BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

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Communication

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EDITORIAL

Significance of the Red Hat

It was the third red hat for a Filipino. The event no longer commanded the enthusiasm one could expect from novelty, as when we had our first Filipino Cardinal, Rufino J. Santos. An attempt to generate additional interest can be seen in the report that the new cardinal is, at 47, the youngest member of the Sacred College. But in the world press the oldest new Cardinal, Joseph Marie Trin nhu Khue, 76, Archbishop of Hanoi (Vietnam), stole the show. Nevertheless the elevation of Archbishop Jaime L. Sin to the rank of Cardinal is a milesstone for the Philippine Church. It invites us to look at the Cardinalate no longer as a mere honor but as a symbol of our commitment to heroic Christian witness today. The Archbishop of Manila has taken to heart the meaning of the red color of the cardinal's hat: "you must show yourself heroic in the exaltation of the Holy Faith, the peace and tranquility of Christian peoples, and the conservation and growth of the Holy Roman Church, if need be even unto death and the shedding of your blood."

Recalling these words during the Thanksgiving Mass at the Manila Cathedral, Cardinal Sin said, "My friends, I am not a brave man, and I have no pretensions to being a hero... But, in obedience to the Holy Father, and in accordance with my own deep convictions, I shall strive, to the limits of my capacity and strength, to uphold truth and freedom, peace and justice. I shall endeavor at all times and without counting the cost, to work for the preservation of human rights."

In the Philippines today the Cardinal's red hat should be, spiritually, on every Christian's head. Even those who are not brave must steel themselves for heroic acts in the cause of truth and justice.

In This Issue

Continuation seems to be the mark of this issue. We have a continuation of the articles by Father Francisco del Rio, O.P., and Father Ted Gresh, M.M. However, continuity should be seen not only in what is obvious. There is also a continuity in the words of Paul VI during his visit to the Philippines and during the audience he granted to our new Cardinal and his group. A tone of continuity is also present in Father H.J. Graf's article on "The Second Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation" in as much as it continues the theme of the past Holy Year.

A communication "On Bernard Häring" does not continue anything we published before. But we hope it will start a discussion we can continue.

MESSAGE TO FILIPINOS

(On the occasion of the private audience he gave to Jaime L. Cardinal Sin and party on May 29, 1976)

With the appointment of Cardinal Jaime L. Sin, we have had once again the joy of naming a Filipino Cardinal, as well as the opportunity of showing our immense affection for the entire country. We recall with reverence the memory of Cardinal Santos, who was very dear to us in the Lord.

As with your presence here today, we relive those wonderful hours we spent together in Manila. They were moments of deep ecclesial communion, when we came among you — as we told at the time — to proclaim Jesus Christ and to announce His sanctifying, liberating and uplifting Gospel. Our message to you today is the very same. And as we continue to proclaim Christ, we ask the response of your Christian conduct, the fidelity of your baptismal commitment. How often we have recalled the dignity of your mission and your destiny: the Philippines, a great beacon of light — the light of Christ — in the Far East:

This is why, with the Apostle Paul, our exhortation is for ever pressing: "I plead with you... to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1).

Through you, we send our cordial greetings to the authorities of your country and to all who so kindly welcomed us in Manila. We have a special remembrance for the community of Tondo, for the representatives of the mass media and for the students. We hope that the students still remember our words: "We greet you with the deepest loving interest and with all our paternal affection... Your responsibility is supreme for the future of your nation."

To all the beloved clergy, religious and laity, we impart our Apostolic Blessing.

WHERE IS MORAL THEOLOGY GOING?*

(Continued from May issue)

By

Francisco del Rio, O.P.

The doctrinal stance taken by Pope Paul VI in the encyclical Humanae Vitae of July 25, 1968, is not binding in conscience, we are told, on the strength of one, or more of the following considerations:

- a) The **Humanae Vitae** is not a doctrinal **collegial** statement, contrary to and against the **mind and spirit of Vatican II**. Likewise the momentous significance in this problem of the "sensus fidelium" is ignored.
- b) The H. V. is **not** an **infallible** doctrinal pronouncement, consequently, **responsible** dissent from it is in order whenever the value protected by said doctrinal pronouncement conflicts with a **higher value**, such as the **stability of the family** and **its peace and happiness** in the **context of true love**, the **proper education of the children**, etc.
- c) The real issue at stake in the Humanae Vitae, we are told, is "that the magisterium has exceeded the bounds of its teaching authority. The theologians claim that not only is the biological act outside the domain of faith, but that the arguments adduced to support the teaching magisterium are theologically and scripturally inconclusive".³²

Man has the power of **stewardship** over his sexuality and generative functions, we are told, i.e., man has been given by the Creator **proximate control over human life** and this proximate control places upon individual human conscience, the burden of deciding under what conditions man has the right to such control.³³

d) A notable majority of both the theologians and of the bishops who were included in the Papal Commission set up to study this question, declared themselves against laying down this norm which has been published in the encyclical "Humanae Vitae". Add to this the opposition of notable theologians of the West to the encyclical,

^{*} Cfr. B. E. de F., May, 1976, pp. 304-327.

 ³² Cfr. The Priesthood is a Call by R. A. Tartre, S.S.S. — Manila, 1970, p. 142.
 ³³ Cfr. Pastor and the Patient by W. Jacobs, N.Y., 1973, passim.

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referred to above. In the light of these factors, it is difficult, nay it is practically impossible to hold out any well grounded hope that a notable majority of Catholics in the West, at least, will regard the line of argument adoped in the papal encyclical as carrying conviction and consequently morally binding force.³⁴

- e) Some theologians wish to see in the pastoral letters of Catholic bishops presenting the encyclical Humanae Vitae to their respective national Christian communities, some development of the moral doctrine enuntiated in this papal pronouncement, by acknowledging approvingly a greater normal responsibility in married couples in deciding what is and what is not against the divine law in the matter of artificial fertility control.
- f) The subject of birth control has given rise to widespread and and intense discussion. The most fundamental reason is really that with the best will in this world, the majority of our faithful find it impossible to live up to the demands of the moral teaching about marriage as it stands today (1965), a stand re-affirmed and strengthened in the encyclical Humanae Vitae. Extensive inquiries addressed to Catholic doctors have confirmed time and again, that in the regions covered by this survey German, French and Dutch literature roughly, ninety to ninety-five percent of fertile Catholic couples offend against the norms of this moral teaching, more or less frequently.³⁵

"To keep the Catholic conscience bound to the official view on birth control would, in the circumstance of today — population explosion — requires superhuman insistence on the part of the magisterium, and superhuman effort on the part of the faithful to comply with it. We must avoid at all costs incurring the reproach of Jesus "You load on men burdens that are unendurable, burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger to lift". (Lk. 11, 46).36

g) The Pope rejects contraception "after a new and deeper reflection upon the principles of the moral teaching on marriage: a teaching founded on the **natural law**, illumined and strengthened by divine Revelation." H.V. n. 4). Now the concept of the natural law the Pope makes use of, is an **out-of-date concept**. The "static" concept of the natural law is giving way to the **evolutionary idea**

³⁴ Cfr. K. Rahner in Theological Investigations. Confrontations. Vol. IX, London, 1974, p. 278.

³⁵ Cfr. Concilium, vol. 5, May, 1965. A Bibliographical Survey of the Question of Birth-Control by Franz Bockle.

³⁶ Cfr. Theological Studies, vol. 35, March, 1975 pp. 154-163 Denis E. Hurley, OMI, Archbishop of Durban, S. Africa.

of man, as responsible for his own development to an ever fuller degree of humanness. 37

Add to this, the traditional concept of the natural law obviously ignores the essential difference between merely biological sexuality and human sexuality. Lastly, the so-called members of the theological minority in the PCBC, agreed with the majority of theologians in that commission that they could not demonstrate the intrinsic evil of contraception on the strength or basis of the natural law, and so they rested their case on authority.

h) The majority report in the PCBC took the position that individual acts of coitus within marriage are only partial acts. The contraceptive acts were seen to be justified by reference to the non contraceptive acts. "This is the case for matrimonial acts which are composed of several fertile and (contraceptively) infertile acts; they constitute one totality, because they are referred to one deliberate choice." This is the theory of "total" response vs. the morality of the individual act.

i) That in the implementation of a moral principle, man is guided by the light of the first of the moval virtues — prudence, pointing out what here and now may be done, in the existing situation, which differs in each concrete case. Only the individual conscience can serve as an effective guide here and now...



As stated above, in the course of the seven years after the promulgation of the H.V. encyclical, a **truly prodigous variety of moral principles unheared of or newly discovered,** greets the reader of Catholic moral literature, aiming at the moral justification of a **world-wide practice**, — **contraception**. We have offered those which prima facie seem to be more convincing. Let us have a close look at each one of them, evaluate them and see what their real value is, if any.*

To argument a) What is "the spirit of Vatican II"? It seems, it is something very subjective, which means whatever each one of us wants it to mean. One should first study and meditate on the documents of Vatican II to find that out, and there is little

³⁷ Cfr.. Love and Sexuality. — A Christian Approach by M.P. Ryan John J. Ryan. N.Y. 1969; pp. 101-107. This booklet carries the "Imprimatur" of 1967, and yet it covers the evaluation of the Humanae Vitae, July 25, 1968 which the co-authors disapprove. It is "A Christian Approach"!!!

^{*} This evaluation is meant to be accurate, but not exhaustive.

evidence of this on the part of priests and so-called theologians objecting to the Humanae Vitae, as violating Vatican II spirit.

"Collegiality" does not mean that the Pope has to take a public vote of all the bishops or that he must decide matters in accordance with a majority vote of the bishops. When Vatican II described "collegiality", it emphasized at the same time, the supremacy of the Pope, and declared that even the whole college of bishops holds its authority in union with the Pope, not apart from him (Vatican II, Const. L.G. n. 22, n. 25).

It should be noted too, and it is a well known fact, that Pope Paul VI did ask all the bishops of the Council to submit their views on these questions of human fertility control in writing and a great many did so. — H.V. n. 5.

As to the "sense of the faithful" supposedly by-passed or ignored in the H.V. encyclical, let me invite lay people to read n. 12 of the Const. on the Church (L.G. n. 12. It reads in part as follows: "The entire body of the faithful annointed as they are by the Holy Spirit (I, Jh. 2:20, 27) cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the people supernatural discernment in matters of faith when "from the bishops down to the last of the faithful" (St. Augustine) they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the spirit of truth. It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people accepts that which is not just the word of men, but truly the word of God."

This is a far cry from the idea that the opinion of Catholics acting against the Church's teaching constitutes the — "sensus fidelium". The Church's teaching is not determined by public opinion among the People of God. The faithful at large have an important contribution to make in the development of doctrine, but the authorized teachers of the Church, the Pope and the bishops, must decide what constitutes a genuine doctrinal development.

It is remarkable, incidentally, how little attention has been given to the witness of millions of Catholic couples who have continually tried, despite failures, to follow the difficult teaching of the Church on marital chastity. The Holy Spirit who dwells in the whole People of God, perhaps dwells in a special way in those who silently hear the word of God and try perseveringly to keep it.³⁸

To argument b) In the whole moral teaching of the Catholic Church there is very little that has been infallibly defined. But this does not mean that all this non-defined teaching is of dobutful

³⁸ Sex in Marriage, Archdiocese of N.Y., Sept. 1968, pp. 24-25, p. 28.

validity. It is authentic teaching of the Church, and faithful Catholics, priests and theologians, accept it as solid Catholic doctrine. "If we were to believe and accept only what has been taught with all the solemnity of an infallible pronouncement, very little of the Church teaching, would remain that was not open to doubt, and the hunt for loopholes would go on. Eventually as Henry VIII finished with six wives, once he had persuaded himself and many others (including some authorities in the Church) that it was legitimate for him to take a second wife, so we would end up with having surrendered one moral law after another".³⁹

It would be difficult for many of us to see and understand a theologian writing on social problems and qualify his references to social encyclicals of Leo XIII, St. Pius X, Pius XII, John XXIII with repeated statements that in these documents the Popes were teaching non-infallibly and that the faithful should give them respectful attention, but ... should not feel bound by them, in forming their consciences, or that the social encyclicals, because they do not carry the note of infallibility, the burden of proof stands with the Church's magisterium. Sad and strange, this is taking place today, whenever references are made to the Humanae Vitae. Why? ...

The conflict between procreation on one side, and stability of the family, its peace and happiness, in the context of true love, the proper education of the children, on the other, is referred to in the Humanae Vitae encyclical, n. 16, where we read: "The Church is the first to praise and recommend the intervention of intelligence in a function which so closely associates the rational creature with his Creator; but she affirms that this must be done with respect for the order established by God. "If, then there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecuned period only and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier"; one may not do evil even if good may come of it." (Cfr. Romans 3:18)

The Humanae Vitae doctrine maintains that contraception is intrinsically wrong, and consequently one may not directly resort to it, as a means to an end, not even for the lofty purposes stated above; — for the end does not justify the means. Vatican II. — G.S. n. 51 teaches: "When there is question of harmonizing con-

³⁹ Cfr. Catholic Medical Quarterly, Oct. 1968, p. 113. Comments on the Humanae Vitae by Dr. K. F. M. Pole.

jugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards." Cfr. n. 49, 50.

To argument c) It is elementary Catholic doctrine that Jesus Christ, when communicating to Peter and to the Apostles His divine authority and sending them to teach all nations His commandments, constituted them as guardians and interpreters of all the moral law, that is, not only of the law of the Gospel, or evangelical, but also of natural moral law which is a divine law, and an expression of the will of God, the faithful fulfillment of which is equally necessary for salvation (cfr. Pius XII: AAS, 46, (1954), p. 671; AAS, 44 [1952] p. 272).

Concerning the "power of stewardship of man over his sexuality and generative function" as claimed by some ecclesiastical writers engaged "in research", it does not mean in elementary Catholic theology, that because of man's proximate control over the generative organs and functions, he is morally free to by-pass the divine law the Creator has laid down governing and directing the use of said sexual powers. "Man does not have unlimited dominion over his body in general, so also with particular reason, he has not such dominion over the generative faculties, as such, because of their intrinsic ordination towards raising up a new life, of which God is the principle". (cfr. Respectable Killing by K. D. Whitehed. N.Y., 1972, pp. 172-202).

In the "Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics", of recent date, Dec. 29, 1975, by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith" we read: "N. 3...

"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" (Gaudium et Spes, n. 16, AAS, 58 [1966] p. 1037)

"Morever, 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; anyone who follows me, will not be walking in the dark, he will have the light of life "John 8:12.

Therefore there can be no true promotion of human dignity unless the essential order of 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 relation elements and relations which tanscend historical contingency.

"These fundamental principles which can be grasped by reason, are contained in the divine law-eternal, objective and universal whereby God orders, directs and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with the result that, under the gentle disposition of divine Providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth" (Vatican II, Dignitatis Humanae, n. 3: AAS, 58 [1966] p. 931). This divine law is accesible to our minds."

"Dissenting — theologians claim, writes Rev. R. A. Tartre, that not only is the biological act outside the domain of faith - but that the arguments adduced to support the teaching magisterium, are theologically and scripturally inconclusive."

But who does claim that the biological act, as such, falls, within the domain of faith? What we often hear and read too, is that the condemnation of contraception by the Church is due to an absurd veneration of biological processes, as such. This erroneous assumption appears already in the "majority" report of the PCBC, but it was noted and promptly answered by the "minority". It is an utter misunderstanding of the whole point at issue. What is at issue is not the violation of a biological process as such, but the violation of that human biological process which is for the genesis of a human person. The physical acts of intercourse are not isolated from the whole pattern of marriage in which hey occur. More about this point, later on, in the course of these reflections.

"That the arguments adduced to support the teaching magisterium are theologically and scripturally inconclusive."

No evidence is given to establish this blunt statement. First of all, the Humanae Vitae doctrine does not rest at all on any scriptural argument.40 Read it. As to the theological argument, we hope the reader of these evaluation of arguments of "dissenting" theologians, will meditate briefly and dispassionately on the answer given to arg. (g) here below, and then make up his mind.

To argument d) Vatican II itself clarified the difference between the work of the experts and that of the Pope, when it said that

⁴⁰ I highly commend for Catholic college students the reading of Chapt. 13 - "Scripture and Tradition": pp. 77-83, from "The Meaning of Contraception" by Mary Rosera Joyce, N.Y., 1969.

the Holy Father had handed certain questions over "to a commission for the study of population, family and births, in order that after it fulfills its function, the Supreme Pontiff may pass judgment". (cfr. Const. The Church in the Modern World, n. 51, note 14). Card. Heenan, who was pro-president of the final Commission, put the matter very well and clearly in a widely printed statement to the press: "The members of the Commission did not regard themselves as a jury. We did not think it was for us to pronounce the final verdict condemning or reprieving "pills" or other contraceptives. It was for us to give a view on the evidence before us. It was for the Pope alone to make the decision."

"The consciousness of that same mission induced us (Paul VI), to confirm and enlarge the Study Commission which Our Predecessor Pope John XXIII of happy memory had instituted in March, 1963. The Commission which included, besides several experts in the various pertinent disciplines, also married couples, had as its scope — the gathering of opinions on the new questions regarding conjugal life, and in particular, in the regulation of births, and of furnishing opportune elements of information, so that the Magisterium could give an adequate reply to the expectation, not only of the faithful, but also of world opinion.

"The work of these experts, as well as the successive judgments and counsels spontaneously forwarded by or expressly requested from a good number of Our Brothers in the Episcopate, have permitted us to measure more exactly all the aspects of this complex matter." (H. V. n. 5).

"The conclusions at which the Commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by us as definitive, nor dispense us from a personal examination of this serious questiton; and this also because, within the Commission itself, no full accordance of judgments concerning the moral norms to be proposed had been reached, and above all, because certain criteria of solutions had emerged which departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with a constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church.

"Therefore, having attentively sifted the documentation laid before us, after mature reflection and asiduous prayers, we now intend by virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ, to give or reply to the grave questions." H.V., n. 6).

As to the obstructive opposition of "notable theologians" to the encyclical at the very time its knowledge had not yet been brought to the Christian communities by their bishops in up-to-date pastoral letters, it stands condemned by itself. This uncalled for premature opposition and the way the communication media played up this dissent — accounts very much for the uncertainty and

confusion presently existing among Catholics that the line of argument adopted in the papal encyclical, for a notable majority of Catholics in the West will carry no conviction, and consequently no morally binding force. Very regrettable, but who stands responsible for this sad fact? So called "progressive theologians".

Catholics in the West as well as in the East, will do well to listen to their legitimate Church authority, their bishops. It is to successors of the apostles that these words are addressed: "He who hears you, hears me: and he who rejects you, rejects me." (Lk. X:16) Cfr. C.M.Q., Oct. 1966, p. 111 to 122. A saying compounded of irony and realism has been current for generations in Christian families, and it is as apposite as ever today: 'The best proof of the divine origin of the Church is that the priests have not succeeded in wrecking it." One may substitute priests for theologians! (Cfr. Catholicism: Religion of Tomorrow! by Henry Fesquet Holt, Reinhart and Winston, N.Y., 1964, p. 47) Vatican II makes reference to a "humanism which is merely earth bound, and even contrary to religion itself." We are witnesses to the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by his responsibility to his brothers and towards society (See Vatican II, G. et S., n. 7). What we are witnessing today, writes E. J. Elbert, is a new humanism, which is prepared, in its own defense, to eliminate the traditional concepts of morality. The objectivity and universality of immutable principles seem to be completely at variance with the new personalism which now dictates right and wrong." (cfr. I understand by Edmund J. Elbert. Sheed and Ward, N.Y., 1971., The Sexual Revolution: pp. 173-197). A humanism, which begins by recognizing only one moral principle: the law of humanitarian compassion, the law of pity; it ends by justifying the putting to death of those who have always been, in civilized societies, the natural object of compassion and pity. If the objects of pity are to be eliminated on humanist principles, then, by these same principles must not pity itself perish from the earth? The language of many humanists envisages a world when there is no longer any need for pity. (cfr. C.B. Daly: Morals, Law and Life, - Scepter, London, 1966, p. 215). Modern man has lost its identity, and its sense of direction in life: What he is, where from he comes, whereto he is going, and the landmarks showing him the way!

To argument e) Claims that "some theologians" wish to see in the Pastoral Letters of Catholic bishops presenting the enc. "Humanae Vitae" to their respective national Christian communities some development of the moral doctrine enuntiated in this papal pronouncement, by acknowledging approvingly a greater moral responsibility in married couples in deciding what is and what is not against the divine law in the matter of artificial fertility control."

I have read time and again the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines on the enc. Letter "Humanae Vitae" and found it most praise-worthy and strengtherning; likewise I have read in full three of the Pastoral Letters by bishops in Europe to their respective communities and I failed to discover anything disturbing, theologically. I know only of two Pastoral Letters which present objectionable doctrine, theologically. Reading them it came to my mind that if Catholic bishops have to be advised by theologians, I know of no charism of inerrancy protecting them against the possible vagaries of "expert" theologians.

Lastly, one thing is -

- (1) the **objective** justification, in individual cases, **of an action** which is objectively, i.e., "intrinsically" immoral ((Cfr. Theological Studies, vol. 26, 1965, pp. 259-260, on the meaning of the term "intrinsically immoral" sometimes predicated of some human acts) and another.
- (2) the subjective justification of performing an intrinsically immoral action, on the ground that this action is substracted from his moral domination through invincible ignorance or error, or some factor directly limiting his freedom: these are two entirely different things. Enough of this.

I assume that pastoral work is carried on in perfect harmony with established Catholic doctrine, for it is with the **bread of truth** that we must feed and nourish the christian people. This was made perfectly clear at the very beginning of Vatican II, in 1962, when it was stated that we could not have a Pastoral Council which is not first of all **doctrinal**. This is too readily forgotten today by some moralists...

To argument f) The Pope has given the answer to this argument, "the most fundamental reason, the one at the basis of many of the arguments against the H.V." — Number 20 of the H.V. reads: "The teaching of the Church on the regulation of birth, which promulgates the divine law will easily appear to many to be difficult, or even impossible of actuation. And indeed, like all great beneficient realities, it demands serious engagement and much effort, individual, family and social effort. More than that, it would not be practicable without the help of God, who upholds and strengthens the good will of men. Yet, to any one who reflects well, it cannot be but that such efforts ennoble man and are beneficial to the human community."

"The honest practice of regulation of birth, demands first of all that husband and wife acquire and possess solid convictions concerning the true values of life and of the family, and that they tend towards securing perfect self-mastery. To dominate instinct by means of one's reason and free will undoubtedly requires ascetic practices, so that the affective manifestations of conjugal life may observe the correct order, in particular with regard to the observance of periodic continence . . . (n. 21).

"Everything in the modern media of social communication which leads to sense excitation and unbridled customs as well as every form of pornography and licentious performances, must arouse the frank and unanimous reaction of all those who are solicitous for the progress of civilization and the defense of the supreme good of the human spirit." (n. 22 of the H.V.)

"The Cross is one element in Christ's teaching which has almost vanished; I mean not only the Cross on which He died, but the cross on which as He tells us, we all must die, to self, daily. There is a distortedness in each of us that only the cross, our own individual cross, can straighten." (Cfr. J. F. Sheed, "Is it the same Church?" Sheed and Ward, London, 1967, p. 183.)

"The sex instinct, writes F. J. Sheed, seems so powerful that to expect the generality of men to control it, is like urging tranquility upon a man with St. Vitus dance. But this is to under-rate the generality of men. There is a vast store of moral health which does not normally show very spectacularly in moral action perhaps, but shows unmistakably in other ways especially in two ways negatively, in a total inability to find happiness in self indulgence; positively in an outstanding readiness for sacrifice for a cause seen as good. Exceptional men will die as martyrs to science, the most ordinary men will die helping the stricken in an epidemic or in a war for their country. Men will sacrifice themselves for any ideal that they value. The integrity of marriage, for instance does not seem to them such an ideal. Why should it? Who has ever shown them the enormous human interests involved in it? At any rate we can say of marriage what we have already seen true of social relations in general, that we are not entitled to say men will make no sacrifice for the ideal until we have done something to show them why it is the ideal".41

The Population Explosion is one of the most potent stimulus accounting for the almost universal practice of contraception today in developing countries, and the de-emphasizing of woman's reproductive and maternal role and this not only in the "third world". but in the "affluent" countries as well, and perhaps more. The current emphasis on the emotional values of personal involvements and the developing power of love, as compared with the ugly effects

⁴⁷ Cfr. Society and Sanity., F. J. Sheed and Ward, N.Y., 1953, p. 132. Cfr. Enquiries into Religion and Culture by Christopher Dawson, London, Sheed and Ward, 1934, Christianity and Sex, pp. 259-292. Why the Cross? by Edward Leen, N.Y., Sheed and Ward, 1939, pp. 1-366.

of hate, inequality and war, have paved the way for the strengthening of the "new morality" particularly in the area of sexual morals.

Writing in Theological Studies* Archbishop D. E. Hurley, of Durban, South Africa, maintains "that every country in the world will have a state-supported system of family planning, and most of these will have the dimension of population planning as well. The common currency of these systems, as far as we can forsee, will be practices in conflict with Catholic morality: contraception and abortion. They will be common places of human society all over the world, part of the cultural climate of the age. People, not accepting them will be mere curiosities, strange survivors of another age. Ninety percent of the world's population will be unable to understand the religious and ethical samples of the dissident ten per cent". (ib. p. 150) Arch D. E. Hurley more than suggests that "freed from the absolute mentality — the catholic system should be able to cope with problems raised by the need of population control" (p. 162) "The challenge of population control class for a braver approach, an approach that must make the use of what our various experts have to offer, an integrated approach to a problem that affects human life in all its dimensions. An abstract formula is not an answer. We must know as precisely as possible the situation that constitutes the problem, the values that are at stake, what we are going to offer in preserving and promoting these values, and how we are going to offer our contribution to the world. If the magisterium does not see to it that this total ecclesial effort is mobilized and deployed, it will not have the right to teach; for invoking our old ally, natural law, no authority has the right to command the impossible, and it will be impossible for pastors and people to cope with the population issue without very full and effective leadership from the magisterium. We must avoid at all costs incurring the reproach of Jesus. "You lead on men burdens that are unendurable, burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger to lift" (Lk. 11:46). The answer to population explosion then - Liberal Humanism !!! . . . That is not the answer, Archbishop D. E. Hurley! . . .

The theory of the impossible morality, morality for giants, is an old error; it appeared in the third century of Christianity. It is refuted in practice by the example of many Christians who strive to live up to the evangelical ideal and keep themselves in a state of complete detachment, affective and often effective and heroic. This epithet can be applied to such attitude, for example, constant devotion to the point of self-sacrifice, maryrdom or faithfulness to conjugal morality. St. Jerome has another way of defining the sublimity of the evangelical ideal. Christ, he says, requires not im-

^{*} March, 1974, Population Year, pp. 154-163.

possibility but perfection and He gives grace for the achievement of what to man seems impossible. This supernatural ideal corresponds to the aspirations of a human ideal, in contrast to the views of the time and of our own time, which were and are egoistical. particcularist and even grossly materialistic. We Catholics must begin to take our ideal of chastity so seriously that we set to work to do everything possible to improve this entire course of development.

The problems which tempt married couples to practice contraception do not begin with marriage. These problems often are forshadowed by a long flirtation with sin, during late adolescence, when company-keeping and courtship are marked by a great deal of pointless sexual stimulation. Even more commonly they are foreshadowed by the practice of masturbation which begins during early adolescence or even before and which sometimes continues even until marriage. What might be done is to have a program, to offer, an outline would take us too far. But a program exists and must be implemented, begeinning with "family education". Our failure in the case of adults, is a real failure of faith. Not only of faith in the teaching of the Church which points out what divine law forbids, but even more, failure of faith in the teaching of Christ who promised sufficient grace and who told us that all things are possible with Him and through His Spirit. We do not genuinely believe, we never really have genuinely believed, that perfect chastity can be chieved by all; failure of faith in man and man's latent yet real capacity for mastery of self in the area of sex.

To argument g) Modern man has an instinctive dislike for "stability, order and law". Man is freedom, unlimited dynamism. (Cfr. Josef Thomé, "Il cristiano maggiorenne" Gribualdi, Torino, 1970, p. 60-64), The unfamiliarity of many priests with the best in classic, traditional philosophy and theology borders on the incredible. It is not my purpose here to write a doctoral thesis on the true concept of the natural moral law. Vatican II (Christ, G. et S., n. 89) tells us "In pursuit of her divine mission the Church preaches the Gospel to all men and dispenses the treasures of grace. Thus by imparting knowledge of the divine and natural law, she everywhere contributes to strengthening peace and to placing brotherly relations between individuals and people on solid grounds." In the Declar, on Religious Freedom, n. 14, re read: "It is her duty to give utterance, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origin in the human nature." In the "Humanae Vitae" encyclical, n. 4 itself we read: "No believer will wish to deny that the teaching authority of the Church is competent to interpret even the natural moral law. It

is, in fact, indispensable, as Our Predecessors have many times declared, that Jesus Christ, when communicating to Peter and to the Apostles His divine authority and sending them to teach all nations His commandments, constituted them as guardians and authentic interpreters of all the moral law, not only, that is, of the law of the gospel, but also of the natural law, which is also an expression of the will of God, the faithful fulfillment of which is equally necessary for salvation. (Cfr. Pius XII, AAS. 46, 1954, p. 671). Now, it turns out that according to some priests, and so called moral theologians, the magisterium ignores the very concept of the natural moral law: — how can it interpret it?!!!

Man's adequate knowledge of the Natural Moral Law calls for a two-fold approach: inductive I-II, q. 94, a.2 and deductive S.c.G., III, 129. The concept of the NML is in one sense "static", immutable; in another it is "dynamic", subject to change, variations and development in NML secondary principles which are acceptable and compatible with the unchanging nature of its basic, primary principles.⁴²

The Pope refers to natural moral law in this encyclical Humanae Vitae, but he has not given us a philosophic-theological description of what the natural moral law is, perhaps, because his main purpose here is to stress the fact that the immorality of contraceptiton is not a matter of positive law, or of Church discipline, but of the divine law (Cfr. H.V., n. 4). Pope Paul VI is re-affirming an uninterrupted Christian doctrine and tradition which has rejected contraception as incompatible with the true nature of man, incompatible with his God given power to hand life to others (Cfr. H.V., nn. 10, 13).

The traditional Christian view that man's sexual powers are somehow sacred and inviolable has been called biologism by proponents of contraception. Yes, man's biology is part of his personality. Al human powers, whether vegetative (biological) animal, (physical) or (spiritual) have their own proper activities, unified coordinated by that one of them which is most excellent. Our passions are and must remain animal; they are senstive movements, linked essentially to organic phenomena. But in man, these passions need, by their very nature, to participate in the more excellent level of activity belonging to the spirit. Without losing anything

⁴² Cfr. Conscience vs. Law by Jeremiah Newmans. — The Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1971. — "Aux sources de la loi naturalle, by Felicien Rousseau, in Laval Theologique Philosophique. Oct. 1976, pp. 279-313). Fuch, J., Natural Law, A Theological Investigation. 1965, Theologia Moralis General, I, Rome, 2nd ed., 1963, p. 75-181) W. Farrell. A Companion to the Summa, Vol. II, Sheed and Ward, N.Y., Ch. 181, pp. 365-389. — An Introduction to Moral Theology. Karl Hörman. — The Newman Press Maryland, 1963.

of their animality, they receive from it the spirit - a natural aptitude, an excellence which they could not possess in an animal (1-11, 74, 3, Im; 1, 78, 4, 5m; III, 8,2,2m, III q. 5,4,c). For this reason the human body is endowed with a biopsychological organism more complex and delicate than that of an animal (III, 5,4,3m); the animal's sensory and emotional activities reach, on the whole, this perfection in man.43 Men are not angelic creatures, spirits without bodies. The human body is so much part of the person that we cannot regard our bodies as if they were mere tools which we use and put away again. We do not mean that man can find the moral law, which is the will of God, just by looking at biological organs and at their functions. Indeed, we must look at these, if we are going to understand their fundamental human purposes - life giving and love giving - for which God has designed them. But these goods themselves are not merely biological. They also involve the psychological, the spiritual and even the supernatural aspects of the personality.

Biological fertility is normative, not because biology as such is sacred, but because it is the outer surface of human, personal, spiritual love between the sexes. Natural intercourse is not out of the line with the genuine human love which it embodies, in such a way as to need re-adjusting in order to conform to it, but corresponds to the true nature of married love, with the result that contraceptive intercourse can only be a distorted expression of genuine sexual love and the all too faithful expression of its self-stultifying perversion. It is precisely because biological structures are not external adjustments to human, personal and spiritual sexual love, but perfect mirrors of it, that they must be respected and that the desire to frustrate them contradicts the given nature of the love which they reflect.

Wedded love is a total mutual self-surrender which aspires after the fusion and permanent union of the two parties in the person of their offspring. Our Lord suggests this when He declares that there is no marrying in heaven, in the blessed life hereafter, because there the parties are immortal (Lk. 20:34-36). It is only in its issue that love between normal men and women can achieve the lasting union after which it aspires. When the parties achieve immortality, the need to participate their union in their progeny, ceases. Because inner, spiritual, personal sexual love is a total, procreative, mutual self commitment, the determination restrictively

 $^{^{43}\} QQ$ Disp De Anima, a 8 c, Cfr. St. Thomas and the Psychology of Freud by Albert Ple, in "Cross Currents of Psychiatry and Catholic Morality". pp. 84-109).

to condition the body with a view to intercourse, is a mental and volitional reservation which contradicts the existential nature of that love.44

French priest Y. Congar is quoted by the weekly periodical "TIME" (Nov. 13, 1972, p. 59, col. 4) as saying "The theologian must be in constant contact with human sciences, with the latest developments in all kinds of thought. Take the question of sexuality. We cannot speak of such a matter in the same terms as we used before Freud. The theologian has the responsibility of elaborating and researching . . . "

Well, what is what Freud has to say on the subject matter of contraception; he favours whom . . .?

Freud in his "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (New York, 1920, p. 273) wrote, and I quote: "The common characteristic of all perversions is that they have abandoned reproduction as their aim. We term sexual activity perverse when it has renounced the aim of reproduction and follows the pursuit of pleasure as an independent goal. And so you realize that the turning point in the development of sexual life lies in its subjugation to the purpose of reprotion. Everything this side of the turning point, everything that has given up this purpose and serves the pursuit of pleasure alone, must carry the term "perverse", and as such be regarded with contempt (Cfr. "The Irish Ecclesiastical Record, May, 1965) - "Dissenters" from the Humanae Vitae will do well to ponder over the implications of this statement by Freud.

Furthermore, how about "dissenting" ecclesiastical and laymen writers going over the "Memorandum of the 400 German Doctors of 1965 addressed to the Ministry of Health"? It has something worth while reading and reflecting on "contraception" and "sexuality". Let me quote some statements:

- a) "The strongest powers and greatest possibilities for the creation, development and perservation of the personality and the culture, lie in the creative forces and energies of man. The rise and fall of every culture has depended upon the "disciplined" and "undisciplined" application of these forces.
- b) "While we increasingly ignore these fundamental laws of life and allow our Christian Western inheritance to be destroyed, their importance determining factors of history is more and more recognized by the Soviet Union and Red China, and they are being deliberately incorporated into the ideological and political planning of world revolution.

⁴⁴ Cfr. C. M. Q., Oct., 1968, pp. 110-111.

- c) "The view that the meaning of human life is to be found in prosperity and pleasure-seeking has become the guiding idea for the majority of the people. This attitude ignores the fact that our debt to our parents and to the community means first and foremost the inescapable obligation to assure responsibility for the life of coming generations.
- d) "The essence of human sexuality is the total union of two human beings, a physical, spiritual and intellectual life partnership, whose visible expression is the child, its meaning therefore lies in the preservation of the human race and the formation of the community. One sided and selfish missue degrades and destroys the human personality and the commuity.
- e) "Most of the forms of "modern sexuality" are diseased artificial product of civilization. The now common degradation of the creative forces of man in the pursuit of private pleasure and for the physical exploitation of one's fellowman is thus by no means anything that is "conditioned by nature".
- f) "A decisive role in this is played by the "sexualization of public life which is so common today. This includes in particular:
 - 1 The unrestrained propagandistic exploitation of the female body and of sexual allurements for advertising purposes and for all kinds of unscrupulous profit-making in business, the theatre, films, television, ilustrated magazines, books, etc.
 - 2. The open propaganda for nudism and the systematic destruction of natural sense of modesty, at the beaches, beauty contest, etc.
 - 3 The kind of "scientific" and "morally neutral" sex education prevailing today, which deals only with superficial processes in the generation of human life, as if there could be no mystery here. This type of sex education leads to irreverence and cynicism and destroys the last remaining inhibitions and barriers in this sphere.
 - 4 The public propaganda for contraceptives is part of this "neutral" kind of sex education.

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7. Public ridicule of chastity in most of the so-called cultural products of the theatre, press and television. Making light of pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse.

8.

- 9. A further consequence of the above practices is the loss of respect for the nascent life. Herein lies the real reason for the epidemy of abortions—this continuous mass murder of human life—for which in most cases, in view of the present prosperity, social, financial or ethical reasons can no longer be held responsible.
- 10. The idea of fighting the abortions plague through public propaganda for "anti-baby pills", or even through sex education on television, or in the schools, confuses cause and effect. For as already indicated, this propaganda is itself a part of the public sexualization.
- 11. The indiscriminate distribution of "pills" would moreover, in the case of many women and girls, remove the last breaks on the modern trend towards sexualization.⁴⁵

That the "so-called members of the **theological minority**" in the PCBC agreed with **majority** theologians in the Commission that they could not demonstrate the **intrinsic evil of contraception** on the strength or basis of the **natural moral law**, and so they, i.e., the statement of the "minority" rested their case on the authority of the Church". This is not correct, at all. What the minority report is saying is that — if we could bring forward arguments based on reason alone, which are so evident as to compel assent, it would not be necessary for the Commission to exist, etc. Few, if any, rational arguments, in matters ethical are irresistibly compelling. But, it is a far cry from this, to the statement that — "no valid conclusion could possibly (!) be drawn from the argument of Natural Law" (Cfr. CMQ, Oct., 1970, p. 110, "A reply to some queries by Rev. J. P. Wreo).

Vatican I defined and Vatican II declared that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason. Both Councils declared that

⁴⁵ Cfr. The Physician and the Sexual Revolution by Max, Levin, M.D., CMQ, Jan. 1968, pp. 9-17. Cfr. The 400 German Doctors Memorandum of 1965, pp. 110-112, CPG Ph. Apr.-June 1965, pp. 107-111'.

it is **owing to revelation** that those religious matters which are theoretically accessible to human reason can, in the present **fallen state of man**, readily be known **by all**, with firm certitude and without involvement of error. To say that unaided reason can know certain religious truths is not to say that it has ever done so in fact, or that any of the classical argumens have in fact succeeded in demonstrating these truths. On the contrary, the Church teaches that it is morally impossible (i.e., exceedingly difficul) for **everyone's unaided human reason to reach**, with firm conviction and without erroneous alley, religious truths which are in principle, within the grasp of the mind.⁴⁶

It is not surprising that the clouded mind of "fallen man" experiences much difficulty in the moral sphere and in recognizing their validity, if and when, such arguments are discovered. Most of the arguments from reason on moral topics fail to carry conviction with those who are not already satisfied that the conclusion is true.

If the pressure to commit sexual immoralities which everybody knows to be wrong, were as strong and as widespread as the pressure to practice contraception, then the number of those who found the rational arguments against them "utterly unconvincing" would in no time reach astronomical proportions.

To argument h) The terms "fundamental option" and "total response" vs. the morality of the individual act, although they are becoming familiar to moral theology students, are far, far from being generally acceptable.

When you hear talking of a "fundamental option", it seems they forget that the liberty of man is that of a creature immersed in time and with a nature affected by original sin. Man is not an angel who can opt for God, once and for all; man must do so all throughout his life, and must maintain his decision to love and serve God, with constant struggle and fidelity. This is why man is capable of committing mortal sin, either by deliberately going against God, or through weakness. And if man does not sufficiently endeavour to avoid venial sin, then it is only a matter of time, before he ceases to avoid mortal sin, too.

Contrary to the doctrine of "total response vs. the morality of the individual act", traditional catholic theology maintains that

⁴⁶ Cfr. Vatican I, Sess. III, DB, n. 1785; Vatican II, G. et S., n. 12-22; St. Thomas, I, q. 1. a 1, c; II-II, q. 2, aa. 3-4; I n I Sent., Prol. q. 1; SCG, 1, 4-5; QQ'. Disp. De Veritate, q. 14, a 10; again in I-II, q. 109).

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there is a principle of totality in every single human action. As the whole person exists in each part of himself he exists as a whole in each of his actions.

Morality is based on the totality of the individual act, and not on the life of the person as a whole. In each of his acts, the person express the totality of his being, if not explicitly, certainly implicitly. All actions of a human life are continuous with one another, inseparable, but really distinct. And each distinct action is a moral unit that neither may be condemned nor justified by the continuous of human actions.

Traditional doctrine **never** implied that the "means" of marital intercourse were indifferent, so long as the "end" of procreation was attained; it was never merely reproductionist or biologistic. It is on the contrary, the contemporary "dissenting" literature which seems to regard procreation as a merely biological end of marriage. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, untiringly affirms that human procreation is unique in **being a loving bringing to life of a child and caring for him into manhood** (Cfr. 2-2 154, aa 2-3; Suppl. q. 65, a 3; scg. III, c. 122).

The traditional doctrine did not isolate the single act from its total context; it saw each fully deliberate act as expressing an attitude towards totality, and ultimately towards the Totaliy which is God. It saw each fully deliberate choice as a Yes or No to God. This is the deepest meaning of our concept of the Summum Bonum — Highest Good — This is what is implied by our capacity for mortal sin. In the authentic natural law tradition, end and means are not separated from one another, as if either could be pursued, attained or jutified in independence of the other. The end is present in the means, is willed or is refused in the choosing of the means. Every end- means relationship in natural law philosophy, reflects the relationship between the supreme End of all our willing, God, and the immediate objects of our choices, creatures.47

As to the Dutch Catechism (pp. 401-4. Herder and Herder, N.Y., 1967) invoking the **principle of totalty**, explains that since Vatican II had put the two needs of marriage,—conjugal love and procreation, on a **footing of equal dignity**, the roles can be fulfilled **alternately**, and not necessarily concurrently. This position appeals to a number of American writers and to Protestant divines. "Woman is no longer the victim of her reproductive trait". So now between total rejection of reproduction and total acceptance, stands the golden mean, the ideal norm which is not by definition an impera-

 ⁴⁷ B. E. de F., May-June, 1973, pp. 301-321 "Is modern man insensitive to sin?" F. del Rio, O.P.
 48 Cfr. Theological Studies, vol. 27, 1966, p. 249.

tive! Neither Vatican II in G et S. Constitution nor any other doctrinal document of the Church leads to this wishful thinking, which the Dutch Catechism assumes from the Protestant Conference of Lambeth of 1958 as I have stated (Cfr. B. E. de F., May, 1976, p. 310).

To argument i) "We are beginning to use the traditional teaching on the primacy of conscience in order to justify the easy way out of our problems" said Bishops Mullins, of Cardiff, addressing the Guild of Catholic Doctors of England in 1973.49 I agree with Fr. Pius, O.F.M. Cap. when he asserts that "a great part of the work of the Church in the moral field is to make people face the basic questions, both of morality and of professional competence, rather than providing a way out of difficult circumstances" (Ib., p. 67).

On this point, the need of undergoing, at times, all the agonies of a very cross, the words of K. Rahner come to my mind: "If we Christians, when faced with a moral decision, really realized that the world is under the Cross, on which Christ Himself hung, nailed and pierced, that obedience to God's law can also entail man's death, that we may not do evil in order that good may come of it, that it is an error and heresy of this eudemonic modern age, that the morally right thing can never lead to a tragic situation, from which in this world there is no way out; if we really realized that as Christians we must expect almost to take for granted that at some time in our life, our Christianity will involve us in a situation in which we must either sacrifice everything or lose our soul, that we cannot expect always to avoid a "heroic" situation, then there would indeed be fewer Christians who think that their situation requires a special ruling which is not so harsh as the law proclaimed as God's laws by the Church, then there would be fewer confessors and spiritual advisers who for fear of telling the penitent how strict is God's law, fail in their duty and tell him instead "to follow his conscience", as if he had not asked, and done right to ask, which among all the many voices clamoring within him was the true voice of God, as if it were not for God's Church to try to distinguish it in accordance with his law, as if the true conscience would speak even when it had not been informed by God and the faith which comes from hearing".50

Vatican II, Const. G. et S. n. 16 says: "Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to these numerous problems which arise in the life of

⁴⁹ Cfr. C., M. Q. Ap. 1973, p. 47. 50 Cfr. Nature and Grace. Karl Rahner, S.J. - Sheed and Ward London, pp. 102 f.

individuals and from social relationships. Hence the more that a correct conscience holds away, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by objective norms of morality." And in Decl. on "Religious Freedom" n, 14 we read: "In the formation of their consciences the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. The Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to and authoritatively to teach that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself."

As to the reference to "situationism" or "situation ethics" contained in this argument, traditional moral Caholic teaching opposes it, on many grounds; let me mention only three: "The first is that while granting that God wants first and foremost a right intention, this in itself is not enough. He also wants good works. (What we do, how we do it, and why we do it—all of them count indeed). Secondly, we may not do evil, even if good may come of it (Romans 3:8). This would be tantamount to following the principle that "the end justifies the means; and thirdly, there can be circumstances in which a man, and especially a Christian, may have to face the duty of sacrificing everything, even his life, in order to save his soul. All of the many martyrs, including those of our own times, remind us of it.51

The modern emphasis on the value of the human person as an individual possessing unparalleled uniqueness has made the universal and absolute character of the natural moral law and prohibitions appear obsolete and devoid of human understanding. It is not nature, human nature we hear the basis of or the foundation source of morality, according to this modern ideology, but it is the person, this person, that provides the pattern of the natural moral law.⁵²

Card. H. Volk presents the problem and its right solution in a brief, clear and sound article which compels me to offer it, in part, in in its own words to our readers. Today the explanation that man draws from his being, his nature, from which general obligatory moral laws are allegedly deducible, does not enjoy much

52 Cfr. Angelicum, vol. 52, 1975, fasc. 2, La Moral y su Valor Objec-

tive por T. Urdanoz, O.P., pp. 217-219.

⁵¹ Cfr. Estudio Modernos de Teologia, Moral. — Vol. I Moral Fundamental: cap. 31-33 pp. 206-224 Martinez Balirach S.J. — Santander, España, 1963 — La Coscienza. Piertro Palazzini — Roma 1961: La Coscienza nella morale della situazione: pp. 281-287. — Catholic Position Position Papers. — "Beyond Situation Ethics" by Celaya — G. de Haro. January, 1975. No. 26. — Philippine Edition.

credit... Actually one wonders it is not better to use the concept of person rather than nature as he moral subject and the responsible agent of moral decisions. The moral subject is the person, man as person. For it is the person that is addressed in God's revelation and in the proclamation of the faith; it is the person that is loved, and it is the person that must answer, responsibly,

in love ...

At this point three questions arise. Firstly, whether nature is so uniform and constant that it holds validity for everyone in the same way. In the Middle Ages this questions was clearly posed and lastly debated in terms of the doctrine of the universals. It was recognized that there must be something in common, man's being, otherwise the aburd conclusion would be reached that not all men are men. (let me add and say: all men are equally men though not all men are equal). The second question whether Christian duty can also find its foundation, for the most part, in man's nature. It should be noted, in connection with this problem, that the order of salvation is contingent on the order of creation and that which comes from Christ transforms but does not suppress what arises from man's nature, as a creature. (Grace perfects nature, does not destroy or suppress it). Furthermore, one must be certain that in the direction from and toward Christ, no harm is ever done to man's nature or being, even for example, the evangelical precepts of poverty, obedience and celibacy are accepted "for love of the Kingdom of Heaven." In Christ, the evangelical precepts are a legitimate mode of Christian life, and they do not diminish man's nature.

"The third question is if the alternative — whether it is common nature, or the unique and unrepeatable person that should provide the standard of moral law and conduct — is justified. No, this alternative is not justified. Because, man's reality does not exist as a something, man is always personal, so that in him matter (man's nature) stops being something; in man, matter is personified. On the other hand, there is no such a thing as a person, we also mean nature, and vice-versa, because one cannot materially exist without the other. Thus, the alternative nature or person is false, it does not exist".53

The authentic demands of the ethics of God's immediate will (or "situation ethics") are met by the Thomistic theology of action, with its enlightening ideas in the practical order, of prudence and of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is regretable that to our

⁵³ Cfr. L'Oss. Romano, Engl. Ed., March 27, 1975, pp. 6,7,11.
54 Cfr. Modern Catholic Thinkers, Vol. 11: "In the World, but not of the World", p. 279.

contemporary mind, prudence seems to be less a prerequisite to goodness, than an evasion of it. God wants us, no doubt, to respond sincerely to the complete data of every situation, but one of these data, must of necessity be its **objective morality**, its relation to His objective order of righ and wrong, and He is not indifferent to whether or not our actions conform to that order. Well, I can do here nothing more than commend Joseph Pieper's booklet on on the "Four Cardinal Virtues" to young theology students, "Prudence" pp. 340 — Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1966.

Indeed, a prodigious variety of previously unheard of moral principles have been advanced in an attempt to appease one's conscience. Most of them give the distinct impression that they have been cooked up for these purposes. It looks as if it is the forgone conclusion that has generated the premises and not the premises that have generated the conclusion. Quite accurately, the pastoral letter of the C. H. of the Philippines on the H. V. asserts: "The Encyclical Letter is the best defense of itself. If studied conscientiously by a Catholic, with an open mind, free from the prejudices that propaganda has planted in the mind of many in favor of artificial regulation of birth, it cannot fail to convince the reader of the soundness of the position the Holy Father has taken." (Pastoral Letter of 1968, October 12, Manila, P. 5).

Underlying the whole doctrine in favor of contraceptions is the premise that the suffering of abstinence, especially for a long period, cannot be called or asked for, in Christian marriage. The logical consequence of such an assumption and attitude is that in case of unavoidable marital abstinence, e, gr. — sickness, separation for reasons of business, military service, etc. — extramarital relations become permissible, to say the least...

The theologians of "dissent" need reflect on the fact that absolutizing of the goal of non-suffering, has not only been greatly responsible for the advocacy of contraception,—but has likewise been greatly influential—perhaps the greatest single influence—in the call for abortion, divorce, etc.⁵⁶

The second premise underlying the "mentality of dissent" from the H. V. is this: "dissent" theologians create or give the impression that Christian morality is a **matter of ethics** alone, — philosophical. Now, the student of theology needs remember and reflect that when the Church employes arguments in the course of proposing a principle of the natural moral law, the ultimate value of the teaching

⁵⁵ Cfr. C.M.Q. October, 1970, p. 109: "A Reply to Some Queries" by Rev. J. P. Wroe

⁵⁶ Cfr. Theological Studies, March, 1971, pp. 48 ff. Cfr. Karl Adam: Christ and Western Mind, London, Sheed and Ward, 1930, p. 45-46.

does not depend upon, or come from the native forces of the arguments, but from the authority itself of the Church to teach, with the corresponding obligation on the part of the faithful - theologians included — to accept its teaching. It is not a scientific or philosophic source of knowledge, on which the authority of the teacher and the security of the doctrine are contingent and upon the potency of the arguments and roofs. The Church bears witness to the truth, in morals as well as in dogma, and its authority rests mainly upon the mission of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rather than upon the internal effectiveness of the reasons alleged or their ability to convince. Cfr. B.E.F., May, 1976, p. 324.

Lastly, I have failed to discover in the foregoing reflections any substantial evidence of the "formidable set of convincing reasons that have been put forth in opposition to the arguments of the enc. Humanae Vitae". - If we read and ponder a little the recent "Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics" issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — Dec. 29, 1975, - it will seem quite clear, that "all this set of formidable convincing reasons", have failed likewise to convince the magisterium.

Some ecclesiatical writers have stated that since "dissenters" from the Humanae Vitae enc. have been riding high in the saddle in practically every area of Catholic life for the past seven years or so, this calls for a reconsideration of the Humanae Vitae doctrine. But I honestly believe that it is high time, "dissenters" reconsider the supposed valid reasons for their dissent and value their objective strength. Of course, this calls for real devotion and openness to truth, and this is not possible without humility The very consideration of the disastrous consequences of contraception are leading, presently, some former dissenters to-day accept the Traditional Doctrine of the Church on fertility control as reaffirmed by Pope Paul VI in the Humanae Vitae encyclical.

How to explain the still existing strong resistance and opposition to the Traditional doctrine of the Church on fertility control, will be the subject matter of the closing reflections of this inquiry on "Where is Moral Theology Going".

MINISTRY AND MISSION: FROM ROLAND ALLEN TO THE PRESENT

By

Ted Gresh, M.M.

PART II

The previous article has shown that following Roland Allen, there is a growing convergence of theological opinions and consensus among major Catholic theologians regarding the feasibility of ordaining married men to the priesthood. These men, coming from within the communities and recognized by the members as true Christian leaders, could provide the needed leadership for the emerging base communities within the great Church. While some theologians have already proposed the ordination of women as a tentative pastoral solution, the Scriptural and theological basis for such a practice is nebulous at best. The ordination of married men, however, has a strong foundation in the New Testament and Apostolic Church and is obviously a practice which should be reinstated to meet the pastoral and missionary needs of the times.

Again, following Allen, it is the intention of the present article to show that the reluctance and intransigence of the Church to reinstate a married indigenous clergy coming organically from the communities themselves, has seriously hampered the divine mission of the Church to all the nations and has clouded and obscured the distinctions between the charisms of celibacy, religious life, missionary and pastor. As Fr. Congar observes, the missionary mandate to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Mt. 28:19 ff.) is a "tradition which is identified with the exercise of the ministry (and) transmits the Revelation of God, not human regulations."1

Despite the fact that there is a difference between missionary and pastoral activity and this appears clearly in the New Testament and in the Decree on Missionary Activity, we are faced with a concrete situation in which many missioners spend most of their lifetime performing the functions of local pastors rather than apostles.2 Our attempts then, to found national churches without the substruc-

¹ Yves Congar, Traditions and Traditions Vol. I (London: Burns and

Oates, 1966), p. 8.

2 "Decree on Missionary Activity of the Church," in The Documents of Vatican II. Walter Abbot, S.J. ed. para. 6, p. 591.

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ture of the local church is a mistake. As Allen said, they should be churches in the biblical sense, instituted and equipped in the same way as the Pauline churches.³ The basic structure which should be restored is that of the small community along with responsible leaders who normally will be married, since they will already be middle aged at the time of their appointment.

In his prophetic book St. Paul's Missionary Methods: or Ours? Allen pointed out time and again the contradictions in training candidates for the missionary priesthood, especially the unbalanced stress on examination as the test for fitness in the ministry.⁴

I. The people have been deprived of the sacraments. Our mission priests have often large numbers of communicants scattered over a very wide area, entirely depedendent upon them for the administration of the sacraments, with the result that the people have opportunity to receive the sacraments only at rare intervals... Thus we deny the Bread of Life to people whom we teach to believe that partaking of the Bread of Life is the first duty of a Christian and the first necessity for spiritual growth ... It requires no great education to be able to celebrate the Holy Mysteries. We put intellectual qualifications in the first place with the result that the congregations starve while we educate a few men.⁵

There are many priests and bishops in non-Christian countries who would never think of allowing a local leader to celebrate Mass, but who have no qualms about allowing a catechist with a sixth grade education to preach the Word and instruct the catechumens. In the urban areas, however, lay leaders are often highly educated and capable of articulating their faith in a manner far superior to the foreign missionary and on par with the indigenous priests.

The obvious contradiction is that while often, the very faith by which the congregation recognizes the Body of the Lord in the breaking of the Bread is transmitted by the local catechist or layman, this same person is judged unfit to celebrate the Eucharist on the grounds that he lacks sufficient training and education or that he has not undergone a long seminary training or that he is married.

Thanks to Vatican II, with the use of the venacular a man could be taught to celebrate the Eucharist in a week, but to effectively preach the Word normally demands some years of preparation either formally, as in a seminary, or practically, in the context of a living

³ Roland Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 20.

⁴ Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours? (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 104.
⁵ Ibid.

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Christian community. It must also be admitted that merely having gone through the seminary does not necessarily produce a good preacher or catechist and that many laymen already possess these charisms to a high degree, especially when preaching or teaching in their own indigenous communities. But the sacral concept of the priesthood is not one that can be removed easily from the collective super-ego of the Church and the history of catechetics with its exaggerated stress on the doctrinal sign, formulations, legalism memorization etc. bears this out.⁶

St. John ends his gospel of love with Jesus asking Peter three times if he really loves Him. "Peter was upset that he asked him a third time, 'Do you love me?' and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you'. Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:17). One might ask the same question to Peter's successors; "Do they really love Jesus — or the sheep? And why are they not upset"? For it would appear that they would rather let the sheep starve or remain undernourished, rather than change the present ecclesiastical discipline and give them local shepherds to feed them.

2. As regards seminary education Roland Allen said:

The young men so educated are sometimes, by that very education out of touch with their congregations. They return to their people with strange ideas and strange habits.⁷

Hans Kung observed the same thing:

I shall never forget one extremely intelligent Indian who was a contemporary of mine as a student at Rome; he could weave his way unassailably with dazzling grace through a tangle of scholastic distinctions, making rings around most of the Europeans in fluent Latin; but ask him a simple question straight from Scripture, which did not fit the formal framework that he had learned, and he was simply dumb. A person like this is then astonished to find that his whole dialectic is simply unconvincing to educated people in his own country.

It is fashionable in missiology to state that the missioner comes to plant the Church and bring the mustard seed of faith. More often, he comes with a full grown "California redwood" or the "pines of Rome". The faith is not allowed to take shape and grow according to its own form because the branches are already filled with Greek metaphysics and Heideggarian categories. It would be better to bring a sound biblical theology, since the Scriptures are a univer-

⁶ Ibid. p. 106.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Hans Kung, The Living Church (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 384.

sal font of faith and Hebrew thought patterns are already closer to the thinking patterns of Orientals than to Westerners. By reflecting on their faith and the Scriptures in terms of their own philosophies, indigenous peoples could then develop their own theologies.

3. In choosing leaders for Christian communities Roland Allen pointed out that:

The outstanding men of the Church, the natural leaders of the village life and the natural leaders of the Church are silenced. The church is not led and administered by the people to whom all would naturally turn, but either by a foreigner, or by a young man who has come with a foreign education. The real elders of the community are not the elders of the church, and the whole church suffers as a consequence.⁹

AND WE WONDER WHY THERE ARE SO FEW MEN AT OUR CHURCH SERVICES!

The natural teacher, the divinely gifted preacher is silenced. There is no opportunity for the church to find its prophets, nor for the prophets to find themselves.¹⁰

There is then, a certain "mystique" of priestly education. That a missionary or pastor spends long years in preparation for his ministry is undeniable. That he uses this education in the exercise of his ministry is often questionable.

Missiology has long recognized and grappled with the problem of culture and language gap. And yet, the often more important problem of education gap between priest and people goes unnoticed or is ignored.

For example, a priest educated in a large American city might, after long years, become a successful pastor in a small Appalachian rural community. He might even use their way of talking and acting in his willingness to adapt. But this is hardly a solution. It would be much better to educate and ordain a man from that locale to handle the problems that occur there and to lead the community. Cesar Chavez has achieved a great deal of success in his work with migrant workers precisely because he comes from that milieu and understands and is understood by those he leads; and he is undeniably a leader.

Ministries differ from community to community and an apostolate of like to like is not a compromise nor a concession. What is needed in many mission villages is a good general practitioner and not a specialist; nor does anyone look down on a good general

⁹ Roland Allen, Missionary Methods: op. cit., p. 106.

¹⁰ Ibid.

practitioner because he is not a specialist. Rahner has already suggested that the training of priests be divided into those who would study what he calls "practical theology" and others who would specialize. But this in a European context would demand different criteria from those of the developing countries. Nor should we think that Europeans and Americans can solve the concrete problems of the Oriental and African churches.

The theology of younger missioners, with this emphasis upon indigenization has only increased the tension between the job description of a mission station or parish as offered to them and the role of a missionary as they see it. They often come with a good grasp of Scripture and theology for which there is little outlet or need at the village level. If they have a secular specialty this is often wasted or ignored. By putting heart specialists in first-aid stations and round pegs into square holes the principle of subsidiarity is shattered and the mission of the Church suffers because of it.

It is becoming more and more apparent that the personal and corporate talents of missionaries and mission societies have been tracked by pastoral demands which should be met by those who possess that charism and because of this, there is a tremendous sense of frustration. The solace of knowing one is doing what is commanded is no solace at all. No one wants to be trained as a heart specialist and then find that he will never operate — or that the main duties of his ministry will be in applying spiritual bandaids. If first aid men are needed and wanted (and they are) then the Church should train medics — not specialists. If the Church does not produce a specialist after years of post-graduate training there is something wrong with that training — it should be shortened, or improved and utilized. Performing the role of a foreign pastor is obviously not the fulfillment of a missionary vocation.

MISSIONARY AND PASTOR

Just as the Church should be a symbol of unity in the world, so the pastor should be the center of unity in a community. It is not his only role, but it should be his main role. As center of unity and animator of the life of the Church he must nourish and promote faith, love, priesthood and apostolicity.

¹¹ Karl Rahner, "The Student of Theology: The Problems of His Training Today," in *Mission and Grace*, Vol. II (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964), pp. 146-181.

But rather than give any personal ideas of what a pastor, as he is called, should be, it would seem better to give more attention to the qualifications demanded of him by the Apostolic Church:

The president must have an impeccable character. He must not have been married more than once, and he must be temperate, discreet and courteous, hospitable and a good teacher; not a heavy drinker, nor hot tempered, but kind and peaceable. He must not be a lover of money. He must be a man who manages his own family well and brings his children up to obey him and be well behaved: how can a man who does not understand how to manage his own family have responsibility for the Church of God? He should not be a new convert in case pride might turn his head... It is also necessary that people outside the Church speak well of him (1 Tim. 3:2-7).

What should be observed here is that many qualities which are considered important for a pastor Paul himself does not seem to have fulfilled. For as an apostle and missionary, his task was to form and oversee these centers of unity, but not to become a local pastor himself.

John Meier, in a recent study on the terms episcopoi and presbyteroi in the Pastoral Epistles, concludes that while the episcopoi formed a college within the college of the presbyteroi, in Titus, the church is so young that the roles are not yet clearly differentiated. This study could also serve as a model for the emerging Christian communities of Mindanao, led by kaabags and kapylia presidents. It is the opinion of many Filipino priests there, that such a collegial presbyteral structure is better suited to Filipino culture than the placing of all authority in a single community leader.12 Fr. Schillebeeckx further illuminates the pastoral practice of the early church which has its parallels in the charismatic and base communities we have described:

Offices of the church which arose freely and charismatically were thus in principle regarded as acceptable by the Christian community, but they had to prove their right to exist in the light of the apostolic criteria and to establish this with the community by their authenticity and meaningfulness. In this way, the 'firstborn' of a newly founded community often appeared spontaneously as official leaders of the community and it is frequently impossible to find any historical evidence proving that an imposition of hands took place. This is a charismatic fact which Paul simply accepted. (see especially 1 Cor. 16:15-16, Rom. 16:5 can also be seen in this perspective). (italics mine) 13

¹² John Meier, "Presbyteros in the Pastoral Epistles," The Catholic

Biblical Quarterly 35, 1973. pp. 323-345.

13 Edward Schillebeeckx, The Mission of the Church (London: Sheed and Wrad, 1973) pp. 214-215.

STATEMENTS FROM THE MISSIONS

Lest one think that this type of theologizing is merely the rationalization of theologians and scripture scholars, we would like to cite a few statements from the missions.

220 Priests to the Episcopal Conference of Chile

Two types of ministries appear to be clearly enough indicated in all this development of the primitive Church; the ministry of the traveling apostle, and the ministry within the Church community.

For the Church to be more of the people we feel that three things are necessary:

— that the ministers are generated in the community itself: that they really arise from this part of the people of God.

— that the services now accumulated in a sole minister-priest be redistributed among various men; that the ministers be multiplied and diversified.

— that the requirements and the formation differ in regard to those who are called.

With this focus, the 'for what' and 'why' of our presence here would be seen; to collaborate with Chilean priests in the creation of communities, and with them maintain the charisms and services that arises in them.

The entire face of the Church will change on the day that this variety of ministries for married men is accepted. Joined with other laymen, and through their deep roots in society, they will enable the waves of the world to enter continually into th interior of the Church. This will keep her more in a state of vigilance and adaptation in the changing reality.

(A letter sent to the Episcopal Conference of Chile in August, 1967, signed by 220 priests from all the dioceses of Chile). 14

Panama

It is quite conceivable then that in the future such a local community will have its own celebrators of the Eucharist (call him the president or the eucharistizer or the celebrator or what have you). Indeed, we in Panama have seen the beginning of such a phenomenon, the emergence of th charism of leadership and commitment within the small group. Thus a mature married man could be designated by the community to oreceive orders to preside at the Eucharist — without ceasing to be a layman dedicated to work and family. (Leo T. Mahon, director of the Panama Pastoral Institute). 15

Indonesia

Cardinal Darmajuwana of Semarang, Indonesia would like to ordain the village heads or other prominent Catholics in areas lacking priests. In some Indonesian areas, like West Irian, Bor-

15 Leo T. Mahon, Philip Berryman, An Article entitled Priesthood,

Panama, Nov. 18, 1967.

^{14 220} Priests from all the dioceses of Chile, "A Letter sent to the Episcopal Conference of Chile in August 1967," National Catholic Reporter, Jan. 31, 1968.

neo, Sumatra and Flores we ought to be able to ordain a Catholic village head or any other prominent Catholic, with the consent of his family and the Catholics of his village. It might be a married man. About married deacons the cardinal said: 'A deacon is no essential help. What a deacon can do, lay people are already doing in the Archdiocese of Semerang.16

Africa

Problem: The rural parishes of Tanzania are foreign in almost everything but membership and so are immature. Suggested solution: Neighborhood communities of Christians under their own leaders and married peasant priests; wide autonomy to decide for themselves what Christian life and worship mean to them. 17

Peru

Since in the Prelature of Juli with its 400,000 inhabitants dispersed in more than a thousand communities, we have 24 priests of whom only 3 are natives of the country, we are greatly concerned about the native priesthood of this ecclesiastical jurisdiction. After much thorough study of the problem of the paucity of priests during the 25 years I have lived in the altiplano, I, with the priests, catechists, religious and lay persons, who live near me, have arrived at some conclusions and proposals pertinent to this urgent problem which I wish to express in the following form:

- 1) The necessity of increasing the number of priests.
- 2) The necessity that the priests be native priests of the country.
- 3) Celibacy: an obstacle to having native priests and an impossibility for them.
- After many years of arduous and difficult efforts formation of worthy native priests has been found impossible.
- 5) Conclusion: Celibacy was and is a great obstacle to the pastoral apostolate.
- 6) Suggestion and positive proposal for this region: to have a priesthood in which celibacy is optional, i.e., priesthood which can be either celibate or married.
- 7) Proof and indications that such a priesthood can bring about very good results.
- 8) Formation of celibate priests and married priests. (From a Letter to Paul VI, from Bishop Edward Fedders, Bishop of the Prelature of Juli, Peru).

Taiwan

According to a recent survey conducted by the Maryknoll Fathers, The Asian Parish: Past, Present and Future, Taiwan Region, conversions average one adult per full time apostle per year. as late as 1972, 9/10ths of the Maryknoll budget was poured into

Cardinal Darmajuwana, quoted by Robert Nowell in Ministry of Service, (London: Burnes and Oates, 1968) p. 67.
 Daniel D. Zwack, in Worship Vol. 43, No. 7, Sept. 1969 p. 424.

two "Maryknoll dioceses" simply to keep the present Western structured pastoral operation afloat. 18

MISSION PRINCIPLES

Based on what has been said above, summarizing Roland Allen and many contemporary Catholic theologians and missiologists, this paper attempts to enunciate a few mission principles which may prove fruitful for theological reflexion and praxis.

- 1. The Gospel has scarcely been heard by two billion human beings yet the Church clings to an ecclesiastical structure and discipline which practically guarantees that they will never hear it.
- 2. As with St. Paul, it is the duty of a missioner to establish centers of Christian life without becoming, himself, the leader of the community, and without making these communities dependent on him but, rather, upon the power of the risen Christ and His Spirit in the members of the community.
- These communities should be significant (sign makers) in important places from which the light of the Gospel can spread.
- These communities should be self-supporting centers, which means that they supply their own ministers as well as support them.
- Bishops and missionaries should not be as concerned with establishing parishes in the legal sense, as with establishing communities. There are parishes which are not communities

¹⁸ I cannot help but express a certain regret that present Maryknoll operations, especially in Taiwan where I served for six years, do not reflect missionary priorities but pastoral priorities *De facto*, the Church there is not expanding but, perhaps diminishing in proportion to the total population. Since our records show that up to 1972 practically nothing was spent for pre-evangelization or pre-evangelization projects, the bulk of our funds went to minister to the 61,000 Ctaholics in the "maryknoll" dioceses.

None of our priests, sisters or catechists were paid for by local support and this could have been partially justified if we were training these local communities in the direction of self support and self leadership, but such was not the case.

Are we not then, creating needs which are not essential to the life and growth of the Christian community, and very costly ones at that, and at the same time that we are denying communities that which is essential to their life, their growth and expansion?

The role of *foreign pastor* has so stunted the mobility, flexibility and apostolic creativity of mission societies that their corporate presence is practically indistinguishable from that of a diocesan priesthood.

This is not meant to de-emphasize or depreciate the need for local pastors or the important and necessary role which is theirs. Rather it is to emphasize the distinction between missionary and pastor, a distinction which has become blurred and clouded in current missiological praxis.

- and communities which are not parishes but Christian communities are what is wanted, and often wanting.
- 6. It is possible and often desirable for a missioner to have a job in the secular field. Paul was a tent maker and rather proud of the fact. Because a father has a job does not make him any less a father; most fathers do have jobs, nor does this make them "part time" fathers. Missioners, priests, sisters and catechists could have part-time jobs.
- 7. The heads of Christian communities (priests or bishops) should have the power to out and extend themselves by forming new communities and ordaining new leaders (priests and bishops).
- 8. The missioner should be freed to give his main attention to the establishment and formation of new communities and not become a local pastor himself.
- If preaching the Word is primary (because conversion is a gift but missionaries must sow the seed) then evangelization and not pastoral work should be the primary concern of missionary congregations.
- 10. Pre-evangelization is obviously a preliminary step to conversion and missioners should be sensitive to the truly human and cultural values they encounter and promote them whenever possible. Otherwise, evangelization is reduced to proselytizing.
- 11. The missioner should be a sign of the universal great Church to the local churches and not an ecclesiastical colonizer as he often appears.
- 12. A missioner should not do for the local church what the local church can do for itself; i.e., supply its own leaders and support them, either directly or indirectly. Local leaders can hold a secular job.
- 13. A church which does not supply its own leadership and support is a weak church. It is not that local leaders do not exist, it is that the universal church refuses to recognize them, to utilize them and to ordain them.
- 14. The pearl of great price, the treasure which a missioner comes to announce is, purely and simply, the Good News of Jesus Christ and not western philosophical and theological systems and disciplines.
- 15. Missioners come to impart Gospel values and not western value systems based on cultural backgrounds. For example, heavy drinking is mentioned in all the Pastoral Epistles as a quality which would render a man unacceptable for leadership in the Christian community while marriage is specifically allowed. Western value judgements both in discipline and practice tend to be the opposite. The emphasis upon private morality, appeals to Roman law in moral theology applied to the church universally, and the identification of perennial philosophy with Western philosophy also exhibit a cultural bias which must be corrected.

- 16. The task of a foreign missioner, says a prominent Filipino theologian, is "To be, beget and to be gone." It might be better said, "to be, to beget and to become" not foreign pastors, administrators or dominators, but missionary brothers.
- 17. Missioners, especially those coming from the First World, have a duty and obligation to sharpen the consciences of their fellow nationals as regards their exploitation of the Third World.
- 18. Missioners should be willing to cooperate in any movement (economic, social, political, etc.) which furthers the solidarity of man in universal brotherhood, in personalized love and growth for the future.
- 19. The Kingdom is greater than the Church and we should seek out those who are promoting its values of peace, joy, love and brotherhood and welcome them as Christ welcomed the Centurion and praised the Good Samaritan.
- 20. The divine mission of the Church takes precedence over the human ecclesiastical discipline and structure of the Church and where discipline and structure do not help but hinder the divine mission, that discipline and structure must be changed.
- 21. Extreme care must be taken to preserve the Tradition and Faith which has been handed down to the Church from Christ and the apostles, but this Tradition must be distinguished from "traditions".
- 22. First, there are Gospel Traditions (ie., the faith and credo of the Church) and these must be preserved at all costs. Secondly, there are ecclesial traditions which, while consonant with the Gospel, flourished in a certain culture and place during a certain time. These traditions (e.g. rites, practices, devotions, etc.) can and often must change. Thirdly, there are ecclesiastical "traditions" which are not consonant with the Gospel and should never be or have been (e.g. the Inquisition, patranato systems in China, South America etc.) These levels of Tradition, traditions and "tradition" must be clearly distinguished.
- 23. The Gospel must be preached as a Gospel of liberation from sin, death, and law and fear, and not a gospel of imposition of laws through fear. For, love casts out fear and perfect love casts out all fear.
- 24. There is a difference between a Christian leader and a celibate or vowed religious. Not all celibates and religious are leaders, nor are all Christian leaders celibate. What every Christian community needs essentially for its ecclesial existence is Christian leaders.
- 25. In the early Church, preaching of the Word was primary. Sacramentalism has developed to a point where a catechist or lay leader is allowed to preach the Word, but the administration of the sacraments is reserved to the ordained minister.

But one can learn to administer the Sacraments in a week. whereas solid preaching normally demands years of training practice. The present priorities are not Gospel priorities and should be reversed. If a man is good enough to preach, he is good enough to be ordained. But much more should be done to improve the quality and raise the standards of preaching.

- 26. The preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments are essential to any Christian community. A baptized Christian has a divine right to the Sacraments. This should not be denied him because a human ecclesiastical discipline will not allow local married Christian leaders to be truly the leaders of their Christian communities.
- 27. The Church should not absolutize what is relative (i.e., present ecclesiastical discipline) at the expense of relativizing what is the divine right of a baptized Christian (i.e., the right to the frequent reception of the Sacraments by an adequate indigenous clergy).
- 28. Certainly most missioners see their pastoral role as more than "foreign pastor", for it is not the ideal role for a missioner. If there were enough foreign priests to staff every barrio and village in the world, it would still be a weak colonial church, and certainly not indigenous. On the other hand, the very presence of "missioners" as pastors often prevents local leadership from developing. At the same time, missionary work among the non-Christians, workers, students, underprivileged, etc. is neglected for lack of men and funds.
- 29. The Church should not make an appeal to young men to become missionaries and evangelizers if what it really seeks is personnel to staff existing parishes due to a shortage of local clergy.
- 30. The pastoral problems of a local bishop are often precisely that — pastoral problems and not missionary or evangelical problems. It is not the duty, obligation or charism of missionary societies to fulfill these pastoral roles. Missionaries will not solve the problems of the local Church by fulfilling somebody else's vocation.
- 31. Missioners should not allow themselves to be trapped by the "choke law" (i.e. the practice of sending a missioner to convert and form a community of Christians and then to remain as their pastor) which ties up the missionary for life in a purely pastoral role.
- 32. It does not seem either theologically or practically feasible to continue to convert individual Christians to the faith and to deny them the adequate reception of the Sacraments by an indigenous clergy, simply because the Church refuses to ordain the local married leaders.
- 33. A Filipino president once said that he would rather see the Philippines run like hell by Filipinos than like heaven by Americans - Indigenous blunders are always better than imported ones.

A FINAL REFLECTION

It is both puzzling and depressing to find local hierarchies and the great Church remaining passive and unresponsive to these pastoral options. Puzzling, because they have a clear and solid basis in the New Testament, and involve none of the ambiguities which, for example, surround the birth control issue. Depressing, because while we, the clergy sit piously by with folded hands lamenting the lack of "vocations" (our definition, not that of the New Testament), millions are deprived or denied adequate pastoral care, preaching and the Eucharist. The divine mission of the Church is hindered and the growth of the Church stunted in favor of a human ecclesiastical discipline.

It is reassuring and hopeful to find an ever growing number of major Catholic theologians articulating more effective pastoral and missionary options for the future and demanding that they be implemented **now**.

Rahner, Congar, Hastings, Richards, and Hillman have stated the case well. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that Roland Allen said it first, and in many ways he said it better. But then he was only echoing the New Testament which said it best, especially in the Pastoral Epistles.

THE SECOND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

A Commentary

By

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

"Look with favor on your Church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself." With these words the Church addresses the heavenly Father in the third Eucharistic Prayer. Since the eucharist is the memorial of Jesus' death and resurrection it may be called "the sacrifice of reconciliation", the sacrifice that made our peace with the Father.

Two eucharistic prayers, recently introduced on an experimental basis for a period of three years, were given the theme of "reconciliation." Now that the Holy Year of Reconciliation is over they may be used in Masses in which the theme of penance and reconciliation predominate, i.e., preferably during Lent.

The text of the present eucharistic prayer, composed in simple language, is a theological density which calls for an introduction and explanation; so that, when a priest uses it with a Christian community, it may become a true proclamation of God's greatest work: through Christ the Father reconciled us to himself. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:18-21).

The Preface

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we praise and thank you through Jesus Christ our Lord for your presence and action in the world. In the midst of conflict and division, we know it is you who turn our minds to thoughts of peace. Your Spirit changes our hearts: enemies begin to speak to one another; those who were estranged join hands in friendship, and nations seek the way of peace together.

Your Spirit is at work
when understanding puts an end to strife,
when hatred is quenched by mercy,
and vengeance gives way to forgiveness.
For this we should never cease
to thank and praise you.

We join with all the choirs of heaven as they sing for ever to your glory: Holy, Holy, holy Lord...

Right at the beginning the — unchanging — preface states what happens fundamentally in each eucharistic prayer: thanksgiving and praise to the Father through Jesus Christ. All liturgical families and rites take as their theme of thanksgiving and praise the history of salvation in general, and the work of salvation through Jesus Christ in particular.

Eucharistic prayers used by oriental rites, but also texts of former occidental liturgies (Gallican and old Spanish rites) have often also a cosmological part in their eucharistic prayers. They praise the Father for the creation of the universe, seeing the world as the stage where the history of salvation unfolds. The Father made all things through and for Christ (Col 1:16). Thus the work of creation and salvation is seen together.

The post-conciliar reform of the Liturgy was influenced by this more comprehensive view. The preface of the fourth eucharistic prayer — which never changes — addresses the Father: "You have created all things to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light." This thought is taken up in the section after the Sanctus where it leads to the strictly soteriological part of thanksgiving: "You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world..."

The preface of the present eucharistic prayer has a different, a more existential approach. A look into today's news media shows us that God seems to be absent from his creation. We may read one of our dailies, listen for hours to a radio station, or sit a whole evening in front of a television set, and never, even once encounter the word "God." God seems to be absent from his world; he does not only seem to be a "hidden God". In view of this experience of ours the act of thanksgiving for God's "presence and action in the world" is a true profession of faith.

Every day we are confronted by sin: by our own and those of others. We are ever so often affected by misunderstandings and sometimes also by malice which lead so easily to separations, divi-

sions, enmities and hostilities among individuals, groups and whole nations.

At the same time we encounter human efforts to overcome these conflicts. In these efforts to restore peace and understanding, to bring people to reconciliation, the preface sees God, especially his Spirit at work. For this the preface thanks the Father.

What has this to do with Christ's saving work in the history of salvation? Very much! We are aware today that even before man consciously encounters Jesus Christ, he is under the influence of God's universal, salvific will of redemption (supernatural existential). Without man being aware of it, God offers his grace, the grace merited by his Son Jesus Christ. Even where people do not know it, when "enemies begin to speak to one another," when "those who are estranged join hands in friendship," when "nations seek the way to peace together" it is the Spirit, the fruit of Christ's redemption, who changes their hearts and turns their minds to peace and reconciliation.

Internal and external forgiveness, restoration of peace, are here not only presented as facts of daily, human experience; they are explained and gratefully acknowledged in the light of faith: they are gifts of the One "from whom every good gift comes" (Jas 1:17). The Spirit of love and peace is the moving force behind every peace treaty. This insight should lead to thanksgiving here and now at Mass, in the thanksgiving in which "we are most closely united to the worshiping Church in heaven" (Const. on the Lit., art. 50), to the angels and the saints.

The Post-Sanctus

God of power and might,

who comes in your name.

He is the Word that brings salvation.

He is the hand you stretch out to sinners.

He is the way that leads to your peace.

God our Father,

we had wandered far from you,

but through your Son you have brought us back.

You gave him up to death

so that we might turn again to you

and find our way to one another.

we praise you through your Son, Jesus Christ,

With the expression "God of power and might", taken from the Sanctus, the soteriological part of the eucharistic prayer begins. The three forms of human reconciliation mentioned in the preface —

that men begin to speak again to one another, that they join hands again, that they seek the way of peace — are used in the Post-Sanctus to describe God's saying activity through Jesus Christ who comes in the Father's name. God has reconciled us with himself through Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:18). Christ is, therefore, the saving Word of God; he is God's outstretched hand; he is the way to peace.

Why had Christ to be active in this way in human history? Mankind had turned away from God, had separated itself from its creator and had got lost like erring sheep that strayed from the flock. Of its own power it could not find the way back. Someone had to seek it; someone had to bring it back to the fold. This was the deed of Christ, the Good Shepherd who, sent by the Father, gave his life for the sheep and brought them back to the Father's fold. In doing so Christ paved the way that mankind had to walk in the future: a way that leads to God and one's fellowmen. He suffered for us, leaving us an example that we "should follow in his steps" (1 Pt 2:21). He is not only the Good Shepherd, but — as the preface had stated — also the way that leads to God and our fellowmen.

Pre-Consecratory Epiclesis

Therefore we celebrate the reconciliation Christ has gained for us. We ask you to sanctify these gifts by the power of your Spirit, as we fulfil your Son's command.

Christ went the way of the cross where he reconciled man with the Father and with one another. This sacrifice of reconciliation is not to be a thing of the past. It has to be effective still today. It has to bring about a future. For this reason we celebrate the reconciliation Christ has gained for us. We know that "each time we offer this memorial sacrifice, the work of our redemption is accomplished" (Prayer over the Gifts, Mass of the Lord's Supper; and oftener). In doing so we also fulfil his command (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24 f).

It is always difficult to connect the pre-consecratory epiclesis in an organic, coherent manner with the preceding context. Unfortunately, the petition for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the gifts to make them holy does not follow very convincingly from the preceding text of the Post-Sanctus. But it is not so glaring that the thought that Christ's body and blood are gifts of reconciliation, sanctified by the Spirit, would be out of place.

Institution Narrative

While he was at supper on the night before he died for us, he took bread in his hands, and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you.

At the end of the meal he took the cup.
Again he praised you for your goodness,
gave the cup to his disciples, 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.
Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim . . .

The introduction to the words of Christ's self-giving to the Father states in both the Latin and the original German version of the eucharistic prayer that Jesus was about "to give his life to liberate us" when he instituted the eucharist. Liberation through Christ and his saving work is a thought that is expressed in the New Testament. The Son was to make us free (cf. Jn 8:36). We have been set free from sin (cf. Rom 6:18) and the Jewish law. According to the epistle to the Hebrews this liberation is intimately connected with Jesus' death which was to destroy the power of the devil "and to deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (2:14 f).

It is obvious from the context — the introduction to the institution narrative — that this liberation is not a merely socio-economic process, as it is sometimes presented in a one-sided, popularizing form of liberation theology. Were the English translators afraid that the text could be misunderstood in this sense? It is a pity that this precious biblical thought has been omitted in the provisional translation.

The introduction to the words over the chalice stress the fact that Christ's words of self-surrender are part of the whole eucharistic prayer. They may not be considered as isolated words of consecration; they are, as part of the eucharistic prayer, words of thanks and praise: "Again he praised you for your goodness." The "you"

addresses the Father to whom the whole eucharistic prayer is directed, from th introductory dialogue to the solemn doxology and the people's consenting "Amen".

Anamnesis-Oblation

Lord our God your Son has entrusted to us this pledge of his love. We celebrate the memory of his death and resurrection and bring you the gift you have given us, the sacrifice of reconciliation. Therefore, we ask you, Father, to accept us, together with your Son.

At the Last Supper the Lord instituted the eucharist as a memorial of everything that the Father has done through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, who "wished to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection" (Const. on the Lit., art. 47).

The eucharistic memorial is not a mere calling to mind of the past events of Christ's saving deeds. It is more. The investigation into the concept "memorial", as found in the Old Testament and in Jewish tradition has shown that in their Paschal celebration the Jews lived through the experience of a past event (exodus) which contained at the same time the promise of its consummation at the end of time. They experienced the effects of the historical exodusevent and the living reality of God's love that it enshrines. But the exodusevent no longer exists, except in its effect and in the divine source of its power. The "memorial" celebration cannot bring the Jews into the presence of the event itself.

The eucharist as memorial celebration is profoundly different. It brings those who celebrate it into the presence of the Christ-event itself; into the presence of Christ the Priest and the Victim. In the eucharistic celebration Christ does not only make present the power of his sacrifice; he is present as his sacrifice in person. The eucharistic sacrifice is, therefore, a unique kind of memorial, involving a unique kind of personal presence.

Christ becomes present as his sacrifice in person; this is "the sacrifice of reconciliation." In baptism we have been incorporated into Christ, and have been consecrated to a priestly life in Christ. This priestly life reaches its highest point here in the eucharistic celebration where we are inserted into Christ's self-offering. Therefore, we here ask the Father "to accept us together with" his Son. This is both a privilege and a task. "Christ's followers... by offer-

ing the immaculate victim... should learn to offer themselves through Christ the Mediator; they should be drawn day by day into a more perfect union with God and with each other so that finally God may be all in all" (Const. on the Lit., art. 48).

Communion Epiclesis

Fill us with his Spirit through our sharing in this meal.

May he take away all that divides us.

May this Spirit keep us always in communion with N., our pope, N., our bishop, with all the bishops and all your people.

Father, make your Church throughout the world a sign of unity and an instrument of your peace.

In the local Christian assembly Christians encounter the glorified Christ as the giver of the Spirit, so that it becomes the place "where the Spirit abounds" (Hippolytus, The Treatise of the Apostolic Tradition, ed. by G. Dix- H. Chadwick (London: 1968), p. 58). The most intimate form of encounter with the Christ who breathes forth the Spirit is holy communion. This insight led at an early time to the insertion of a petition in eucharistic prayers that the union of love among Christians may be ever more strengthened by the grace of the Spirit when the participants receive holy communion.

Since the eucharist is the "sign of unity" and "the bond of charity" the congregation that celebrates the eucharist here and now is united with the whole Church, all over the earth. It is therefore essential for any Christian community celebrating the Lord's Supper to affirm publicly in the eucharistic prayer that it is one and united with the whole Church. It is appropriate that a eucharistic prayer with the theme of reconciliation asks that the Church—which Vatican II called several times a "sacrament" — may be for the world not only a sign, but also an effective instrument of reconciliation that brings about the "peace of God which passes all understanding" (Phil 4:7).

The second part of the previous prayer is not an intercession for the Church; it is a petition that the Church may become ever more fully and effectively ready to continue the work of her Founder who had come "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20).

Communion of Saints .

You have gathered us here around the table of your Son,

in fellowship with the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the saints.

In that world where the fulness of your peace will be revealed, gather people of every race, language, and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet with Jesus Christ the Lord.

Through him . . .

Gathered around the table of the Lord, the local assembly is one with the other local churches on earth. Not only that. All who belong to Christ, also the saints in heaven, are associated with them. The union of the local community with the saints in heaven "is not in the least interrupted." As a matter of fact, the saints "lend nobility to the worship which the Church offers on earth" (Const. on the Church, art. 49).

The Church is by nature missionary. It cannot remain complacent in view of the fact that many do not yet know Christ. All men are destined "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). They have to be called to the eternal banquet. When the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Pt 3:13) have been revealed, when God through Christ has reconciled to himself all things, when the fulness of peace will have been established (cf. Col 1:20), then peoples of all tribes and tongues and nations (cf. Apoc 5:9) are to form the kingdom where the Father will be "everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:28). Then will be formed the "classless society" where people who now belong to different "ways of life" will live in love and peace. This section of the eucharistic prayer intercedes that this may come to pass.

In this kingdom, in the fullest sense, all honor and glory will be given to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The eucharistic celebration and holy communion aim at bringing about this full unity of God's People with the Father through Jesus Christ (Const. on the Church, art. 11).

COMMUNICATION

ON BERNARD HARING

Dear Editor:

Father Bernard Haring writes a column in a well known italian magazine. In a recent issue, just before the italian elections, he has chosen to criticize the Vatican for threatening with excommunication those who vote for the Communists and their allies.

This is pretty bad but it falls in line with some previous statements of Father Haring. Only recently he criticized the Holy Father for having issued a declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics with several points of which he happened to disagree.

It should not be forgotten either that it was Father Haring who led a group of members of the Study Commission about whom the Holy Father had this to say: "The conclusions at which the Commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by us definitive nor dispense us from personal examination of this serious question; and this also because, within the Commission itself, no full concordance of judgements concerning the moral norms to be proposed had been reached, and above all because certain criteria of solutions had emerged which departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church" (Humanae Vitae, n. 6)

I hope this will prompt us to pray more for good Father Haring and to be very cautious about his views.

BRO. ALDO MONTANO 344 Shaw Blvd. Mandaluyong, Rizal

Dear Bro. Aldo:

I am sure something good can also be said about Father Haring. Let us hope some readers would react to your letter so that we can also see the other side.

Sincerely yours,

FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.

HOMILETICS

by

Fr. Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D.

I. BIBLICAL NOTES

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(September 5, 1976)

First Reading: Isaiah 35: 4-7a Second Reading: James 2: 1-5 Gospel Reading: Mark 7: 31-37

First Reading: A message of encouragement written in Babylonian Exile by an unknown prophet and inserted into the bulk of Isaian prophecies. It depicts the liberation from captivity like another exodus out of Egyptian In figurative language, the prophet describes all Israel as rejoicing, with God coming to her aid as her Savior, mightily vindicating his faithful people. There will be a grand transformation. from first to last, will experience God's saving power. All Israel's ailments will be taken away, and nature herself will be transformed in her The liberation visualized by the prophet foreshadows the spiritual liberation brought by Christ and his manifold blessings. Jesus even refers the passage in the literal sense to his healing activity in Mt. 11:5. Gospel Reading: Jesus' messianic actions prefigure the sacraments he intends to institute, wherein bodily gestures and material things become vehicles of divine favor and healing. In this scene the gestures effect what they symbolize: contact with the ear conveys hearing, contact with the tongue conveys proper speech. These actions together with his looking up to heaven to manifest his special relation with God all point to the messianic era mentioned in Is. 35: 5-6. That explains the extraordinary excitement mentioned at the end of the passage. The privacy of the cure and the command to keep it secret are part of Mark's "messianic secret" which characterized Jesus' careful procedure in revealing his Person in full, lest he be taken for a political demagogue. St. Mark, writing for a Christian audience, intends a Christian nuance in his choice of words. Jesus, the great Healer, enables those who accept him to hear the Good News and with a new tongue to proclaim it far and wide, once the time has come to make him known. Here in v.34 as in 14:36 Marks retains the Aramaic, giving it a touch of the original.

Second Reading: Jesus was very much at home with the poor and the lowly, although he was the "Lord of glory" (Greek). If we are his faithful followers (believing in him), we will not favor the rich to the detriment of the poor. A fictitious example illustrates what is meant. All such favoritism is foreign to the Christian spirit, and marks one to be like a judge corrupted by bribes. God's choice falls chiefly on the poor and the lowly. They are the ones who in his eyes are truly rich, worthy of inheriting the Kingdom. St. Paul brings this out in 1 Cor. 1:28.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(September 12, 1976)

First Reading: Isaiah 50: 5-9a Second Reading: James 2: 14-18 Gospel Reading: Mark 8: 27-35

First Reading: In this third of a series of four oracles, Deutero-Isaiah describes the "Servant of Yahweh" meekly accepting the violent maltreatment and grave insults inflicted upon him as his God-given portion as a Suffering Savior. But his deep confidence is in God who will pass judgement fairly in his case, and let him come forth victoriously. The Early Church understood Christ the Suffering Savior as the subject of the four oracles (see Mt. 12: 17-21) and the Liturgy intends the same.

Gospel Reading: Mark has made the message of the Suffering Savior very poignant by combining two diverse scenes: the grand confession by Peter that Jesus is the Messiah, and his being sharply reprimanded by Christ for not seeing the Paschal Mystery in its true perspective. It was in the plan of God to reveal himself chiefly in the sufferings of his Son. Peter failed to go along with this plan, so contrary to all expectations. He is called "Satan", that is, adversary, because like the Great Adversary of mankind, his ideas are adverse to the plan of God for man's salvation. Note the lively description of Jesus' words and actions which left a lasting impression on all.

"Son of man" in the mouth of Jesus is a phrase that does not evoke political expectations, yet embraces a twofold content, that of the servant-receptiveness of Ez. 2 and that of messianic transcendence of Dan. 7: 13-14, reflecting his twofold destiny of suffering and glory. Jesus seizes upon the occasion to drive home the requisites for following him: 1) not to prefer one's own whims and desires to that which Jesus offers, even

though it means laying down one's life; 2) willingly embracing the "cross", that is, one's share of sufferings and trials as member of Christ; and 3) following his manner of life and his teachings. You do not do things by halves with Christ. If you enjoy all that this life offers, you lose it for it ends in death. But if you give up everything, even life itself, for the sake of Christ, you will possess Christ forever, and he is Eternal Life.

Second Reading: Faith is our free acceptance of Christ's saving message of love. To be genuine faith, it must be alive with love (Gal. 5:6), and be implemented by living the message of love in works of love toward others. Otherwise it is really no faith at all. Only living faith brings man to eternal blessedness. This is the point of the argument, and the example given by James clearly demonstrates it. Authors are not agreed as to who is objecting to what in v.18. The best sense results if we take both parts of the verse as spoken by the same person, in corroboration of the main thrust of the passage.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (September 19, 1976)

First Reading: Wisdom 2: 12.17-20 Second Reading: James 3: 16 to 4:3

Gospel Reading: Mark 9: 29-36 (Greek: 30-37).

First Reading: Evil men cannot stand the sight of a righteous person, because his life and warnings are a constant reproach to them. So they are ignorant of the fact that God will reward his saints in his own good time, be it in the after-life, in which such evil men do not believe. The author may have a definite person in mind, such as the Teacher of Righteousness whom the Dead Sea Scrolls show to have been a very holy man in the Qumran community. But he eminently foreshadows the Suffering Christ, as the Early Church clearly notes by quoting this passage in Mt. 27: 41-44.

Gospel Reading: For the second time Jesus unfolds for his chosen band the Paschal Mystery in all its stark reality. They fail to accept it; or perhaps they do not want to, because of what it might demand of them. The evangelist now strikingly contrasts the self-immolation of Jesus with the selfish ambitions of the Twelve. Jesus offsets this with the ideal of humble service symbolized in the simplicity and dependence of a child. The strongest motive he can offer is that the service is really done to Jesus himself, living in each human heart. This is borne out by Mt. 25:40: "As long as you did it to one of my least brothers, you did it to me". Worthy of particular note is the endearing scene of Jesus embracing the child.

Second Reading: True wsidom which is God's gift is contrasted with the cunning of the so-called wise of this world. The latter are known for their arrogance, jealousy and endless strife, whereas Christian wisdom. coming from above, blossoms forth in all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Paul has a similar contrast in Gal. 5: 18-22 and we are also reminded of the beatitudes (Mt. 5: 3-10). The adage of v. 18 seems to mean that those who sow peace and live in peace will reap God's rewarding approval. On the contrary, conflicts in the community derive from unbridled passions never under control. Even the prayers of such persons are never heard beause they are not properly motivated to begin with.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(September 26, 1976)

First Reading: Numbers 11: 25-29 Second Reading: James 5: 1-6

Gospel Reading: Mark 9: 38-43, 45, 47-48

First Reading: Unable to bear alone the burden of controlling the entire people, (v. 14), Moses is assured by the Lord that others would share his power of exercising authority and judgment (v. 17). This is the meaning of the Lord's symbolic words of giving others a share in Moses' spirit. By sharing his charismatic gift, his helpers were enabled to "prophecy", that is, to speak in the name of the Lord, and also possibly to break out in ecstatic enthusiasm, to manifest the gift. Nothing was thereby diminished in Moses by others sharing his gift, although that is what Joshua feared. But Moses was only too willing to let others share his authority and powers, a fact that displays his selfless and genuine love for the community. In fact, all charismatic gifts are for the good of the community. Translators are not unanimous as to whether they shared his power permanently or in a transient fashion.

Gospel Reading: Several advices derived from Jesus are grouped together by means of catchwords to assist the memory: 1) Tolerance toward what is good though imperfect. A superb example of the tolerant Lord when there is a question of good works (like exorcism) performed by those whose faith-knowledge is still imperfect. If the work is good, it all accrues to the general good. 2) The value of small deeds: the least act of kindness toward Christ's own will not go unrewarded. 3) The evil of leading astray those who have sincere faith, be they ever so naive and uneducated. It deserves severe punishment. Physical death of violent drowning would be better for such a person than that he continue to be the cause of others losing their faith. 4) Avoidance of the occasions of sin. This advice is not to be understood literally, because that would not

do away with the temptation to sin. Figuratively, a hand or foot or eye can be anything, a person, a place or a thing, that occasions one to sin seriously, though it be someone very near and dear. There is no other thing to do but to cut oneself off from it, rather than lose divine life or friendship with God. A millstone is a large, heavy, round stone used for grinding grain. Gehenna is a deep ravine south of Jerusalem which came to symbolize the lasting torment of the wicked, because of the continuous smoldering of trash and filth in that ravine. Our Lord did not mince his words about the eternity of hell-fire.

Second Reading: A severe castigation of those who abuse their riches. All their wealth will be of no avail in judgment. It will all come to naught, and signal the destruction of its possessors. Crying out loudly against them are all the abuses of social justice they have perpetrated, right and left, on the helpless poor (anawim). On Judgmnt Day the tables are turned: Now it is the wicked rich who are helpless. What they really stored up for themselves is misery, bankruptcy and slaughter!

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (October 3, 1976)

First Reading: Genesis 2: 18-24 Second Reading: Hebrews 2: 9-11

Gospel Reading: Mark 10: 2-16 (shorter: 10: 2-12).

First Reading: The Genesis accounts are woven together from various traditions (the Yahwistic, the Elohistic, the Priestly) which were individually consigned to writing before they were fused into one text as we have it now. Already in 1950 Pius XII states in "Humani Generis" that these chapters (one to eleven) are written in simple and figurative (pictorial) language, containing a deeply salvific message. This kind of writing may be called "myth" if by myth we mean the belief of a people expressed in popular language. Today's reading stems from the Yahwist's account. He is vivid and concrete in presentation, and he depicts God acting like a man. Here he puts forth basic facts about man and woman:

- 1) Man is different from all animals and is superior to them. This is shown by his "naming all the animals" which in Semitic thought implies dominion over them. Moreover, no one is found to be a suitable partner for him.
- 2) Since man is to have dominion over all the animals, their role is to serve him and his purposes.

- 3) The role of woman: man is social by nature, and woman is his Godgiven partner in life, not his slave (v. 18). This is shown by having woman taken from man, and not from the earth as the animals were. That denotes that her make-up is human like the man's. "Woman" is popularly interpreted as "from the man" for the two words sound alike. pular description of woman being taken from the side of man and thus being one with him at the very outset, endeavors to offer a reason for man's strong urge to be one with woman in marriage, but is not a part of the salvific message. No scientific explanation of origins is being given, for the author's orientation is religious, not scientific. Yet he does show that man and woman's origins are God's own special doing, and not that of chance. A "deep sleep" as in Gen. 15: 12 denotes just that. Very relevant today is the equality of human nature in man and woman; yet, a certain dependence is given in 3:16.
- 4) Verse 24 is the theological and inspired reflection of the sacred author. God made man bisexual, and he made all things good. Marriage and the family are divinely established. Emphasized is the unity of monogamous marriage.

Gospel Reading: Though Moses had allowed divorce on certain grounds (Dt. 24:1), Jesus made it clear that such legislation was merely permissive, tolerating an abuse of the Jews who were stubbornly bent on such a procedure. Jesus in clearest terms restored marriage to its pristine purity, referring to God's purpose in creating man male and female (Gen. 1:27), and to the institution of marriage in Gen. 2:24. (Perhaps not all his words are quoted by Mark because in Gen. 2:24 the reason for man's urge for unity with his wife is derived from woman's coming from man in the first place: 2:23). The union of husband and wife is so intimate that it surpasses even that of parents and children. Jesus thereupon solemnly declares marriage to be indissoluble (v.9). The wording is strong. When questioned by the disciples about this, Jesus repeats his statement without any least modification: those who divorce their partner and marry again are adulterers. Neither party is free through divorce.

The brief scene of Jesus with the children is admirable for its vivid description, and it completes the teaching on marriage. The Savior is shown to be most human in his indignation at the disciples' action and his tender love for children, even embracing them. Mark alone mentions both details. Only those with childlike dispositions of total confidence and docility are ready to accept Christ's teaching so that God can fully reign over them.

Second Reading: Jesus in his life of humiliation, climaxing in his passion and death, underwent for a brief while what was below the angelic nature,

but won thereby exaltation above all created existence. God's loving favor willed that he should suffer in behalf of all his brothers. This was fitting because Jesus is the New Israel and he identifies himself with the entire People of God. Through suffering he would bring to perfection those who were weighed down with sin and suffering. He is their Brother who takes all that upon himself.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 10, 1976)

First Reading: Wislom 7: 7-11 Second Reading: Hebrews 4: 12-13

Gospel Reading: Mark 10: 17-30 (shorter: 17-27).

First Reading: Writing in Greek toward the end of Old Testament times, the author of the book of Wisdom uses the well-known literary device of pseudonymn by impersonating Solomon, the wise king of Israel, in order to emphasize what he wants to bring home. In an earnest prayer he begs for divine Wisdom in preference to all that earth could possibly offer, even light itself because it is transient. But in obtaining divine Wisdom all other good things came to him besides. Wisdom here takes on personal characteristics. This was later developed by Paul, and in the fuller revelation of the New Testament it is Christ (1 Cor. 1:24.30). (By extension Wisdom is applied to the person of Mary).

Gospel Message: A scene of contrasts. Treasure in heaven is contrasted with great possessions on earth, and the Master's penetrating look of love with the sad look on the man's face; enthusiasm for the spiritual soon cooling off when faced with demands on one's material goods. Questioned about sharing life eternal, Jesus proposes giving up everything temporal. Instead of joyfully responding to the call of him who alone is the Way and the Life, the man goes his own way dejected.

"Good" in the Jewish mind was mainly an epithet of God, though it was also predicated of the Law. Jesus is not ready at this juncture to reveal his divine nature (which he by no means denies), so he channels the conversation to the Law, yet proposes the renunciation of everything in order to attain the one and only Good: God.

With this invitation to renunciation of earthly goods, the evangelist connects two other words of Jesus, one concerning the difficulty of the rich to possess the one sole Good, and the other concerning the possession of eternal Life by those who renounce all things for Jesus' sake, or for that of

the Good News he proclaims. Since wealth was generally considered the mark of divine favor, the disciples are taken aback at the Master's reverse appraisal of it. But Jesus well knows that riches bring with them strong attachments to the good things of this life with little concern for the things of God, especially his poor and the needy. The camel-needle comparison is meant to be taken in the literal sense to illustrate the impossible. At this the disciples show further dismay. But Jesus assures them that while no amount of money can purchase salvation, God has ways of saving both the rich and the poor alike.

Voluntary renunciation of earthly interests and family ties will be generously rewarded by an infinitely good God in a twofold manner: 1) with spiritual benefits that far outweigh what was sacrificed, as well as multiple spiritual kinship with all who follow Christ, though not without sharing their sufferings; 2) possession of Life that never ends.

Second Reading: These verses continue the warning of the preceeding exhortation against unbelief like that of Israel who did not believe the word of God (v.2), and hence did not profit by it. But the Word of God will profit all those who accept it as the revelation of God which is the Christevent bringing definite salvation. This Word is 1) dynamic and capable of having a powerful effect (v.12); 2) it is all-searching in its purpose, bringing out man's inner aims and intentions, laying bare his real self strikingly expressed by the metaphor of the sharp sword able to go between man's innermost parts) 3) it is all-knowing. The transition in v.13 to the Word of God with personal characteristics is in line with Mark's gospel which equates the Good News with the Christ-event itself. Still later John would call Jesus the Word of God in person: Jn. 1:1; 1:14.

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 17, 1976)

First Reading: Isaiah 53: 10-11 Second Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-16

Gospel Reading: Mark 10: 35-45 (shorter: 42-45)

First Reading: A passage taken from the last of the "Servant Songs" of Deutero-Isaiah, depicting one whom God has singled out to do his will in a most perfect manner without the least resistance. God willed to give him over to great sufferings and even to death, in atonement for the sins of the multitude. He would be the cause of their being saved. Once his mission is accomplished, he shall be greatly rewarded with life, light and bliss, conditions that best describe the life to come. The Early Church

saw clearly in this passage the vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus in behalf of all mankind, and his subsequent victory, though a collective interpretation is not thereby excluded. The Liturgy evidently has Christ in mind.

Gospel Reading: The evangelist does not pass over the character faults of the chosen band of Jesus. Ambition for honor and glory loomed high in the hearts of James and John, but their readiness to pay any price for it shows courage and determination. "To sit at the right and the left" is to aim or the highest places in the kingdom. Jesus had just foretold his dire sufferings. "To drink his cup" and "to be immersed (baptized) in a bath with him" are vivid metaphors expressing suffering (Mk. 14:36; Lk. 12:52; Jn. 18:11). Share his sufferings they will, yet it belongs to the Father to reward with glory as he sees fit. Only after the resurrection is "full authority in heaven and on earth given to Jesus" (Mt. 28: 18).

Reaction to the ambitious petition on the part of the other apostles was to be expected. So Jesus explained to them again the lesson of humble service. His idea of exercising authority is not by power and force, but by humbly serving the needs of the community. In the kingdom, those will be the greatest who have outdone all the others in such service. Such an attitude goes contrary to all that the world holds high in values. But Jesus backs up his attitude with persistent example. St. Luke gives the scene in greater detail in the setting of the last supper (Lk. 22: 24-27). The last verse of today's Gospel-reading stresses this paramount example of Jesus and brings out the atoning character of his sufferings, hearkening back to Is. 53:10-11 as in today's first reading. It may be an added reflection of the Early Church.

Second Reading: Following the preceding exhortation to faithfulness is a brief but poignant exhortation to confidence for which a threefold motive is given: 1) The Son of God himself, our supreme high priest with the Father (see 2: 17), has passed through our life of suffering to the place of rest (see 4:11). 2) He is totally sympathetic toward our weak nature with its sufferings and temptations, for he underwent all that we undergo, including all manner of temptations (Lk. 4:2; 4:13; Hb. 2:18). But in all this he never succumbed, he never sinned. 3) As our great Mediator (high priest) at God's merciful throne, he can win all and everything we need to be victorious, for the Father is propitious because of the Paschal Mystery of his Son.

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 24, 1976)

First Reading: Jeremiah 31: 7-9 Second Reading: Hebrews 5: 1-6 Gospel Reading: Mark 10: 46-52

First Reading: A joyful announcement of deliverance and restoration from the Lord. Mention is made of the "remnant", a theme running throughout Isaiah and other prophets. It refers in this context to those who have survived the divine chastisements, and who, purified by them, turn totally to God to bring to completion his saving designs. Between Yahweh and his people there is a loving father-son relation. As a devoted father, he himself will guide them back and care for them, so that their returning will be like a second Exodus. "Ephraim" stands for all Israel (the Northern tribes) and the prophet foresees restoration also for them, which, however, finds its real fulfilment in Christ and the believing community.

Gospel Reading: As usual the scene is replete with lively details characteristic of Mark. Jericho is the last stop before Jerusalem, the holy City, where Jesus is about to be given a triumphal entry. So he allows himself already now to be proclaimed as Messiah, Son of David. It is a poor, blind beggar who has the courage to do that, despite the loud protestations of the crowd. He comes with great faith, begging to see, above all to see the Son of David, whose compassion he can rely upon. That faith and confidence moved Jesus to grant his request. Once healed, he followed Jesus on the way to the Holy City. The faith and restoration of sight of the poor, blind beggar is in strong contrast to the unbelief of Israel's leaders, and the dullness of understanding of the disciples. It symbolizes that the lowly will be given to see (with the eyes of faith) the Savior of Israel whom the learned and proud fail to recognize.

Second Reading: Taking up again the theme of the high priesthood (see 2:17 and 4:14), the author gives a somewhat detailed description of what a priest is: 1) He is a mediator, taken from men and representing them before God. (This applies eminently to Christ). Representing his fellowmen and identifying himself with them, he must be compassionate with their weaknesses and needs, having experienced his own. (The verb is used only here in the entire Greek bible and means "intelligent sympathy"). His sin-offerings are made to atone for his own sins and those of his people. 2) He does not propel himself into the priesthood but is one who is called, called by God himself (v.4). Though Christ's priesthood was in the author's mind already in the foregoing, he now takes up the calling of Christ as priest explicitly. From Ps. 2:7 he points out that it is God who calls him and from Ps. 110:4 that his eternal priesthood is not of the levitical order but like that of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18).

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 31, 1976)

First Reading: Deuteronomy 6: 2-6 Second Reading: Hebrews 7: 23-28 Gospel Reading: Mark 12: 28b-34

First Reading: A double exhortation to "listen" indicates the importance of the announcements. First of all, there is a promise of long life and temporal prosperity in return for fidelity to the Law. At the outset, such a provision was perhaps the encouragement needed to keep Israel loyal, For a long time, then, temporal blessings were considered tangible evidence of God's favor. But later on, this standpoint was questioned (Job. 21; Ps. 37). Secondly, the keynote of the entire book and the fundamental principle of the whole Law are brought out forcefully. Yahweh has greatly loved Israel, and now he expects a return of love in full: undivided loyalty to Yahweh with the whole man (heart, soul, might), for Yahweh alone is Israel's God. This is covenantal love. It is not to be merely a matter of lip service, but deeply in earnest from the heart. In the course of time, this "greatest of all commandments" (Mk, 12:28) became Israel's foremost prayer. In every household it was daily recited by the father of the family with his entire household. It is called the great "shema" from the opening Hebrew word "shema" which means "listen!". Such a prayer sincerely said could keep the family well aware of its covenantal loyalty.

Gospel Reading: The Rabbis enumerated 617 precepts, 248 commandments and 365 prohibitions. On being questioned which was the greatest of all, Jesus without the slightest hesitation pronounced as the foremost of all, the "verticle" commandment of love of God (Dt. 6:4, today's first reading), but added at once the "horizontal" commandment of love of neighbor taken from Lev. 19:18. Love of neighbor is inseparable from love of God, for he is the image of God. Although "neighbor" is Leviticus 19:18 referred mainly to those belonging to the race of Israel, Jesus clearly gives it a universal meaning in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:36).

The reign of God is not merely the end-event, but is already present in the person of Jesus and his disciples. The scribe's conviction that sincere love of God and neighbor surpasses all merely external works moved Jesus to encourage him to continue his search. At the end of the path he would find what he sought in Jesus himself, by whom both commandments were perfectly observed.

Second Reading: A contrast between the many priests of the Old Covenant who succeeded one another together with their multiple sacrifices, and the one priesthood of Jesus which lasts forever. He is the perpetual "gobetween" for man to reach his Saving God. His sacrifice of himself once

offered is forever present before the Father, pleading, interceding for all his brothers. Thus he is the perpetual Savior for all who come to the Father through him. St. Paul voices the same thought in Rom. 8:34.

There follows in glowing terms a description of Jesus our perfect high priest. He is all-holy as God is all-holy. Sinless is his character and without blemish, as the Lamb of sacrifice (Ex. 12:5). He is far different from the Temple priests on earth. Exalted on high, his sacrifice is lasting in its efficacy. It is God's own Son who is our high priest forever, according to the oath of God himself (v.21). The author endeavors by these words to instill the greatest confidence in his readers, for the salvific work of Christ is not merely something in the past but dynamically present, with Jesus continually pleading for us before the Father.

II. HOMILIES

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE POOR

Sept. 5, 1976: Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The Human Situation: How often it happens that a person of limited means reaches heights of eminence and success because of hard work and determination, almost in spite of the poverty that dogs his steps at every turn. One could mention St. John of the Cross and St. Pius Tenth, both of whom came from families that felt very much the pinch of poverty. Yet both reached the summits, as did many another poor boy or girl upon whom God's favor fell. A little orphan boy in China many years ago was taken in by the missionaries, converted to the faith, became seminarian and priest, and finally was chosen as the first Cardinal of China, His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Tien. God can bring about such marvels.

The Good News: Jesus loved all. There was no partiality in his dealing with men. No single instance in the gospels can be found where Jesus caters to the rich because they are rich. He enjoyed at times the friendship of persons of means, such as Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Joseph of Arimathea. He accepted their invitations (Lk. 14: 1), but their wealth never blurred his judgment, as can be seen by his unmasking their hypocrisy on just such an occasion (Lk. 14: 7-11). He even gently chided Martha for an elaborate preparation of a meal when it was not at all necessary (Lk. 10: 42). To the young man who stated he would follow

Christ wherever he went, Jesus explained that he had nowhere to lay his head, indicating what awaited those who were his close disciples (Mt. 8:20). In his first sermon he quoted the prophet saying that he was sent to bring glad tidings to the poor (Lk. 4:18). When choosing the Twelve who would be with him always, he picked the ordinary working man, such as fishermen, tax-collector and the like. He was at home with the common laborer, having been one himself. His had always been a simple peasant's home, a day-laborer's menu, a carpenter's work-bench. By his own choice he belonged to those whose social condition was not of the wealthy. He never made any attempt to excuse or disguise this fact. He told his followers to eat what was put before them, and undoubtedly he practiced what he preached. Coarse barley bread and dried fish he shared with the rest, and there is never mention of any complaint concerning food, clothing or shelter. Nor do you find him exacting a remuneration for his many healings and other miracles, or asking a salary for his continued instructions. He called the poor in spirit blest, for their aims were on the higher blessings of God's reign.

Toward wealth his attitude was plain and simple: it is an obstacle to God's reigning fully over a man (Lk. 18:24), yet he added that God could accomplish all things. For anyone who desired to follow him in close companionship he demanded that they imitate him in total surrender of earthly possessions (Mt. 19:16f). Wealth itself had no value for him as seen from the praise accorded to the widow who gave all she had with her—little coin (Lk. 21: 1-4). How earnestly he advised his followers to lay up treasures in heaven where the moth could not consume nor the rust corrode, nor thieves break in and steal (Mt. 6:19). Jesus loved the poor. God was so near to them in their need and in their helplessness, promising to give them full reward of eternal life, once this exile was over. How well the first Christians learned the lesson of the Master is evident from the Acts of the Apostles where they sold all things and brought them to the Apostles for the common good (2:44f).

Our Response: Wealth may afford comfort and ease, but the Lord's words and example ought to make everyone wary of puttiing one's trust in earthly possessions. The real treasures of a man are within. If, on the contrary, the pinch of poverty is felt because of the constantly increasing food prices, high cost of living, and similar demands, we can feel more at home with Christ "who made himself poor though he was rich, so that we might become rich by his poverty" (2 Cor. 8: 9). St. James' word offers strength and consolation: "God chose those who are poor in the eyes of the world, to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom he promised to those who love him".

NECESSARY CORRECTION

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 12, 1976)

The Human Situation: Stalin, who led communist Russia for many years, was an altar-boy in his youth and later a seminarian. The story is told that at one time he received a well-deserved rebuke from his superior, but was unwilling to take the correction. He left the seminary. Would he have turned out the way he did, had he taken the correction humbly, and learned by it?

The Good News: "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is an old adage born of experience and proved again and again by fact. Today parents are often reluctant to correct their children when they stand in need of correction, either because they are a victim of today's permissiveness, or because they fear to lose the love and affection of their offspring. Teachers condone what ought not be condoned but needs to be corrected, because they think they will lose the good will of their students. The Lord acted differently and he is the Master Guide.

It was the will of the heavenly Father to redeem mankind by the sufferings and death of his Son. In no better way could he manifest his great love. Jesus Crucified is the way he chose to prove to the world that he is a God of immense love, sacrificing his own Son, giving him up to such torments out of love for men. But the Apostles found a suffering Messiah repugnant, and a stumbling block to their pre-conceived notions of a glorious Messiah-Conqueror. Peter even took it upon himself to object what Jesus had just foretold about his passion and death. monstrated with Jesus saying that such things would never happen to him! But the Lord sharply rebuked Peter. He called him by an undesirable name, namely, Satan, the arch-enemy of Jesus. And this, right after Peter had acknowledged him as Messiah-King in the name of all the others. Jesus not only called Peter Satan, which meant that he is entirely adverse to the Father's saving plan, sharing the very ideas of Satan himself, but he orders him out of his sight, plainly telling him that his thoughts were farthest from the thoughts of God. Jesus found it necessary to correct Peter's attitudes and views, and correct them bluntly, sharply and publicly in front of all the others, knowing that such wrong ideas had to be correctly promptly if Peter was to be the leader and guide of others.

Another correction was dealt by Jesus to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, though they were very close to Jesus and had shared his special confidences. When the little group was proceeding toward Jerusalem they had to pass through the country of the Samaritans. Anyone who was a Jew and on his way to Jerusalem, the Jewish capital, was no friend of the Samaritans, and they prevented the disciples from passing through. James and John were highly indignant and asked the Lord,

"Lord, would you not have us call down fire from heaven to destroy them"? But Jesus turned toward them only to reprimand them (Lk. 9:55). His was not the spirit of violence and destruction, but of mercy, understanding and for bearance. The disciples had to learn that, for in later life they would often be repelled and persecuted for his sake. Correction was in order, and correction was given.

Still another time Jesus upraided the disciples when the mothers were bringing the little children to have Jesus bless them. The disciples scolded the mothers for they thought the Master had no time for amenities. But Jesus became indignant when he noticed it and told the disciples not to hinder the children. He then embraced them one by one and placed his hands on them in blessing (Mk. 10: 13-16). A child was the symbol of the very dispositions he wanted in his disciples: simplicity, dependence, confidence. How often he would put a child in their midst and warn his disciples that they had to change and become childlike if they wanted to enter the kingdom (Mt. 18: 2-3)!

Ordinarily, Jesus endeavored to change men's attitudes and ideas by giving motivation, like in the beatitudes (Mt. 5: 3-12) and by gentle persuasion, as often in the sermon on the mount (Mt. 5-7), but he never evaded the issue when he felt that correction was needed. He gave it clearly and promptly. Today's guidance counsellors can learn much from the Savior of men.

Our Response: In the Book of Proverbs we read: "He who loves correction loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid." (12:1). And again: "A wise son loves correction, but the senseless one heeds no rebuke" (13: 1). Our age of permissiveness does well to heed these admontions of the word of God and learn again from the example of the Master. The purpose of letting the young find their way was to make them reliable, persons who could stand on their own feet and make their own decisions. But the past ten years have shown that guidance and correction are needed by youth if these goals are to be reached. Let parents, instructors and teachers give this much-needed guidance, coupled with proper correction whenever necessary. In due time it will be appreciated.

AMBITION DIRECTED

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time: (September 19, 1976)

The Human Situation: Many a man has one sole ambition: to make a large amount of money so as to live the rest of his life comfortably and bequeath to his children a splendid inheritance. Others make every effort to reach top government positions, or in their business firms. Still others leave nothing unturned to be a successful movie star or sportsman or athlete. All their energy goes into that one ambition.

The Good News: Our Blessed Lord had also one sole ambition: to do the will of his heavenly Father in every respect and thus win for all men who would receive him the Supreme Gift of God, the Holy Spirit of Divine Love. All his energy went in that direction. He knew only too well that the Gift of the Spirit would enable man to perfect his human personality in unsurmised dimensions, and to live his divine sonship fully with splendor for an eternity. But he also knew that it would cost him everything he had and this he gladly gave. It cost him the privations of early childhood, the hard labor for decades at the carpenter's bench, the strenuous journeys preaching the word of God and healing all manner of diseases, and finally the horrible sufferings of the Cross. Yet, he attained his ambition. He never swerved from that sole ambition of seeing the Father's will in everything that happened to him and every person who was placed over him, and he carried out the Father's plan to its minutes detail. Neither setbacks nor opposition nor maltreatment nor crucifixion deterred him. He was submissive to all of it, submissive to everyone and everything. He emptied himself and became the slave, the last of all,

And his chosen band of disciples? Today's Gospel spells out their ambition in clear terms: To be considered first in line, to dominate the rest, to rule their minds and wills, to be held in esteem by all the rest. What a contrast today's Gospel gives us: the utter submission of Jesus to the last place, and the ambition of the apostles to the first place among their equals! It is the evil of pride that shows itself sooner or later in every man. Children will fight to have the leading role in a play. Men are jealous if one of their equals obtains a prominent parish position. Women at times refuse to cooperate if they are not the head of the organization. Julius Caesar preferred to be first in any small town than second in Rome. And Babylon's King, the veritable image of Satan, declared: "I will set my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend the tops of the clouds. I will be like the Most High" (Is. 14:13f). Even the chosen friends of Jesus were not free from pride and ambition.

That is why Jesus placed a child in their midst. A child humbly obeys without questioning, and is content to be last of all. A child does not hanker after position, honor, rank, protocol, but is content to be led. A child takes it for granted that others are over it to command, to guide and instruct. A child is dependent. This is the spirit that Jesus tries to inculcate and he gives the best example possible of such childlike attitude. He wants his disciples to serve and spend themselves for others, humble and obedient in their attitudes and ways of approach. Of himself he said: "The Son of Man has come not to be served but to serve and give his life in ransom for the many" (Mk. 10:45).

But once the price was paid through his entire life of service, Jesus obtained the Supreme Gift of the Spirit for all who obey him, and poured out the Personal Love of God into the hearts of the believers (Acts 2:33).

Then they could love God in a manner that befitted the children of God, and love their brothers and sisters in the one family of God. To this objective Jesus directs the ambition of his true disciples: to live a life of humble service, willing to take the last place as he did, in order to win from the Father the Gift of the Spirit or an increase of his powerful presence for one's fellowmen, especially those of the same household. That ennobles all man's aspirations. Then his ambition is worthy of the sons of God.

Our Response: Jesus told his disciples: "What profit would a man show if he were to gain the whole world and destroy himself in the process?" (Mt. 16:26). Experience shows that worldly ambition if fulfilled does not completely satisfy, as St. Augustine testifies: "Our hearts are not at rest, O Lord, until they rest in you". The Lord warned that those who were last in the estimation of all may be surprisingly the first in the everlasting kingdom (Mt. 19:30; 20:16).

OCCASIONS OF SIN

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time: (September 26, 1976)

The Human Situation: A teen-age girl was in tears as she confessed to a trusted counsellor that she was pregnant. When asked what was the occasion for what had happened, she burst out: Oh! That torrid movie! Not only did she dub the movie as bad or obscene, but torried: blazing hot, passionate. Was it any wonder that weak human nature gave way? Can we play with fire and then he surprised if the house burns down?

The Good News: If Christ is ever radical it is today's gospel when he speaks of cutting off a hand or foot, or gouging out an eye. This is very strong figurative language. To carry out these words literally would not lessen the temptation to sin, which remains in the heart. Figuratively, the Lord has in mind those persons, places or objects which lead one into serious sin and thus destroy the spirit and deprive one of God's loving friendship. It is imperative to remove such an evil eye or misleading foot or misguiding hand, rather than be lost forever in eternal frustration together with the loss of God himself and eternal happiness.

There are various occasions of serious sin. A man must be willing to give up even closest friends if by these he is being led to give up or deny his faith. Faith is the highest good God has given us. Hence, if a friend's hostile attitude toward God or our Christian faith spells real danger to the Catholic party, and there is no hope of bringing about a change, the friend becomes a misleading hand that must be "amputated" to save one's total life. The same holds good in the case of member-

ship in an organization that is in general hostile to the Church. One is obliged to terminate membership. This can be done gradually under various pretexts.

Anyone who unnecessarily exposes himself to serious temptations against chastity is in grave danger of succumbing. Thus the bane of certain movies that are well-known to be downright obscene, or literature of the same sort. Here is the evil eye that needs to be gouged out, to save the whole man. Places of ill repute, such as immoral floor-shows fall under the same condemnation. Our Lord and Savior would never condone them, knowing that they bring untold evil on mankind. Likewise, keeping company with one with whom a person is sure to fall into sin must be likened to a gangrenous foot that has to be cut off, unless the temptation to sin is made remote by sincere and earnest endeavor to keep things in proper order, and by avoiding situations that inevitably lead to sin. In these matters the Savior does not mince his words. But they are words of love, with only the good of a person in mind.

Again, if one has employment from a business-firm and knows that its procedures are definitely fraudulent or rank immoral from any other score, he should separate himself from this "misleading hand" lest he himself be gradually infected with the firm's sinful methods, or possibly leave the impression that he is in agreement with them. There are many other examples in the line of justice that crop up in business. The Savior knew only too well the evil occasions that would surround his faithful people during their lifetime, and therefore he used such vigorous metaphors: plucking out your right eye, cutting off your right hand, even though it is so near and dear to you, and seemingly so important for life. Of far greater importance is life eternal.

Our Response: From time to time we ought to examine our hierarchy of values. What do we consider of greatest worth in life? Are we willing to let companionship jeopardize our eternity, evil literature separate us from our highest Good, shoddy business associates keep us from lasting association with Christ who alone can make us fully successful and happy? There is always a time for housecleaning. So there ought to be a time also for spiritual housecleaning: cleaning up on our values, our associations; getting rid of objectionable books, pictures, comics; taking a firm stand on ourselves to see if the path on which we tread leads to heaven or deviates to eternal frustration. In the matter of eternal life one cannot be two-faced. God is all knowing.

THE HOLINESS OF MARRIAGE

Twenty-Seventh Sunday: October 3, 1976

The Human Element: A priest entered the hospital room of a dying father of a large family to say the prayers for the dying. At the head of the bed sat the wife bowed in grief. All around the room stood sons and daughters,

thirteen in all, mostly married men and women, while one after the other flung himself on the bed sobbing and weeping. Here was a family that had lived in an atmosphere of love. Here was a father who had held high the noble ideals of Christian marriage. They knew well that their father would soon receive the great reward for a life of devoted love, yet their grief at his departure was understandably great. For they loved their father. To see these grown men sobbing their hearts out greatly edified the priest.

The Good News: One of the first acts of Jesus is his public life was to take part in a wedding celebration in Cana of Galilee. He not only brought along his newly chosen disciples to share the wedding feast with him, but even provided the young couple with a large quantity of wine in a wonderful manner so that their lack of it would no longer cause embarassment, and the guests could enjoy the feast with alacrity and joy. By this very human act of sharing their joys, Jesus manifested his high regard for marriage, and his presence blessed their union. For marriage was God's plan of love for mankind.

From the outset God intended marriage to be the sacred covenant of love between man and wife which would be a mutual giving and receiving of the very best that was in man. Love is the very make-up of marriage. Even the love of one's parents could not kep one from entering into an even closer union with the beloved one, who would be a partner for life in all life's joys and sorrows, in all one's endeavors and undertakings, in sickness and old age, till death came to separate. For they were no longer two but in a sense one (Gen. 2:14). Through them God would channel life to the world, making parents co-creators in his designs. How noble is the plan of love God has for man, how sacred the love that unites them in a golden knot never to be untied!

That is why Jesus frowned decidedly upon divorce. Yes, he was well aware that it had been tolerated in the Law. But that was because stubborn minds in Israel were bent on doing what they pleased, especially when the first spouse did not come up to their expectations. Jesus stoutly opposed this law of toleration because it put marriage at the will and beck of man's whims instead of bringing out of him the best in sacrifice, patient courage and submission to God's will. So Jesus restored marriage to its pristine purity and declared for all his followers that marriage was to be kept intact and not broken through any of man's clever machinations. "What God has joined let no man separate" (Mk, 10: 9). Could he have spoken more forcefully? He also used very strong language to characterize those who went against his word. They were adulterers plain and sim-No exception was granted to separate and marry again, unless the first union was not a true marriage to begin with (Mt. 5:32). He knew well the ravages that divorce would bring upon his followers once its poisonous fangs were let loose.

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Marriage as God intended it is beautiful and meaningful. It reflects first of all the mutual love in the Trinity of God between the Father and the Son from which proceeds their Personal Love as a third Person in the Trinity. Life in the Blessed Trinity is community, a community—life of love, the supreme model for all communities especially the family. What a joy it is to see a truly happy family where the atmosphere of love reigns, and the children are united in a community of understanding and deep concern!

Marriage reflects moreover the wonderful love of Christ for his Church, as St. Paul so eloquently depicted it in Ephesians 5: 22-33. As Christ loved the Church, labored, suffered and gave himself for her, so ought the husband act toward his wife. And as the Church is the faithful spouse of Christ, hearkening to his teaching and heeding his commandments in loving cooperation, so ought the wife willingly acknowledge her husband as the head of the family, and work with him for their mutual progress and the development of the children. For God truly intended the wife as the life-partner of the husband. Such mutual love and understanding will be fruitful and blessed with offspring in joyful cooperation with the Creator, just as the union of Christ and the Church brings forth an abundance of God's children who fill the world with his praises. It is the mutual action of married couples that matters, for it expresses their total and irrevocable surrender to each other in a bond of love that is never to be broken. That is why anything that militates against this marriage ideal cannot be pleasing to the Creator, and is bound in the long run to bring down divine chastisement. God knows what is good for man.

Our Response: Every Christian ought to endeavor to make his home a happy one as depicted in Psalm 128. That will mean fidelity of the husband at all times to his marriage vows, and a wife's faithful loyalty, despite misunderstandings and difficulties. Joy reigns in a Christian home where children can sense the mutual love and fidelity of parents. Their example means much more than many words or warnings. For couples both young and old, the blessings of genuine and faithful love are the God-given mainstay that keep the bond of marriage in unbroken fidelity. In such a home the Spirit of God abides. He is the Bond of union and of love.

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARD RICHES

Twenty-Eighth Sunday: October 10th, 1976

The Human Situation: How often those who are exceedingly rich find life extremely boring, despite the fact that they have everything that money can buy. Youth from well-to-do families are found involved in drug addiction and exotic experiences just to relieve the monotony of their lives.

Some years ago a famous inventor in one of the Eastern United States was found dead in his bed. He had built up a great business empire and had become a multi-millionaire. They found the revolver next to him and a note that read: "My work is done. Why wait?" Of what use to him was all his wealth, the great name, the world-wide prestige? "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world but destroy himself in the process" (Mt. 16:26), the Lord himself asked?

The Good News: Is not the attitude of the Lord toward riches unexpectedly harsh? In themselves, riches are not evil. Whatever is in the universe is good, coming as it does from the creative hand of God. Temporal goods were often alloted to man to assist him in his tiresome journey toward the spiritual and the eternal. God enriched those he loved, as it is said of Abraham that he was very rich in livestock, silver and gold (Gen. 13:2). Of Isaac the same is said: "Since the Lord blessed him, he became richer and richer all the time until he was very wealthy" (Gen. 26:12f). Jacob was exceedingly prosperous. For a long time temporal blessings were looked upon as a mark of divine favor, but it was gradually realized that this was by no means always the case (Job. 27:16; Ps. 37:16). Christ himself did not spurn the rich as such. People with means cared for his needs (Lk. 8:3; Mt. 27:57). Yet his general attitude toward riches was negative.

"Woe to you rich" he said, "for your consolation is now" (Lk. 6:24). And again: "No man can serve two masters; you cannot serve God and money" (Mt. 6:24). The simple reason is: riches channel a man's interests to the temporal and the material, whereas man's foremost goal is spiritual and eternal. In the parable of the seed fallen among thorns, the love of money it is that chokes the good seed and stifles all higher aspirations" (Mt. 13:22). Riches often have the effect of making a man selfish and greedy. This is brought out in a very telling manner in the parable of the rich farmer who had a bumper crop. His only thought is how to accumulate more wealth, with no concern at all for his fellowmen, but the Lord called him to judgment that very night, and what good was all his wealth to him" (Lk. 12:20)? Today's gospel simply states that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Some have thought that the eye of the needle was a low gate leading into Jerusalem, and a camel would be able to pass through it only with great difficulty. But there is no such gate with that name. Jesus' words are to be taken literally. One who has his heart set only on the goods of this world is aiming in the wrong direction, and it does not lead to the kingdom of heaven. Moreover, all the money in the world will not be able to purchase entrance into that kingdom. Salvation is God's gift to man, and no one relying on his riches will attain it.

In the eyes of Jesus, there is only one Good, that is God (Mt. 19:17) That is why his exhortation is to all his followers: "Do not lay up for

yourselves an earthly treasure. Moths and rust corrode; thieves break in and steal. Make it your practice instead to store up heavenly treasure, which neither moths nor rust corrode nor thieves break in and steal. Remember, where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Mt. 6: 19-21). The rich man in the parable of the beggar Lazarus had everything this life could offer, while Lazarus lay helpless at his gate, not even receiving the left-overs from the rich man's sumptuous banquets. But in the next life the tables were turned. The rich man turns beggar and asks for a mere drop of water, which is denied him (Lk. 16:24f). Therefore the Lord exhorts his disciples to make use of the goods of this world to come to the aid of others, and to help those in need, for these in turn will befriend them at the judgment seat of God (Lk. 16: 9). A dreadful vengeance will overtake the rich who have deprived the poor of their wages and who have lived in luxury, according to the letter of St. James (5:1-6). And St. John earnestly begs his dear ones: "Have no love for the world, nor the things that the world affords. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love has no place in him, for nothing that the world affords comes from the Father . . . And the world with all its seductions is passing away but the man who does God's will endure forever" (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

Our Response: Jesus invited the rich man in the gospel to total renunciation in order to obtain the Supreme Good which is God himself. But the man preferred his worldly goods. What will our response be if Christ invites us in the same manner? Or what is our response if his Spirit deep within our hearts inspires us to use the goods of this world to help the poor and the needy, to see to it that our own employees get a decent wage for their own situation, and to champion the cause of those who are oppressed? Our material goods we must leave behind when we die, but the good use we make of them will last forever. In the Kingdom, many who were last shall be first and the foremost here below will be among the last. God is never outdone in generosity.

CHRISTIANITY'S FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Twenty-Ninth Sunday: October 17, 1976

The Human Situation: When Apollo 13 was shot toward the moon, something went wrong. It was on an erroneous course and unless a corrective could be computed in time, it would never return, and the lives of the three men were doomed. For three days and nights dozens of people at the Space Control Center at Houston in Texas worked frantically while time was fast running out. Tensions mounted as relatives at home failed to understand the long absence of husband or father, and relations strained. But these men put aside all personal preferences. They were men for others. Totally unmindful of their own inconvenience and distress, they

succeeded in bringing the three astronauts back safe and alive. Though the names of the ground crew are hardly known, they had done a singular service to all. They had slaved those three days and nights to save the precious lives of others.

The Good News: Three times Jesus announced to his chosen band that his was a life of sacrifice, a life of total service for man, climaxing in his death for them. Each time they failed to enter into his thoughts. After the first announcement of his passion, Peter even remonstrated vigorously with Jesus, only to be sharply reprimanded by him (Mk. 8:13). After the second announcement, the disciples seem to ignore what he told them, and begin to argue among themselves who was the greatest. Jesus chided them by saying: "If anyone wants to rank first he must remain the last of all, and the servant of all" (Mk. 9:15). But the lesson was lost on Now after the third announcement of the passion comes the gross misunderstanding from the side of two favorite disciples, James and John, who strike out for highest honor and glory, while Jesus himself had told them he was giving himself to ignominy and death. He had come not to be served but to serve his fellowmen. His favorite disciples crave to be served in the highest places of the kingdom. Their ambition is for worldly honors, his one ambition is for the glory of the Cross.

So again he gathered them around him and tried to impress upon them the lesson of loving service of one another. Authority in his kingdom on earth would be exercised by humbly serving the needs of others. Of this he never tried of giving them his own example, healing the sick of all kinds of ailments even till late in the evening, teaching the crowds for long hours and even days, going from town to town preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, listening to their problems and their queries. He asked for no salary, he sought no exceptions, he made no demands. He lived, a man for others. And one day he would give them the supreme example of service, by washing the very feet of his disciples, including the one who would betray him. What more could he do to show them that they were not to flaunt their authority and seek high places, but live a life of total service for their fellowmen?

Of course this was against all that man in his pride had hitherto done. It would take a new way of thinking. Only the gift of faith could provide such sentiments and such stamina. That is why a rebirth was necessary, and the disciples were to become like little children again in their attitudes and appreciation of values. It would take faith-values to enable them to live up to this new pattern which he was giving them. What a striking contrast he then drew on the one hand of a despotic ruler and a picture of the willing servant on the other. A despot rules through oppression as did the great despots of ancient and modern times as well. Authority is exercised by sheer power and force. All this was farthest from the mind and

spirit of Christ. The new spirit was to exercise authority by serving the community. True greatness is to be willing to be lowly in one's own eyes and to be deeply concerned with the needs of others. This is the epitomé of Christianity's fundamental principle.

For years Dr. Tom Dooley gave his life's service to heal the sick and comfort the helpless in Vietnam and Laos. As a doctor, and unmarried, he had tremendous stamina which enabled him to bring hope and joy to the hearts of thousands of distressed people of all ages. He literally spent himself and his energies for the countless children who greatly needed not only medical attention but love. His life was lived in the service of others. Tom Dooley is dead now, having died of cancer at a rather early age. But his life of service for thousands of his fellowmen who were perfect strangers to him was the best witness to Christianity's fundamental principle of living like Christ, not for oneself, but for others. And it is that which makes a person truly a person.

Our Response: There is no need to go beyond our scope of activity to exemplify this principle of service. Everyone is inclined or at least tempted at times to be selfish, to shut oneself up in an ivory castle and live only for one's little ego. But real nobility and greatness of everlasting value throws open the doors and seeks to do all in its power to come to the aid of others in loving and humble service. Even a word of encouragement or a smile, if other means are not at our disposal. But where there is a will, there will always be found a way to do much more. To radiate Christ's Spirit to those at home, at work or at school or anywhere: This is Christianity at its best.

O LORD! THAT I MAY SEE!

Thirtieth Sunday: October 24, 1976

The Human Situation: A remarkable woman is Helen Keller, who despite being both deaf and blind, managed to acquired an enviable amount of knowledge and experience, cheerfully enjoying the good things of life. Once, in Florence, Italy, the Italian government erected a scaffolding around Michelangelo's "David", so that Miss Keller could climb up and "see" it. "Seeing" for her is touching the statue, for through her sense of touch she comes to know what objects are all about. She tells us that she was "thrilled" by this experience. What would have been her unbounded joy if at that moment her eyes had been opened and she could have seen Michelangelo's "David" as it really is!

The Good News: He was just a beggar, a poor blind beggar, but he wanted to see. His hope was not in cures and medicines, but in the one Person who had now come into his lonely life, Jesus, Son of David, the

Messiah of Israel. Without any inhibitions of human respect or fear of what people might say, he loudly professes his faith in Jesus and begs him to open his eyes. He longs to see, and the first object of his sight will be Jesus, Son of David, King of Israel. What ecstatic joy must have been his and what gratitude welled up in his heart as he was face to face with Jesus, "the desire of all the nations." No wonder he followed him at once up the road, regardless that it led to suffering and death.

There are many blind people in the world today. They never see the beauty of the skies, the color and shape of trees, birds and animals, but above all the beauty of man, God's masterpiece, and all that man has wrought through his God-given creative genius. They never can observe the marvel of womanhood and the charm of children. The sun does not shine for them by day nor the stars display their magnificence at night. All is lark. They live in perpetual night. Yet how often God has given these unfortunate people deep spiritual insights and the powerful eyes of faith! But there are many others who are spiritually blind, though they have the gift of sight. They have closed their eyes to the Way that leads to Life. Passion has taken away the delicate perception that sees things in their correct perspectives. They are blind to their own inner state, blind to their need of a Savior who can heal them. St. Paul declares: "Their unbelieving minds have been blinded by the god of the present age so that they do not see the splendor of the Gospel showing forth the glory of Christ, the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4).

And yet Jesus came to cure man of his blindness and his sinful ways. He is the only one who can stretch forth his hand and heal him. many will not come to him. They will not come to the sacraments, which are his sacred presence, to receive healing for their spirit, nor take up the inspired word of God to move their hearts in order to cry out with the blind beggar for the gift of sight. They do not believe that Jesus is their Lord and God who has the power to cure them of every evil. like Saul of Tarsus they never really knew Christ. What they knew of him was not the real Christ. His image at times had been so distorted by cheap commercialism or by exaggerateed devotions that border on superstition that they are "turned off" at the very mention of Christ. They need a real encounter with Jesus as Saul had, in order to really know that this Jesus is truly God's own Son who has taken our flesh and blood to be our Brother and Savior. They need only to turn to him as did the blind Bartimaeus and acknowledge him as the Divine Physician who can help them. Untold joy will be theirs if they do, and the beauty of God's Incarnate Son will shine forth for them to gaze upon, as it has for so many countless thousands before them. Like the blind man after his cure, they will joyfully follow Jesus even to the road that leads to Golgotha, and like Job, they will be "eyes for their fellowmen" (Job. 19:15).

Many too are the pagans in the world today who have never come to know Jesus. Their blindness is often merely one of ignorance through no fault of their own. Given the opportunity of seeing by faith the reality that is Christ, they too are "thrilled" at their newly-won treasure, and in their enthusiasm run "the way of his commandments". Jesus is the Light of the world, and of all nations. It is the members of his Body that must let the radiance of his light shine on all around them so that all may come to know and love the One, True God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (Jn. 17:3). To let this light shine is the obligation of every member of the believing community, for everyone shares the mission of the Church to bring Christ to all men.

Our Response: Everyone needs from time to time to cry out with Bartimaeus in silent prayer: Lord, I want to see! I want to see what you want of me. Show me the many times I offend you by sins of omission, blinded by selfishness and ambition. Show we how passion obscures my sight. Make known to me my true self that I may humbly acknowledge my need of you, my divine Physician. You are my Light. In that Light, all things fall in line, so that I see clearly again the Way that leads to Life that never ends.

THE PRIMACY OF LOVE

Thirty-First Sunday: October 31, 1976

The Human Situation: Before Christmas one year, a mission Sister, teaching young boys aged nine to eleven in Ghana, W. Africa, asked them to write down three things they wanted for Christmas. As usual with young boys, they had all kinds of wishes: some wanted sports articles, others a radio, a TV set, a bicycle and so forth. But one little fellow wrote as follows: "I want to love God with all my heart; I want to love my neighbor as myself; I want to live a very simple life". Greatly surprised, the Sister held the lad after class and asked him where he got these ideas. Without hesitation he replied: "O Sister, I've been thanking about this for a long, long time." Sister was deeply impressed. Here was Jesus Christ walking on earth again, having put his Spirit into the heart of a little Ghanaian boy. How many adult Christians have such a degree of Christ's Spirit!

The Good News: When Jesus was asked by the scribe which was the greatest commandment of the law, he did something very unusual. If he had merely mentioned the great commandment (the Shema) of Deuteronomy 6:4 (as in today's first reading), the commandment of love of God in its solemn setting, it would not have been unusual. But that he added to it a rather obscure commandment from the book of Leviticus about love

of neighbor and put it on an equal footing with the love of God, this was something new. In the mind of Jesus, my neighbor was not just my countrymen, but anyone in need, be he kinsman or stranger, as is clear from the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is the two-pronged fiery arrow with which Jesus wishes to pierce the whole world and set it on fire with the highest of all virtues, that of love. All other commandments are included in this twofold commandment, even the "Ten Commandments" given by Moses. What a great relief it was for the followers of Jesus, for it entirely lifted from their weary shoulders the burden of hundreds of precepts and prohibitions which had proliferated in the course of time and which no one was able to carry. Henceforth in the community of Jesus, love alone was to motivate all their actions.

God wishes not only to be adored and obeyed as Lord, but also intensely loved as Father and Lover of men. The prophets had gone to extremes to make this clear, even comparing the love of God for man with the love of husband for wife. The Good News brought by Jesus was just that: a message of love. And since God is the Father of all men, pouring out daily his love on both good and evil alike in the countless favors of life, all men must likewise mutually love one another in sincere and cons-Christ became Brother and Savior of all men, without any distinction of race or color; and he sent his Spirit into the hearts of all who received him, whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor, young or old. All men are the objects of our love, for God dwells within them. Such simplified motivation concentrates all efforts on the one goal; far from scattering our energies and attention to innumerable obligations, we are carried along with the highest motivation that is at the same time most simplified. Over and over again at the last supper and in the farewell discourses (Jn. 13-16) Jesus keeps repeating his commandment of love: If you love me, keep my commandments. This is my commandment, that you love one another. And the Beloved Disciple writes: "If anyone says: My love is fixed on God, yet hates his prother, he is a liar." (1 Jn. 4:20). As the scribe in today's gospel exclaimed: to love in this manner surpasses all external Temple worship. Without love, all our external actions have no value.

All his life the Lord gave a perfect example of this twofold love. He was always open to the Father's will by serving his fellowmen with great love. Nothing in the gospels stands out more than his universal love which reaches out to everyone regardless of his stand in life. He set out to accomplish the Paschal Mystery for man's salvation, but it was out of sheer dedication to the Father who had so ordained it. His love led him to the heights of heroism on Golgotha, where love of God and love of man combined in one great act of the divine holocaust. Of this the pierced Heart of Christ stands as an everlasting symbol and witness.

Yet Jesus knew that his followers of themselves were incapable of carrying out his twofold injunction of love. That is why he was bent on winning for them through his sufferings and death on the cross the supreme Gift of Love, the Person of the Spirit. Then man would not merely have external commandments to show him the way, but the internal Spirit of love to impel him from within, and thus enable him to love the Father and one's fellowman as Jesus himself taught by word and deed. Only with the Spirit of Jesus can the Christian accomplish what Jesus asks of him by this greatest of all commandments.

Our Response: Just as a fire once started needs to be continually fed with fuel lest it die out, so the fire of love needs to feed on the fuel of constant self-giving. Selfishness will gradually quench true love. The Saints knew how to stifle selfishness and selfish inclinations, by finding opportunities at every turn to love God and one's fellowmen. Love grows by acts: acts of love offered frequently to God, and acts of kindness and goodness or of patient forebearance in regard to others. What a different world we would live in if every Christian tried his level best to carry out the injunction on love given by the Savior!

SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Auer, Johann: El Evangelio de la Gracia, tomo V. Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 306 págs. — Rústica 400 pesetas.

Johann Auer wrote a much praised and extensively used *Curso de Teología Dogmática* in 8 volumes, of which this is Vol. V, about the mysterious topic of grace, under the following headings: the problem of grace in a contemporary setting; fundamental questions on the salvific will of God — predestination and reprobation; relations between grace and sin; what is sanctifying or justifying grace; its effects; grace visavis nature; actual or auxiliary grace; merit; grace and free-will, etc. This book has the *imprimatur* from Mons. José M. Guix, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar-General of Barcelona.

Auer, Johann: Sacramentos — EUCARISTIA, tomo VI. Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 368 págs. — Rústica 400 pesetas.

This book, which is volume VI in the series Curso de Teología Dogmática in 8 volumes, by the distinguished theologian Johann Auer, is an entirely orthodox, modern and up-to-date treatise on the Holy of Holies the Eucharist. It can be a textbook in a seminary, or can serve as a reference for the priest, seminarian or schooled lay Catholic or Christian. It is an exhaustive or panoramic, in-depth treatise on the Holy Eucharist from all angles and points of view. Well anchored in the Bible, it reproduces faithfully Catholic doctrine on this divine subject. It has the imprimatur from Mons. José M. Guix, Auxiliary Bishop and Vicar-General of Barcelona, on February 52, 1974.

Hörman, Karl: Diccionario de Moral Cristiana. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 688 pág. — Rústica 850 pesetas, tela 950 pesetas.

The author is a scholar of vast erudition, endowed with a surprising power of synthesis. This book is a most comprehensive handy encyclopedia of orthodox Catholic morals. All libraries will be enhanced with this book; nay, every priest and lay man or woman who can afford its reasonable price should procure a personal copy. Seminarians will certainly obtain higher grades in Moral Theology by often leafing through this precious book.