

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

**SYNOD 1977 AND US**  
Editorial

**RESPONSIBILITY, ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS  
IN ADVERTISING**  
Pope Paul VI

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**THIRD WORLD THEOLOGY**  
Theologians at Tanzania

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and is printed at U.S.T. Press, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946.

Subscription Rates (Effective January, 1976). Yearly subscription in the Philippines:

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
Glazed Newsprint	P30	P55	P80	P105	P130
Bookpaper	P35	P60	P85	P110	P135

Price per copy, P4.00. Abroad, \$12.00 per year. Back issue, \$3.00. Subscriptions are paid in advance.

Communications of an editorial nature concerning articles, cases and reviews should be addressed to the Editor. Advertising and subscription inquiries should be addressed to the Business Manager. Orders for renewals or changes of address should include both old and new addresses and will go into effect fifteen days after notification.

Address all communication to:

**BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS**

Fathers' Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
Manila, Philippines

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## Synod 1977 and Us

Gone are the days when we could think of our Faith as something that can be compressed in a "Summa" or "Enchiridion" or "Manual" which can be further digested into a "Catechism" in question and answer form. Gone too are the days when the task of the catechist was to help children memorize lessons. Almost gone are the catechists whose qualification for teaching catechism consists in being students in a Catholic school and having spare time for children in public schools.

And so the Church has to give serious attention to setting up guidelines on WHAT is to be taught in catechetical instruction, HOW it is to be taught, WHO should be catechists and what is their ROLE in the christian community.

These are not "incandescent" issues and it is understandable that the Synod which will meet in Rome in September to discuss them has not aroused much interest. Yet, without good catechesis the Church might just as well forget about growing.

Comparing evangelization and catechesis, Rev. Donald W. Wuerl describes evangelization as "the announcing of the good news of Jesus Christ to others," while catechesis "is the instruction of others in the full meaning of the good news that Jesus is the Lord". Hence, comparing the 1974 Synod of Bishops to that of 1977, he says that



the question has moved from "how more effectively to announce the word?" to "how more efficiently to teach the fuller implications of the word?"

In a way, catechesis is more difficult than evangelization. It is the art of helping Christians grow in their faith. How do you help another person grow? "I planted the seed", said St. Paul, "Appollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow" (I Corinthians 1:6). Growth in faith is primarily the work of God, the work of the Spirit.

Nevertheless we know that God wants us to cooperate with him in catechetical work. It is but right for us to hope that this cooperation will be achieved more smoothly if we have the proper orientation. This is to be achieved principally by clarifying just what the CONTENT of catechesis should be.

It can be expected that the coming Synod will focus its attention on the CONTENT of catechetical instruction, just as the previous synod, and especially the Pope, gave prime importance to the content of evangelization, emphasizing that "the content of the faith is either Catholic or it is not... (it is a) single message presented in a diversity of languages".

HOW the message is to be adapted to different cultures would be more profitably discussed in local meetings. Very general guidelines on this from the Synod would suffice.

On the CATECHIST, however, it would be timely and very useful for the Church if the Synod would give wise, concrete guidelines. The Catechist, perhaps more than the Evangelist or Preacher, must work closely with God in fomenting the growth of Christian life in the faithful. Our catechetical effort stands or falls with the quality of our Catechists. The Synod should draw up guidelines on the prudent choice of Catechists, their proper preparation for their work, their adequate remuneration, and the opportunities the Church should offer them so that their charism will truly prosper in the christian community.

We, who will be staying at home during the Synod should pray for its success. We can also give thought to the importance of catechesis in our days, so that when the decisions of the Synod will be published we will be ready to do our part to put them into practice. Each in his own way, we must help one another grow in faith through instruction and witness — and this is what

we call catechesis. The Bishops' Synod of 1977 will, hopefully, help us do our job well.

## In This Issue

We all enjoy the TV commercial that makes us laugh, but in fact ADVERTISING is no joke. It involves serious ethical and religious problems. These are discussed in Pope Paul VI's message for the World Day of Social Communications in the document from the Pontifical Commission for the Media of Social Communications, "Cummunio et Progressio", and in the article of Fr. Paul McLachlan.

The problems connected with Advertising illustrate the need for vigorous leadership in our laity. We are therefore happy to note that Catholic Action of the Philippines has been reorganized into the **National Council of the Laity** which held its first national convention on May 13-15 in Manila. In his address to the convention Bishop Jose T. Sanchez of Lucena identified the building of Basic Christian Communitities as one of the thrusts of the Council of the Laity. We are confident that our laity will find solid guidelines for this endeavor in Fr. LeFrois' biblical study on **Community Building**. On Social questions they will find much food for thought in the article of Fr. Henri de Riedmatten, O.P., on **Populorum Progressio**, and in the report on **Third World Theology**.

Priests are not forgotten in this issue. We publish the fatherly exhortation of Cardinal Jaime L. Sin on the **Authority of Christ in a Priest**, and also the Manila Archdiocesan **Norms and Guidelines on the Ministry of Guest Priests**. Furthermore, Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P., writes on **The Church's Financial Support through Tithing**.

What do contemporary protestants think about Mary? The article of Cardinal John Wright on **Some Recent Mariological Publications** shows us that there are dark as well as bright spots in Protestant Mariology today.

## POPE PAUL VI

### RESPONSIBILITY, ADVANTAGES AND DANGERS IN ADVERTISING

Venerable Brothers and beloved Children of the Church, all you men of good will,

The dioceses of the Catholic Church, in response to the invitation of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council (cfr Decree **Inter Mirifica**, n. 18), again this year celebrate the World Day of Social Communications, in order to help, through reflection, through prayer, by their interest and concern and by moral and material support, the press, the radio, the television, the cinema and the other modern instruments of social communication in the discharge of their important function in information, education and where the specific responsibility of Christians is concerned, evangelization of the world.

• • •

This Day, now being celebrated for the eleventh time, has happily become in many countries an occasion for direct contact between the local Churches and the professionals of the mass media and an opportunity for the growth of better understanding between them. By means of appropriate liturgical and cultural events, it goes some way towards alerting the conscience of the person who uses social communications—whether he be reader, listener, viewer, or cinema spectator—to the necessity of being selective in what he reads, views and listen to; a selectivity that often effectively influences those responsible on the production and as regards the type of matter they will offer for his consumption. But still more, it stimulates him to make a mature evaluation of the content of the communications which he receives.

For such is the complexity of the communications phenomenon today that it requires not only that society and the individuals who comprise it shall be constantly reminded of their respective duties and continually refined by being brought face to face with the true values of human life, but also that everyone who exercises influence on the communications process shall do his part.

• • •

For this reason the Church, as well as dedicating the annual Day to a study of all the pastoral questions which arise in the

sector of communications, has been careful to call the attention of Christians and men of good will to particular aspects of this very wide subject. The Church hoped, by this means, to help each man to find his direction and keep his balance in the midst of the many-sided reality which is the "mass media". She hoped also to contribute, as the nature of her mission demands, to the theme chosen for this year, "Advertising in the mass media: benefits, dangers, responsibilities", which is intended to focus our reflection on one powerful factor of the present social organization.

It may be asked why advertising and its bearing upon the instruments of social communication should be of interest to the Church. The answer is that advertising is a quite important element in the common life of man, because it conditions his integral development and, directly or indirectly, has an influence upon his cultural life. No one now can escape the influence of advertising, and, even apart from the actual content of its messages, it presents, or at least suggests particular visions of the world, which inevitably pull at the Christian, affect his judgment, and influence his manner of acting. Advertising, moreover, takes on an ever growing importance, because in large part it finances the development of the communications media and uses them for its own purposes, directly and sometimes dangerously influencing their orientation and their freedom.

The Church looks with favour on the growth of man's productive capacity, and also on the ever widening network of relationships and exchanges between persons and social groups; they are for her a reason, as sign and an anticipation of an ever greater brotherhood, and from this point of view she encourages advertising, which can become a wholesome and efficacious instrument for reciprocal help among men. Another fundamental aspect which the Church recognizes in advertising is its informative aspect, with all the weight and the obligations deriving from it. It has to be truthful, prudent, respectful of man and of his essential values, careful in its choice of the circumstances in which it addresses him, and of the manner in which it makes its presentation.

Advertising is, then, a promotional tool of particular interests which, even if legitimate, must take the common good into account, keep in mind the equally legitimate interests of others, and especially have due regard for the concrete circumstances of the integral development affecting the people to whom it addresses itself, for their cultural and economic environment, and for the level of education they have attained.



As is well known, the advertising message is, naturally, designed to convince people, it makes use of techniques based on precise psychological and social knowledge, and it is constantly researching the ways and means of persuasion. It is here above all that there is imposed on it and therefore on those within the advertising profession, the imperative requirement to respect the human person, his right-duty to make a responsible choice, his interior freedom; all these goods would be violated if man's lower inclinations were to be exploited, or his capacity to reflect and decide compromised.

The vast advertising phenomenon, with its moral and religious implications, involves first of all the instruments of social communication, which often themselves become agents of publicity, but which more usually serve as vehicles for messages coming from other economic agents, and maintain themselves partially or entirely on the revenues earned by carrying the advertising. It can be said, therefore, that all the communicative activity of these instruments is closely linked to the modern phenomenon of advertising, and this connection permits the factors of economic life to help the socially necessary development; but there ought not to be any imposition of conditions which limit the freedom of the media or inhibit the exchange of cultural or religious values (cfr. Pastoral Instruction **Communio et Progressio**, n. 62).



It is our belief that these guidelines could serve to bring about an advertising respectful of the fundamental rights and duties of man, and deserving of the support of the Christian conscience, if the various categories of professionals concerned were to unite their efforts in collaboration to this end. It is up to the advertising agencies, to the publicity workers and to the directors and managers of the media which carry advertising, to make known to the public, to subscribe to and to apply, the codes of professional ethics which already have been opportunely established, so as to have the co-operation of the public in making these codes still better and in enforcing their observance.

All this touches, very often, on delicate moral questions, such as, for instance, the education of youth, respect for woman, the safeguarding of the family and the protection of the rights of the human person (cfr. our Discourse to the Council of the European Association of Advertising Agencies, in the audience of April 28, 1976), and it therefore justifies the interest of the Church and, sometimes, her well-founded concern.

How could she remain silent when offence is caused to certain ethical principles? And how could We Ourselves neglect to utter a strong protest, in which we know We are joined by all men of good will, concerning the widespread display of certain types of cinema publicity which do no honour to our civilization, but which gravely offend the dignity of man, disturb the peace of consciences, and promote disharmony among men? It is for this reason that we ask the bishops, priests and laity engaged in pastoral activity to enter into a healthy and open dialogue with the directors of the publicity process, in respect of reciprocal interest, and in common acknowledgment of the good of human society.



At the same time, we invite the promoters of the Catholic press, those in charge of Catholic transmissions on radio and television, and those who are engaged in any way in any form of social communication, to give the example of their religious conviction and of their ideal of life, precisely by the advertising they choose and by the excellence of their own performance in respect of advertising practice. We request, meanwhile, of the distributors of advertising, that they shall not neglect those channels of communication which give a guarantee to promote and protect moral principles and which truly favour the development of the person and of his spiritual and human values.



It is our wish also that the Catholic Institutions, in their various kinds and according to their specific character, will follow with constant attention the development of the modern techniques of advertising and will know how to make opportune use of them in order to spread the Gospel message in a manner which answers the expectations and needs of contemporary man.

With these wishes, we willingly impart our Apostolic Blessing to all those who take part in the celebration of the forthcoming Day of Social Communications and offer the contribution of their mature human experience and of their attentive Christian sensibility to the reflection on this important matter.

From the Vatican, 12th May 1977, the fourteenth year of Our Pontificate.

POPE PAUL VI

## ADVERTISING IN THE PASTORAL INSTRUCTION "COMMUNIO ET PROGRESSIO"

(NOS. 59-62)

59. The importance of advertising is steadily on the increase in modern society. It makes its presence felt everywhere; its influence is unavoidable. It offers real social benefits. It tells buyers of the goods and services available. It thus encourages the widest distribution of products and, in doing this, it helps industry to develop and benefit the population. All this is to the good so long as there is respect for the buyer's liberty of choice, even though in trying to sell some particular objects appeal is made to a person's basic need. Advertising too must respect the truth, taking into account accepted advertising conventions.

60. If harmful or utterly useless goods are touted to the public, if false assertions are made about the goods for sale, if less admirable human tendencies are exploited, those responsible for such advertising harm society and forfeit their good name and credibility. More than this, unremitting pressure to buy articles of luxury can arouse false wants that hurt both individuals and families by making them ignore what they really need. And those forms of advertising which without shame, exploit the sexual instincts simply to make money or which seek to penetrate into the sub-conscious recesses of the mind in a way that threatens the freedom of the individual, those forms of advertising must be shunned. It is therefore desirable that advertisers make definite rules for themselves lest their sales methods affront human dignity or harm the community.

61. It is true that a judicious use of advertising can stimulate developing countries to improve their standard of living. But serious harm can be done them if advertising and commercial pressure become so irresponsible that communities that seek to rise from poverty to a reasonable standard of living are persuaded to seek this progress by satisfying wants that have been created artificially. The result of this is that they waste their resources and neglect their real needs and genuine development falls behind.

62. In fact the vast sums of money spent in advertising threaten the very foundations of the mass media. People can get the impression that the instruments of communication exist solely to stimulate men's appetites so that these can be satisfied later by the acquisition of the things that have been advertised. Moreover, because of economic demands and pressures, the essential freedom of the media is at stake. Since advertising revenue is vital for these media, only those can ultimately survive which receive the greatest share of advertising outlays. Consequently, the door is open for monopolies to develop in the media which may impede the right to receive and give information and inhibit the exchange of views within the community. A variety of independent means of social communication must therefore be carefully safeguarded even if this requires legislative action. This will ensure that there is an equitable distribution of advertising revenue among the most deserving media of communication and prevent the lion's share from going to those that are already the most powerful.

## THE POPE SPEAKS

On 26 March Pope Paul VI received the Archbishops and Bishops of the central region of France, in the framework of the canonical visits "and limina Apostolorum". The following are excerpts from his address:

### PRIESTLY MINISTRY

We understand that you are more and more concerned by the question of new vocations to the priesthood. You must give the problem your serious attention, but not to the extent of becoming paralysed or of being induced to concentrate your looks and your hopes on impossible or illusory solutions. This difficulty is not universal in the Church, thank God, and it should rather be considered a temporary and superable one. It is necessary, therefore, to look for everything that can be done to solve the situation, according to the ways that have been established or confirmed by the Church as a whole.



approval, only six years ago. The Church considered she could rely on the grace of the Holy Spirit and on the preparation of souls, to bring forth men completely dedicated to the Kingdom of God. It is along these lines that we must all work. Can you imagine the risks of doubts, of paralysing hesitations, of disengagements that would be caused or strengthened by the public questioning of priestly celibacy, even if expressed as a wish? Do you really think this would be a solution? Which is the vital problem, the one that destroys the seeds of vocation? Is it not, in the first place, the crisis of faith, and then, perhaps even more, the very widespread fear of a definitive commitment among the young? And do you not see that this problem is made more acute when there is lack of cohesion, clarity, firmness with regard to the identity of the priest of tomorrow, whereas this identity has not changed and can not change? The young, as is normal, wish to know where they are going, what kind of life theirs will be. Think of the spiritual perspective in which your generation or even the one after you prepared for the priesthood. Remember the bracing texts that encouraged them, such as the letter of the venerated Cardinal Suhard on **The Priest in the City**. The Second Vatican Council was able to complete this perspective; it did not abolish it. To propose the role of the priest in all its greatness and its urgency, with all its demands, that is the principal problem in our eyes.

### **Problem of priest shortage**

We will give you some suggestions not doubting, of course, that you have already begun to explore them. Within the diocese, among the dioceses, is it not possible to envisage an even better distribution of priestly forces, both diocesan and religious? Have the possibilities of the diaconate been really exploited, as regards choice of candidates, as regards their more thorough preparation? Cannot a more resolute and assiduous appeal be made for priestly vocations among older men, but also with adolescents and even children? Let us think of all these groups of young people, eager for spiritual effort and for participation in some ecclesial responsibility; are they, then, insensitive to such appeals? You yourselves, Bishops, far more in contact with the young than previously, do not be afraid to set forth to them often the problem of finding a new generation of priests, with suitable tact and enthusiasm. And may your teams of priests, even in difficult sectors, radiate the joy of their priesthood, that of ploughing and sowing for the Lord, without yet seeing the harvest, sometimes not even the germination, but always sustained by this invincible hope that a deep interior life gives!

**SUNDAY SERVICES WITHOUT PRIESTS**

You also tackle the question of Sunday congregations without priests, in rural sectors where the village forms a certain natural unity for life as for prayer, which it would be dangerous to abandon or disperse. We clearly grasp the reason for this, and the advantages that can be drawn for the responsibility of participants and the vitality of the village. The present-day world prefers these communities of human dimensions, provided, of course, they are sufficiently substantial, alive and far from the spirit of the ghetto. We say to you then: advance with discernment, but without multiplying this type of assembly, as if it were the best solution and the last chance! In the first place, you are convinced of the necessity of choosing judiciously and preparing the animators, laymen or religious, and already at this level the role of the priests seems essential. Then, too, the aim must remain the celebration of the sacrifice of Mass, the only true realization of the Lord's Passover. And above all let us consider clearly that these Sunday gatherings will not be enough to rebuild living and influential communities, in a context of populations that are not Christian or are falling from Sunday practice. It would be necessary to create at the same time other meetings, of friendship and reflection, groups made up of priests and laymen with a better formation, which would help their immediate entourage to weave bonds of charity and to shoulder better their family, educative, professional and spiritual responsibilities.

**CATECHETICS**

Catechetics. In the context of "lapsed belief" that you describe, we understand the necessity of a pedagogical approach to faith in Christ, often slow and progressive, close to human experience, which restores to the Christian message its savour as Good News, its attraction, and makes it as audible as possible. Jesus expressed himself in parables that smacked of the soil and all the apostles, beginning with St. Paul, tried to smooth the way to faith, for the different mentalities.

However, if we give what the apostle called spiritual "milk" to beginners, to Christians on the threshold, let us find at the same time the means of nourishing more substantially those who already believe, who are capable of a doctrinal formation, who desire a more advanced spiritual and apostolic life. And we must proclaim the Message to everyone without ever allowing the progressive character of the presentation or the adaptation of language to bring about inconsistency with the true doctrine. We will not profit in any

way by building with poor materials (cf. 1 Cor. 3, 12). And we must find the means of making the Gospel heard boldly and clearly, where so many alien voices inculcate other human messages in a myriad ways. Oh! certainly, some people are experiencing this in a harsh way. Certain lands seem to have been long impervious to the Gospel: the call of God, of Christ, does not seem to find any echo in many hearts. What an ordeal for the apostle! And yet, "woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor. 9, 16). Perhaps it is necessary in the first place to stimulate an atmosphere of prayer in order to hear it. The Christian Message has always an abrupt character, which obliges the listener to the choice of faith and which, moreover, paradoxically is more attractive than is thought. Let us believe in the force of God's Word!

**On 28 March the Archbishops and Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the North Region of France were received in audience by Pope Paul VI on their visit "ad limina". Here are excerpts from his address:**

### **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**

The synthesis of your Reports emphasizes your attachment to the territorial parish. This bears witness to your realism. The parish will remain the most adequate place for the gathering of the People of God. The very vast majority of the faithful would rightly be disconcerted by the devaluation and abandoning of an ecclesial sign which can and must find a new lease of life. The examples of this renewal are fortunately very numerous. But you stress at the same time that the parish is called to an ever increasing extent to form within it a variety of little communities of reflection, action and prayer, in accordance with the often very varied environments that compose it.

You note this appearance or awakening of Christian groups. Reading your Reports, we feel both the hopes and the apprehensions aroused by this transformation of your rural and urban parishes. We understand your joy when you discover Christians, young people especially, who are dreaming of communities on a human scale, called forth by the Paschal Event and Pentecost, eager

to love one another, share, bear witness to the Good News, reveal to their brothers the meaning of human existence! Yet you are not without fearing the dispersion, the lack of roots, the isolation, the possible errors of these young and generous communities. To pass from the unity to the multiplicity of the Christian gathering, is an extremely delicate step. That is why you have the imperious obligation to remind all your faithful often, and above all those who are engaged in the experience of these new communities, that they must thoroughly verify their membership of the Church according to the criteria set forth in our Exhortation **Evangelii Nuntiandi** and those you specified yourselves in your Report.

This evolution of the parish makes us think of a comparison, that of the vocal and instrumental concert. Each community is a little different from the others, like voices and instruments. But one and all, in order to remain authentically ecclesial, must be very concerned to remain in communion, to find the means to meet to celebrate the same Saviour, adhere to the same Gospel, participate in the same Bread of life and resume the same apostolic mission together. Recently, moreover, in the Letter to French Catholics, you laid down the major guidelines by which they must be inspired. And the more the priests themselves live this unity among themselves, whatever their age or their specialized ministry may be, with respect, trust and brotherly love, the closer will be the unity among communities.

### ADVANCEMENT OF THE LAITY

We note, in your Reports, another main concern; the advancement of the laity. Is it necessary to assure you that we quite agree? It is the Lord's will that all the baptized and confirmed should take part in the apostolate. This is one of the major guidelines of the Second Vatican Council.

A preliminary remark: concern for a trained and responsible laity should not, of course, make us forget the urgency of calling priests and preparing them well. On the contrary, it demands this, as we have recently recalled.

This having been said, we warmly encourage your efforts for the formation, at all levels, of a Christian laity, for the apostolate cannot be improvised, and it must draw its principles and its methods from the Church. Those who work in apostolic movements, the leaders particularly, cannot claim to carry out a work of evangelization without seeking to deepen this specific Christian formation. The faith which must imbue their action cannot be deduced from a mere glance at life or from an analysis of events,



although it sets itself to do so. It springs from the Gospel read in Church, it is strengthened in prayer, it is nourished in the sacraments, and puts into practice in the first place the fundamental charism of Christians: love, universal love.

And we add: a doctrinal formation. Many movements are already trying to make provision for it, according to their means. For the laity in general, we know, too, that possibilities of doctrinal renewal have been organized in the Catholic Institutes of France and your respective dioceses. We hope that many of the laity will thus receive a solid theological teaching which will enable them to understand the mystery of the Church. Such laymen, fully present in the realities of this time, and sometimes at the critical points where the fate of civilization is at stake, will be better able to discern values and exchange values, for a true evangelization.



These laymen, far from being instruments of the hierarchy, will acquire their identity and come of age, by respecting likewise the identity and the specific mission of their pastors. It is important to maintain and renew the indispensable organic bond between priests and laity. Each one intervenes according to his particular vocation. The priest does not have to replace the militant, or the militant to replace the priest. The Church does not want either a clericalism, which would claim to monopolize the apostolate, or a "laicalism" cut off from the priesthood on the pretext of autonomy. What is necessary, is intelligent persevering articulation: it will be creative, and will prove that the Church, far from being a relationship of forces, is a communion.

As for the fields and methods of apostolate, realism makes it necessary to show flexibility and diversity. The different environments of life are a privileged ground, to the extent to which the laity endeavour to evangelize particular mentalities and to stimulate commitments inspired by a Christian spirit. Realities of a strictly family nature, educational responsibilities, problems of conscience of professional and civic life etc... must not be neglected. The political dimension of problems, however important it may be, must not mask the other aspects of daily life, or harden interpersonal relations. And to avoid ghettos, it is important to bring about wide meetings within the People of God.



Finally it is necessary to steer for the goal of evangelization: if it is necessarily interested in the humanization of structures, it wishes more deeply to open minds to the Gospel and even to provoke in the hearts of people Christ's fundamental question to the disciples:

"Who do you say I am?". Respect for the autonomy of the temporal order and the growing phenomenon of secularization must not make us forget the necessity of bearing witness explicitly to the faith.

We know that certain apostolic movements are accepting more and more "catechumens" or unbelievers of goodwill; it is a sign of their influence. This fact must not, however, paralyse specifically Christian reflection, or reduce its spiritual revival, or lead to ambiguous action.

We call upon you to examine these points again with our Pontifical Council for the Laity, the structures and members of which we have just renewed. We are well aware that you share these wishes. The laity expect from you closeness, benevolence, friendship, but also discernment, frankness and courage. It is the same love and trust we all bear together for the Christian laity that makes us desire for them an authentic and vigorous apostolate, that of the salt which does not lose its savour, that of the leaven which mingles with the whole dough to make it rise.



# **PASTORAL NORMS AND GUIDELINES ON THE MINISTRY OF GUEST PRIESTS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA**

## **I. COVERAGE:**

ALL DIOCESAN PRIESTS duly INCARDINATED to ANOTHER LOCAL CHURCH but actually RESIDING AND MINISTERING in the ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA in the past six months OR intending TO RESIDE AND MINISTER therein for at least six months are covered by these PASTORAL NORMS and GUIDELINES.

## **II. REQUISITES:**

Pursuant to LAW and PRACTICE, to RESIDE AND MINISTER in the ARCHDIOCESE, they should be in pacified possession of the following basic documents required for the VALID and/or LICIT regular exercise of the MINISTRY:

1. CELEBRET from their PROPER LOCAL ORDINARY or his VICAR.
2. RECOMMENDATION from their PROPER LOCAL ORDINARY or his VICAR.
3. GRANT of MINISTERIAL FACULTIES from the ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA or his VICAR.

## **III. REGISTRY:**

So that the LEGITIMACY of their PRESENCE AND MINISTRY in the ARCHDIOCESE can be duly certified for ecclesiastical and civil purposes, ALL GUEST PRIESTS should be accordingly registered in the BOOK OF GUEST PRIESTS to be updated every SIX MONTHS in collaboration with the GUEST AND HOST PRIESTS.

## **IV. OBJECTIVES:**

The main objectives envisioned in the ACCEPTANCE and RECOGNITION of GUEST PRIESTS in the ARCHDIOCESE in accord with these PASTORAL NORMS and GUIDELINES are the following:

1. To better promote their SPIRITUAL LIFE and PRIESTLY COMMITMENT, and ascertain their DUE PLACEMENT and COMPENSATION for ACTUAL SERVICES RENDERED, during their stay in the ARCHDIOCESE.
2. To better integrate and render their MINISTRY more effective and self-fulfilling, in the PAROCHIAL, VICARIAL, DISTRICT or ARCHDIOCESAN pastoral plan.

3. To better serve and minister to the PEOPLE OF GOD in the ARCHDIOCESE through a closer COMMUNION and COMMUNICATION with the pertinent ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS in the ARCHDIOCESE.

#### V. ORGANIZATION:

The EPISCOPAL VICAR designate for GUEST PRIESTS in the ARCHDIOCESE shall undertake ORGANIZATIONAL ways and means conducive to the attainment of the above OBJECTIVES — without prejudice to COMMON LAWS, ARCHDIOCESAN STATUTES and PARTICULAR NORMS, and in CLOSE SUBORDINATED ADMINISTRATIVE COLLABORATION with the pertinent ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS of the ARCHDIOCESE and the guest Priestss' PROPER LOCAL ORDINARIES.

#### VI. FUNCTIONS:

The ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA through the LEGITIMATE HIERARCHICAL AUTHORITY fully and ultimately vested in the PASTORAL OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP, welcomes and confirms the RESIDENCE AND MINISTRY of GUEST PRIESTS therein ONLY when they are in possession of the relevant BASIC DOCUMENTS and duly registered in the pertinent BOOK, considers and recognizes them as TEMPORARY AUXILIARY PASTORAL COLLABORATORS deserving of its administrative attention and solicitude.

The GUEST PRIESTS so residing and ministering in the ARCHDIOCESE while in pursuit of LEGITIMATE PERSONAL MATTERS and/or OFFICIAL FINALITY, are equally expected to respect and support standing or dated pastoral directives render deference and obedience to the ARCHDIOCESAN HIERARCHICAL AUTHORITY in line with their TEMPORARY AUXILIARY PASTORAL COLLABORATION therewith.

#### VII. RESERVATION:

As provided by LAW and demanded by ECCLESIAL ORDER, the MINISTRY of a GUEST PRIEST in the ARCHDIOCESE may be TERMINATED for a DUE CAUSE, by the non-renewal or withdrawal of his MINISTERIAL FACULTIES at the instance of a COMPETENT LOCAL ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIOR — subject TO APPEAL, if so desired, to a HIGHER AUTHORITY.

MANILA, 31 MARCH 1977

(SGD.) EPISCOPAL VICAR

(SGD. NOTED) CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF  
MANILA



## **APPOINTMENT**

**W e**

**JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN**  
**Archbishop of Manila**

Aware of his scholastic attainments in the sphere of Ecclesiastical Philosophy and Sacred Theology, and considering his expertise and apostolate of long standing in the field of Catholic Education, by these presents appoint pursuant to Common Law, established Archdiocesan Statutes and Norms

**HIS EXCELLENCY**  
**MOST REVEREND LEONARDO LEGASPI, O.P.**

as Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Manila, and as Episcopal Vicar for the Affairs of Catholic Education in terms of the pastoral care of students, developmental assistance to Catholic particularly Parochial Schools, organization and coordination of School Chaplains and Catholic Educators, and doctrinal vigilance on religious formation, in the Archdiocese of Manila.

Given in MANILA, this eleventh day of July in the year of the LORD, Nineteen Hundred and Seventy Seven.

✠ JAIME L. CARD. SIN

**ARCHDIOCESE OF TUGUEGARAO**  
**ARCHBISHOP'S RESIDENCE**  
**Tuguegarao, Cagayan**  
**Philippines 1101**  
**N. 77147**

**COMMUNICATION**

On or about May 16, 1977, the REV. FR. EDUARDO CABATOTAN, a diocesan priest of this Archdiocese, contracted civil marriage with MYRNA MATEO in the municipality of Tuao, Cagayan.

In accordance with the Sacred Canons, I hereby declare that REV. FR. EDUARDO CABATOTAN and the above-mentioned MYRNA MATEO have incurred EXCOMMUNICATION *latae sententiae* simply reserved to the Apostolic See, (c. 2388). As a result, they shall be deprived of the Sacraments and Sacramentals and may not receive Christian burial until they repent of this offense (cc. 1240 and 2260).

I further declare that the above-mentioned marriage is canonically null and void *ab initio* (cc. 1072 and 1094).

† (Sgd.) **TEODULFO S. DOMINGO**  
**Archbishop of Tuguegarao**

# ADVERTISING

by

**Fr. Paul McLachlan (F.A.I.A. Dip)**  
**Director of Social Communications,**  
**Diocese of Brisbane, Australia**

*"Advertising never sold anybody anything:  
Advertising makes people want things"*

## INTRODUCTION

### **The naturalness of advertising**

Advertising is important because to work and live together humans need to communicate, so, in some way, everyday, everybody advertises. Man has always sought to exchange information, and the modes and intensity of this exchange have changed as he progressed over the years. The size, structure and function of our society has changed so drastically and with this change has come the complication in the exchange of information. As the complexity of our society increases, so the need for mass communication increases.

The North American Indian did not take up smoking because of a national advertising campaign and the worldwide sales did not result from television commercials. But tobacco was advertised; people heard about it and it sold because people wanted to try it.

Even negative critics of advertising, in an attempt to ban advertising, would have to advertise.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Information — a part of life**

We too often forget that advertising is a part of our life. We are too ready to consign it to the commercial world when, in fact, it is an integral part of the world around us. The beauty of nature is a three dimensional commercial. The man next door advertises and his commercials affect our daily life style. In the

bus he talks to us into joining his club, to vote for his party; he has sold something to us after having persuaded us to buy from him. He has advertised.

### Information actuates

The power of persuasion is so much part of us it simply means talking to one another. Advertising is just that, talking to people. We can persuade one another in many and varied ways: e.g., by dress, by tone, by gesture, by silence and by pause, by colour, by shape and size and we come to understand these many forms because we think about them. Conversation, persuasion, advertising are one and the same in the one aspect that they are two-way communication and have to be understood by both the sender and receiver. For advertising to be effective, it must talk to us in a language we understand.

Bertrand Russel's dictum that: **most people would rather die than think and many, in fact, do!** is contradicted by the very purpose of advertising. The copy writer must recognize that his reader, listener, viewer will most certainly think about what he claims. An advertisement must compel attention. If it is unnoticed, or ignored, it has failed.

### Declaration — not necessarily information

Having gained the attention of the prospective buyer it is clearly of vital importance to sustain it. Some advertisers fall into the trap of equating 'attention-getting' with the use of noise, printed noise and explosive sound effects. What a waste when the effect is lost in the welter of confusion and annoyance. Headlines that scream in a cacophony of sensation can attract immediate attention, but readers quickly lose interest. This is cheating and the consumer knows it. The whole purpose of advertising is to inform and to sell products and services.

### ADVERTISING — AN ABUSE?

People who **fear advertising** usually have faith in their own powers of resistance but do not trust those of other people. Were all targets of advertising like themselves, they urge, there would be no danger. Actually, research studies have shown that the public as a whole is alert to being advertised at and that resistance to advertising in general and in detail is fairly widespread. They also show that the people like, appreciate and remember advertising appeals that are useful to them.

Naturally the consumer will be misled, sometimes, by bad advertising; he will make mistakes: but these mistakes teach and build up a resistance which might be compared to that resistance which the human body develops to measles and other childhood complaints and ailments. As a result the average person is not so easily misled. The people for the most part are a good deal tougher than those who wish to protect them from advertising realise. And they are essentially human; their lives revolve around their homes; their families and their garden. They are full of plans for the betterment of their homes for providing good things for their children dressing better: striving towards an improved standard of living. They lay great store on what they possess and what they have achieved. In these matters they have a well developed sense of self proportion. They want to lead their own life in their own way and above all they want freedom of choice including the right to make that choice for whatever reasons seem best to them, whether they be emotional or icily rational. In this regard no money estimate can ever evaluate the contribution of advertising on our free way of life.

That the power of advertising is abused by far too many, is denied. It is a proven fact, by your rejection, that advertising can be tried as a lure to trap people and fool them. The slick operator can and does abuse peoples' desires especially the 'socially inadequate' person who, more times than not, cannot afford the object he is led to 'want'. Advertising is abused, by the too casual businessman who does not know what he is really doing and inadvertently misleads; by the 'confidence trickster' who deliberately sets out to mislead by the operator who works on emotive exaggerations. But to judge all advertising according to the criterion '**some cheat, defraud or mislead, therefore it is an evil**' is the same as saying "riding on buses is unsafe" because one bus was involved in an accident. Don't blame the bus, blame the driver.

#### REGULATED — NOT CONTROLLED

In Australia there are formidable regulations to curb exaggerated misleading or false claims in advertising, (i.e. the Trade Practices Act). There are various Federations, Councils and Associations with self-imposed codes, standards and ethics. These are the responsible advertisers — (the fact that they do belong to these associations, possibly is their best advertisement 'perhaps their product is good if they determine to inform rather than impel'). **Abuse weakens credibility** so in the long run it is the advertiser who loses.



Even if these organizations did not exist, such practice is totally undesirable as a business proposition, let alone, by professional responsibility to the industry. We can measure the validity of this statement against our own experience of life. If someone makes a promise to you and breaks it, you lose confidence in that person. An advertisement is a promise; moreover it is made publicly. If a man wants to stay in business he has to ensure that his promises are kept. A product must live up to its promise. All promises must be able to be substantiated; in fact, this is law.

If today all abuses in advertising were eliminated, many of the negative thinkers would still not be satisfied. To them all advertising—no matter what—is a social destroying agent. These people would accept that the greatest blessing to the early morning shave is the double bladed razor—for a company to try to inform people—to tell them of this fact and so, therefore, sell the razor is a crime. It would appear that to invent, devise, produce, in an attempt to be successful in business is something to be forbidden. Would we ask a carpenter to build a house and forbid him to use a hammer? There are people who want to do just that with advertising, reduce it to a point of complete ineffectiveness, so that it can no longer be a means of business communication. On the other hand there are those who would want advertising to confuse and delude people, appealing to their suppressed desires with emotive appeals in order to sell their product—which, nine times out of ten, is like their advertising—a fraud.

#### 'DESIRE' DISCRIMINATION

There is only one sure way of controlling advertising appeal and that is by the discriminating buyer himself. People themselves have to do something: they have to evaluate, discriminate and appreciate advertising. To evaluate, they will need to know what they require for life and what is practically possible for them to obtain. This has to be determined from the barrage of commodities presented by producers who try to influence the thinking process of the buyer to the extent where they will come to 'want' the object. Making the desire the drive.

Once a person can evaluate that person is well on the way to being able to discriminate. That is, able to say: 'this is good for me'; 'this is bad for me'; 'this is of lasting value'; 'this is of passing value'. Selecting what is best for himself—a free and deliberate choice, not one forced on him by extraneous pressures. When he has reached this stage he is discriminating. He now appreciates.

Knowing what he wants and not being told what he 'wants'. Knowing why he makes his choice and being capable in himself of making his choice.

### To appreciate — we need to be free

To make a choice we need to 'know' and that we might know we need to be informed. Incidentally what advertising there is under totalitarianism is rigidly controlled and understandably so. It is dangerous to let a captive people choose freely their food, clothing or their homes; such freedom can only too easily expand to the ultimate goal of choosing their leaders and their own way of life.

Advertising is the means of industry communication, as such it is a necessary part of business. It is the means by which the manufacturer communicates with the consumer. More than that it is not just a means of business communication, advertising is an essential part of a free economy. Vast sums of money, time and thought are spent on the development and manufacture of goods which it is believed, the public want. It would be foolishness, indeed, to stop short at this point and not tell the people what is available, the improvements and advantages. Without advertising as such, the consumer would often be hard put to make his free choice.

### UNDERSTANDING — MOTIVATION

Advertising is concerned with motivating people and to motivate people you have to understand them. We have all said: "I understand you" and in most cases it is a polite lie, for to understand someone we must look into their hidden needs and driving impulses.

As much as we admire the individual as an independent, we must admit that as such he exists as an ideal rather than as a fact. We are limited in our experience; we lack **essential information**; unconscious motives, (not only those implanted by the advertiser) sway our judgments. We are vulnerable to suggestion. Advertising does have success in stimulating wants and suggesting courses of action, but to say that advertising is automatically successful is a claim which can be fairly described as a delusion. Indeed its delusionary character is accepted by economic critics when they denounce advertising as wasteful; if wasteful it is, it is so precisely because it is ineffective.

## DRIVE — TO INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

To have individual identity, recognition of self, status and the commensurate privileges which demonstrate the possession of it, is the fundamental desire. Human motivation, simply the drive toward the satisfaction of needs, can be divided under two headings.

Primary and Secondary human needs. These are:

Primary — shelter, security, sustenance, sex.

We must have somewhere to live and to sleep; we must have the security of affection, hence the family unit, and beyond this the Community for mutual self-protection. We must have food. We need sexuality not only for procreation but also as a fundamental means of physical and emotional expression. We all know this and little else need be said. They add up to the desire for life.

Secondary —

Social needs in contradistinction to the Primary (basic groups). The satisfaction of social needs is important; satisfaction of primary, basic needs is **vital**. Social desires are virtually the same in us today as they were in ancient Rome. Social status, individual recognition, material advancement, remain the same; what is different is the expression given to them in today's modern mass-consumption democracy.

## Concrete examples of human motivation

These principal needs can be divided into four categories of human motivation:

- All of us want to **be something** — attainment.
- All of us want to **achieve** something — ambition.
- All of us want to **do** something — action.
- All of us want to **avoid** something — prevention.

Examples:

**attainment:** we want to **be:** healthy, attractive, successful (at work, as parents, as friends), capable, influential over others, admired by others.

**ambition:** we want to **retain:** our health, better appearance, more money, more security, popularity, prestige, greater convenience and comfort, pride of accomplishment, more free time (leisure).

**action:** we want to **express** ourselves at work, at leisure, acquire possessions, copy those we admire, to improve our social status.

**prevention:** we want to avoid effort, anxiety, uncertainty, embarrassment, spending.

The advertiser can and does crystallize these elements into priorities. The scriptwriter and the creative team, after investigations and surveys by the market research team, identify the need relevant to the consumer and which can be satisfied by the product or service being promoted, and then **express** the benefits of the proposition in a way which is convincing and will be retained and recalled. Manufacturers know that the provision of product information alone is not enough in the present day intensity of competition. The avalanche of brands available make it necessary to 'sell' as well as to inform, hence the use of emotive advertising. Put together the complexities of society and the complexities of human nature and expose the result to an impact of emotive material deliberately designed to elicit a response and that response is or can be uncontrollable in many.

### NEEDS AND WANTS

#### Advertising doesn't sell — it makes people want things

The salesman is the point of sale and what, in fact, he is selling is simply — benefits. Therefore it is essential for the researchers to establish just what it is that the consumer 'needs' and 'wants' in relation to the product. 'How' and why will he product **benefit** the buyer. What is it the buyer **desires**? What is the 'purchase proposition'?

On the buyer's side, people are seldom interested in a product or service in itself. They ask: "what can it do for me?" It is irritating to the consumer if he is exposed to an advertisement for a refrigerator which makes no mention of capacity purpose and the principal benefit of advertising is the provision of information — that is, information relevant to the prospect's 'needs' and 'wants'.

What is it the buyer 'wants' from the refrigerator? The "puffery" (hyperbole), is expected and, I suppose, necessary in a free society. What is commercially (and morally) wrong are claims or promises beyond the product's capabilities. (Customer satisfaction is the 'life-blood' of any company). Any respectable firm would have a highly developed 'equality control' process through which a product would have to pass before any claim is made public.

### CREATING DESIRE — INDUCING ACTION

Taking into consideration then, the need to supply information, the "need" of the consumer for a certain commodity, the advertiser

has to devise some way of creating 'desire'. A desire for his product in preference to his competitor's. He has to sell the 'crispness' not the biscuit. He will try to sell the 'sizzle' not the steak. A slab of meat in itself is hardly likely to inspire, but cooked, served with colourful vegetables, steaming hot, makes an 'object' a 'desire'.

The desire is not created by the "steak" but by its relationship to a hot, tasty, satisfying meal — appetite appeal is activated, heading to a desire to possess.

The appeal to the base appetites is the simplest and easiest for the 'smart' advertiser to work upon. Posters, magazines, record labels, songs, even popsicles can activate and are in fact a potent means of creating desire. It is not the desire for the jeans, but the 'desire' for the pleasant feeling aroused by the appeal that sells the jeans. The stronger the appeal to the desires (especially the suppressed desires) the stronger the inducement to act. Most people are lazy. They have to be reassured and so the litany of outlets indicates clearly that no effort is required to fulfil the desire. We have all seen the list, obtainable from: "Smiths, Jones, Woolworths, and all other stores" — so action is not going to be difficult. "Go out and it is yours now — act before midnight".

The advertiser can select from any of the primary and secondary needs and can then aim his advertising appeal through any of the categories of human motivation. The challenge, not one to be feared but faced, has to be met by a thinking public. Evaluation as to the 'needs' necessary for life has to be appreciated by a discriminating public (people, buyer). Educators have to acknowledge the full import of this part of our way of life and make provision in the curriculum of studies available to students. In Brisbane the Australian Association of National Advertisers have introduced in recent years the "Company Game". A course for senior students introducing them to marketing and advertising in Commerce through participation in and active involvement with leading companies. Teachers should place before their students the profession of merchandising in its entirety and its proper place in the spectrum of career choices available to young people.

Listed here are perhaps those qualities most needed in the advertising man or woman:

**An interest in people:** Advertising is talking to people. Advertising is about people. The person involved in the advertising profession must know people if he is to communicate. To understand people he must be interested in them. We have said advertising is directed to thinking people, ordinary people, and the knowledge gained by the advertising man, of people and their



desires, must never be turned against them. To use this knowledge in such a way is to be concerned with things and not with people.

**A dynamic personality:** Advertising is fast moving in a rapidly changing society and market place. New trends and new needs must be quickly recognized and these adapted to the true requirements of the people. These speed and adaptability does not mean he has to forego ideals and values merely to adapt his ideas and method to mass audio-visual communication.

**Objectivity:** The diversities and complexities of society involve the advertiser in an operation aimed to people of diverse interests and education, status and tastes. Judgments must be objective—'not what you like or dislike', but the standards and values of the people must always be recognized. The advertiser is not aiming at changing social values, neither is his purpose to legitimize social changes opposed to the values of the community.

**Determination and Energy:** The rewards of good advertising are high. The demands likewise are heavy. Study in all aspects of business, commercial law, all social behaviour will demand dedication and long hard hours to prepare for success in communication. The cheat will not succeed in this profession any longer than a fraud in any other. The will to succeed must never be comprised by deceit or the fear of competition.

## CONCLUSION

Reputable advertisers, who are in the majority, do not fear control systems and these systems do not imply the existence of a battery of unscrupulous advertisers at the ready to mislead the public. People might be misled and persuaded to buy a product **once** on the basis of exaggerated, misleading claims, but if it fails to give the benefit promised, it will not be bought again. Advertising publicly **identifies a brand**. Advertising then is a two-edged weapon if it is misused, and most reputable advertisers readily recognize this. Reputable firms acknowledge that misleading advertising brings all down with it, so the short-term gains it brings are quickly cancelled out.

In point of fact, the most misleading advertising is perpetuated by the public itself and while newspapers exercise reasonable

vigilance over their columns, the classified ads are the public trying to deceive the public.

Nor can the control system operate against the 'fly-by-nighter', it does prevent the pornographers and snide operators from 'pushing' their wares in reputable media, but they still use the shop window and shelves, depending on public apathy to cover their operations.

The public has the strongest control on advertising. The voluntary control system is a powerful instrument both for protecting the public and ultimately, by helping to ensure that advertising is 'legal', 'descent', 'honest' and 'truthful' but in the end the result depends upon the discriminating public.

Impressions die hard, especially when they are derived by vivid audio-visual input. British life is not like that described in Charles Dicken's novels, neither is all advertising for "quack remedies".

# **THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST IN A PRIEST MUST BE MANIFESTED IN HIS ACTIONS**

**by**

**Jaime Cardinal Sin, D.D.**

In every organization where there is power there is a search for more power. "All power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely", wrote Lord Action. To overcome jealous, angry altercations, Our Lord taught his disciples the lesson of littleness. After the Transfiguration, on the way back to Capharnaum, the twelve disputed about who would be the greatest among them. Arriving at Peter's house, the Lord asked: "What were you arguing about on the way?" (Mark 9, 33). They were embarrassed because it was a sign that the Lord knew the subject of their discussion. Sometimes the Lord's disciples and priests can little understand the nature of his truth.

The cult of pre-eminence is not foreign to the Church; even the passion today for higher education can sometimes be used to sharpen the claws for competition. Perhaps because Peter was called 'Satan' by the Lord, some of the disciples, especially James and John were ready to take over the primacy with two co-equal seats. How to be humble when in power was one of the hardest lessons the Lord ever had to teach his priests: namely, that they can be prayerful, compassionate and generous, but at the same time grossly defective through their self-seeking. The Lord uses a child as the vehicle for instruction: "If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and the servant of all" (Mark 9, 35). Jesus here halts the boast of heraldry and the pomp of power; he stops the human parade of greatness and makes the "somebodies" the "nobodies" and the "nobodies" the "somebodies." He said this authority, like His, must be administered in a moral atmosphere.

## ABUSING AUTHORITY

There are two ways of abusing authority: one is to elevate oneself unduly over others; the other is to denigrate rightful authority. The more modern abuse of authority is to demean it, deny it or seek to play another role than the one the office of priesthood demands. The pride that once sought the first place, now seeks the last place in order to be more noticed. The older sacerdotal pride was jealous of the first place; the new modern pride is jealous of the last. The priest who is unconscious of power never abuses it because it is Christ's power. "By God's grace, I am what I am". (1 Cor. 15, 10). The priest who ridicules the authority of the Church and Scripture and the Pope is proud of saying "I am not what I am".

No Church is strong when it is "tolerated" by the world. The Church is weak when its delegates are afraid of not "keeping in the good grace of those who flaunt the authority of Christ". It is only because the salt is "divisive" to the meat that it gives flavour. It is only because the light is "divisive" to darkness that it illumines. The new hypocrisy now is envisioned in the "New Christianity" (I am distributing copies of this article to all of you) which some Christians would advocate just to be able to give way to their own whims which could be entirely different from what Christ's visible Head would want us to do. It used to be that the priest enjoyed prestige and general acceptance because of his function as an ambassador of the King of Kings. Today, because of a denial of authority, the ceding of pre-eminence to the spirit to the world, a priest often has to earn respect. He does not enjoy status. Scandals have diminished respect for his authority. The task now is to re-earn it by personal fitness and repentance which restores the innocence that was lost. If there is anything that keeps a priest humble in the exercise of the Kingly Office of Christ, it is the remembrance of his own sins. The priest becomes the model of humility when he knows he is not innocent. He is most strong in the affirmation of the authority of Christ when he is most conscious of his own weakness, for then command and compassion become inseparable.

The second manifestation of authority of Christ in the priest is service. Our age is not as anti-authority as is commonly believed. One kind of authority it always accepts; that is, who does what he commands. The command without the deed, the telling without the doing, is what prompts rebellion against authority. It is the example rather than the precept that inspires obedience. Authority is service.

At the Last Supper, the Lord enforced this definition of authority when he washed the feet of his disciples.

In every society there must be authority and subordination. But the authority must be exercised in sacrificial love for those who do not have that authority.

### *Test of sincerity*

The problem behind authority has been well expressed by Jean de Rougenant: "If my neighbour is stronger than I, I fear him; if he is weaker, I despise him: if we were equal, I resort to subterfuge". The answer to this dilemma is for the strong man to recognize his moral weakness in the light of faith, and for the weak man to recognize his moral strength through the grace of God. As Paul Tournier puts it: "The martyrs were not, in the main, 'strong' by nature, and yet they faced persecution and death with indomitable courage". Such were the Apostles after Pentecost, who a few weeks before had all fled from the Garden of Gethsemane. When the rich serve the poor, they learn how poor they were on the inside; when the learned professor spends time with the mentally retarded, he discovers an innocent wisdom of which he knows little.

Finally, two telling touchstones of a priest's life are his attitude to the Crucifix and the Eucharist. In every age where humility, purity and loyalty decline, there is a thrusting aside of the recall of the Cross and the Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

### *Wilderness Church*

The Church today is like the Church in the Wilderness. By the Church of the Wilderness we mean the Israelites, the people of God who after 400 years of slavery in Egypt, started out for the Promised and of Canaan. The modern Church of the Wilderness is like the old Church of the Wilderness in three ways:

- 1) contempt of Hierarchy, Manna or the Eucharist,
- 2) rebellion against authority,
- 3) want of balance during a transitional period.

The Church up until the Vatican Council was more separated from the spirit of the world than now. But, since the rightful emphasis on being more involved with the world and its needs



was made, there began to be a yearning for the fleshports of modern Egypt. Some priests and religious felt much less comfortable in being identified with what they called the "Establishment".

### *Self-selected standard*

A decline in reverence for the Eucharist developed in the Church as there was a rejection of the Manna among the Israelites. "Will no one give us meat? There is nothing wherever we look except this Manna? In Egypt we had fish for the asking, cucumbers and melons onions and garlic". (Num 11, 4-7). Abortion, violence, divorce and repudiation of vows which belonged to the Egypt of the world were now by some accepted and defended. It was no longer what the Church believed or the Holy Father taught or what the Word of God cautioned; the individual conscience of and by itself became the sole standard of right and wrong: "Each of us doing what he pleases". (Deut. 2, 8).

The second reason why we are like the Church of the Wilderness is that in both there is a rebellion against authority. The People of God protested against the authority that Moses and Aaron had over them: "You take too much upon yourselves. Every member of the community is holy and the Lord is among them all, Why do you set yourselves up above the assembly of the Lord". (Num. 16, 3). Why should the Pope guide them in morals any more than Moses?

The Church like Israel is in transition. As Israel stood between Egypt and the Promised Land so the Church stands in this present wilderness wandering between what it is and what it will eventually become. We can only pray God that his period of wandering in and out may last no longer than forty years. As the Israelites were brought out of Egypt but not brought at once into Canaan, so the Church today is in between. This middle state does not mean that when the Church recovers from this secularism, that it will be a perfect Church. When the Israelites passed into Canaan they had seven battles to fight. Canaan is not heaven.

The Church today is undergoing its wandering too: the cloud and the pillar of fire move her from one position to another; no sooner does an experiment begin than it ends in a water-less waste. Nothing seems to be fixed except that God is leading us. "Have no fear, I am with you, says the Lord of Hosts; my Spirit is present among you". (Haggai 2,4, 5).

*For a greater energy*

My dear Brothers and Sisters: there are two kinds of "atheism"; of the right, which professes love of God and ignores neighbour; and the atheism of the left, which professes to love neighbour and ignores God. The incognito Christ operates in history and many are serving him and loving him unwittingly. But our problem here now in the Philippines, is the one who feels that the lifted Host and raised Chalice are impediments to the serving of bread and wine to the hungry and thirsty.

Our days are not safe; they are hard days of testing. Let us then make sincere and self-searching withdrawal from the world to charge our batteries for action so that a new ardour would burn in our breast to receive new thrusts of God for a greater apostolic energy.

April 7, 1977

# THE CHURCH'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT THROUGH TITHING — THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE

by

Florencio Testera, O.P.

The centuries-old financing system of the Church in the Philippines seemed headed for a radical change during the late sixties and early seventies. The Arancel, Stole Fee System, Diocesan Tariff has been the main source of financial support in the Filipino Church for many centuries. Undeniably, priests had often complained of the shortcomings of the system, but nothing in the past was ever said or done to abolish it. However, when Vatican II came out with a number of official pronouncements urging the abolition of all programs of Church support that abetted class-distinction or those which were tainted with a money-seeking appearance, hell broke loose on the Arancel. Right then and there, and without much of a process to speak of, the Arancel was doomed. The contention was that the Stole Fee System had failed in its main objective of providing adequate support for the Church and its ministers, and, furthermore, it was not in conformity with the spirit of Vatican II. Such line of thought runs all through the entire report prepared in July 1969 by a special Committee formed by the CBCP, wherein the gradual elimination of the Arancel was recommended as the only way to eliminate class distinction in the administration of the sacred functions. Moreover, the most severe attacks against the system were yet to come from the rank and file in the Church.

Amidst somber warnings from some quarters about the possible dire consequences of a sudden change to a new financing system, the Church in the Philippines opted for the gradual elimination of the age-old arancel.

Now, having reached a point of no return, the need arose to move quickly and systematically in search of an alternative to the Arancel. It was then when biblical tithing was singled out as the desired system that could finance the needs of the Church and meet the aspirations of its ministers and personnel.

The earliest experiment hereabouts in the tithing system was undertaken in the Phil-Am Parish of Quezon City as early as 1956. At the diocesan level Sorsogon has the distinction of being its pioneer in 1969. At about the same time the Santo Niño Parish in Tacloban City followed suit, and then Mount Carmel in Project 6, Quezon City in 1970.

All these projects bear similar characteristics and pursue a common goal, that of providing the Filipino Church with a more suitable source of income to support its material needs and those of its personnel.

This, no doubt, was a most formidable task and many were openly skeptical about its success. This notwithstanding, the innovation generated bursting enthusiasm among the sponsors and supporters of biblical tithing. It was contended by these quarters that a system that had been tried and fared well in the USA and in Europe had no reason to fail in P.I. either. Was this, after all, a valid assumption? Did tithing really work in the local churches in such a satisfactory manner as it had done in other countries? This paper will try to answer such queries using as basis for discussion the knowledge derived from a decade of experimentation on tithing in the Philippines.

### THE TITHING EXPERIMENT IN THE DIOCESE OF SORSOGON

As already said, the diocese of Sorsogon pioneered in the tithing system on a diocesan level in 1969. Its main objectives were: 1) to provide adequate and equitable remuneration for priests as befits their social status and apostolic ministry; 2) the gradual elimination of the Arancel, and eventually, the abolition of the anomalies and inequities allegedly fostered by it, such as the semblance of commercialism in the administration of the sacraments and the sacramentals, the distinction of classes in the sacred rites for weddings, baptisms and funerals, the inequity of living standards among priests and many others; 3) the reclassification of parishes; 4) the eventual standardization of priestly remuneration.<sup>1</sup>

Envelopes were regularly distributed among the faithful for enclosing their tithes, and so the program was popularly known as the Envelope System.

<sup>1</sup> DIMEN, Salvador., "Towards an Equitable Remuneration of Priest through the Envelope System". *Philippine Priests' Forum*, March 1969. pp. 5-21. (Hereinafter cited as PPF); "Tithing", PPF., Sept. 1969, pp. 5-12.

The actual implementation of the Sorsogon program was preceded by an extensive and well organized educational campaign which reached the people even in the remotest barrios. The motive behind such promotional drive was to make the faithful fully aware of the serious obligation incumbent upon each christian to support the Church and its ministers.

The program had an auspicious start: "the laity, both cultured and uncultured, were enthusiastic and concern beyond expectation. Tithing then became the talk of the town", (PPF, Sept., 1969, p. 8). But what happened as the novelty rubbed off? The Philippine Priests' Forum, which ushered in the Sorsogon Project amidst enthusiastic cheers and high expectations, failed to keep its readers periodically posted on this matter. Some priests, however, with working assignments in Sorsogon and nearby places have brought to us the sad news: "the program turned out to be a flop. No one in town talks of it anymore".

This report is truly disheartening for, after all, the Sorsogon project was a praiseworthy experiment and, furthermore, its organizers left no stone unturned to make it work and succeed. Who or what is to blame for its failure? Was it due to structural defects within the system itself? Or was rather the result of lack of interest and cooperation from both the clergy and the laity?

Knowledgeable persons interviewed by this writer are split on their appraisal of the Sorsogon project. For some the failure was due to the apathy of a considerable number of pastors entrenched in financial security under the wings of the Arancel. Other priests who had been originally sold out to the innovative program became cold to it after the initial enthusiasm cooled off and saw to their consternation that all the tithes collected were utterly insufficient to keep their parishes going. Another factor which decidedly contributed to the collapse of the tithing program was the prevalent criticism that it was a poor imitation of the financing gimmick of the Iglesia ni Kristo. The faithful, it is said, begrudge any financing scheme whereby they are constantly reminded of their dues with the parish. Instead of fixed monthly offerings, they prefer to pay the stole fees whenever the ministerial services of a priest are needed.

In all likelihood, the precise factor or factors that in the final analysis have accounted for the Sorsogon flop may never be known. It may be pointed out, however, that the organizers of the project failed to apply the lesson from history — that tithing can succeed only in communities whose members have steady jobs and stable incomes — which did not and does not hold in most of the towns of Sorsogon.



Lastly it was the height of naiveté to presume that: "those who do not tithe would be a negligible minority who in the end will be pricked by their consciences", PPF., Sept., 1969, p. 12). What really happened was the other way round: many tithers stopped their contributions resentful at seeing some of the well-to-do who did not give tithes receiving free ministrations as the regular tithers in lower financial brackets. So the result was that the tithers dwindled continuously and soon became an insignificant minority.

### THE SANTO NIÑO PARISH APPROACH TO TITHING

The Santo Niño Parish Approach to Tithing<sup>2</sup> is an integral part of a broad and ambitious Pastoral Program aimed at the structural renewal of the Santo Niño Parish in Tacloban City. Tithes were to be given monthly, and so the name Monthly Thanksgiving Offering Program, which is tithing pure and simple, to which the authors of the Parish Pastoral Plan pinned too rosy hopes because as they said: "if all the parishioners who can afford will give at least a monthly offering proportionate to their ability to give, then, there is no need for the Arancel system. And class distinction and the smack of commercialism in sacramental ministrations will be eradicated, because the parish priests will render for free the same ministrations to all in return for their financial support", (PPF., March, 1971, p. 38; March 1970, p. 53).

The mechanics of the Monthly Thanksgiving Offering Program are as follows: 1) every parishioner who can afford is enjoined to give a monthly offering according to his means; 2) after tithing regularly for two years, the tither is given a certificate that entitles him and his dependents to free ministrations of baptism, marriage, burial, etc. However, he must continue tithing regularly, else he would lose the mentioned privilege; 3) the collection of monthly offerings is done by bonded collectors who are allowed an across-the-board 10% commission of their turn-over. Those who can not really afford to make an offering will be given free services. On the other hand, those who can certainly afford the monthly offering and yet fail to do so, will be excluded from the benefit of free ministrations, and thus the Arancel will still apply

<sup>2</sup> PARADO, Cornelio, "The Santo Niño Approach to Tithing". PPF., dec., 1969, pp. 34-38; "Parish Structural Renewal", PPF., March 1971, pp. 35-50; "On the Parish Structural Renewal", PPF., Sept. 1971, pp. 67-68. TUPAS, Terencio, "Towards Welfare Church", PPF., March 1970, pp. 52-54; CBCP Special Committee Report, "On the Parish Structural Renewal", PPF., Sept., 1971, pp. 65-66.

to them, "because giving them free ministrations would be unfair to those who can hardly afford and are giving a monthly offering for the support of the programs of the Parish Pastoral Plan", (PPF, Sept., 1971, p. 68).

The Santo Niño Project made its bow in November, 1968, amidst enthusiastic cheers and the most optimistic expectations, and seemed headed for a resounding success. The faithful, impressed and won over by an active campaign that drummed up their interest for the project, responded promptly and generously to the call of support for the parish, its ministers and projects. And so it was for several months, PPF, Sept., 1971, p. 68). However, latest reliable information tells us that the whole program has become moribund long, long ago. At present it is reported that the parish gets from the tithing program the measly sum of about P90.00 per month. In such a predicament the pastors of Santo Niño Parish were forced to search for new methods of financing their needs and those of the parish.

Nevertheless, the efforts and pains of the organizers of the Santo Niño Project have not gone altogether down the drain, for they have rendered the faithful more and more conscious of their duty to support the parish and their pastors, and in consequence the Sunday collections have been gradually on the rise.

Why did the Santo Niño Program become such a dud? A report drafted by a special committee of the CBCP in 1971 already pointed out some flaws found in the said program which could have been liable for its sad performance: "The Thanksgiving Offering Program with bonded collectors who get a commission of ten per cent of their collection retains the stigma of the Arancel system, and adds a new danger of loose talk on the part of the parishioners who are not willing to give regular monthly offerings and offers a breeding ground for corruption on the part of many bonded collectors. Moreover, experience has shown that this collection of offerings thrives only for several months. The stigma of compulsory contribution remains, because the non-tithers are not given free ministration of the sacraments", PPF, Sept., 1971, p. 66).

The Santo Niño pastor took the committees' evaluation with mixed reactions, and buckled down to try again with more determination and resolve. Unlucky for him and even for some others who were getting ready to plunge full-scale into the tithing system, the good pastor did not prosper even this time, and left his Monthly Thanksgiving Offering Program in a moribund state.

### THE PARISH MONTHLY SUPPORT PROGRAM AT PHIL-AM, Q.C.

This was started as early as 1955 by the then parish priest of Santa Rita Parish at the Phil-Am Homes in Q.C., and now Bishop of San Pablo, Most Rev. Pedro N. Bantigue, D.D.<sup>3</sup> Its main characteristic is its flexibility by which any parishioner is free to join the tithing program, or to remain under the Arancel. The amount of the tithe is also flexible, but a very reasonable rock-bottom was set, —a peso per month or ₱12 per year—, and leaves the most fortunate ones to show their generosity. The schedule of payments was also flexible: per month, quarterly, per semester, or per yearly lump sum. The program was flexible also in that those who dot toe the tithing line remained automatically subject to the Arancel.

In an effort to make the system understandable to the parish community, one of the parishioners at Phil-Am likens the Monthly Support System of the Santa Rita Parish to an Insurance Policy by which any family who faithfully pays the 'premium' of not less than one peso per month is entitled to such benefits as free baptism, ordinary wedding ceremony, funeral services and the like, much in the same manner as an insured person by paying regularly a 'premium' gets the benefits corresponding to the type of insurance policy he holds.

The reader, previously rattled with reports of failure of similar tithing programs, will get a pleasant surprise to hear that the Phil-Am experiment has managed to survive somehow since twenty years ago up to date, Msgr. A. Reyes, the present pastor, in an interview with Fr. Honorato Castigador, O.P., to whom this writer is indebted for all his information on the Phil-Am Project, sums up his ambivalent appraisal thus: "While I'll go on with it, I hesitate to recommend it". He also said that during his first year as pastor of Santa Rita Parish he found it very difficult to adjust to the new system, but with a little waiting and patience he has managed to bear up with the program and is satisfied with it. He likewise released the following interesting data about the program:

"Let us take 1973 as a sample year, he says. From January 1 to December 31, out of 430 catholic families living inside the Phil-Am Compound, only 169 had joined the tithing program. This is about 25% of all the catholic households. The gross amount of tithes collected during that whole year was ₱6483, while the gross

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<sup>3</sup> CASTIGADOR, H., O.P., "The Parish Monthly Support System for the Philippine Parishes". UST, Manila, 1975. (Unpublished Paper).

expenditures for the same year amounted to ₱15,029.90, or a staggering deficit of ₱8,546.90. How was this shortage of about 60% covered up? Well, of the 52 Sundays of the year, Mass collections during sixteen of them are to be turned over to such projects as the Missions, Red Cross, T.B. Fund, Community Chest, etc., but the collections of the remaining 36 Sundays were for the parish, and together with generous donations in weddings and christenings by sponsors often belonging to other parishes, they have extricated the Phil-Am parish from being in the red".

Survival, however precarious, of the tithing program in the Phil-Am is good news against the backdrop of failure in other parts of the country. Beside the flexibility of the program at Phil-Am, the zeal, dedication, spirit of self-sacrifice of the priests at said parish contributed much to salvage the system. The social and economic stability of most residents at Phil-Am is another important factor in the success of the program.

#### IS TITHING A VALID ALTERNATIVE TO THE ARANCEL?

The present study has shown some of the country's pilot projects, which for nearly a decade, have experimented on tithing. The results obtained through such experimentation can not be deemed an achievement by any standards. On the contrary, the bleak performance of the new financing system has once more brought to the forum these all-important questions: Is tithing a worthy and valid substitute of the Arancel? Can it effectively solve the economic problems the local church is encountering in supporting the needs of its parishes and those of its personnel?

We hazard nothing by saying that tithing retains most if not all the defects and stigmas attributable to the Arancel, like coercion. It is a historically proven fact that the ancient tithing system was introduced in the Church by force of law when the Christian community started being lukewarm, lax and remiss in providing support to the clergy and indigent and the maintenance of the church buildings through free and voluntary offerings.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed a tithing system divested of its stigma of coercion will most likely fail in its objective of financing the churches. Experience shows that the only local tithing projects, which somehow have managed to survive, are those where in the free ministration of sacraments is limited to the indigent and regular tithers, with the exclusion of delinquent members and those who chose not to

<sup>4</sup> HANNAN, Philip., *The Canonical Concept of 'Congrua Sustentatio' for the Secular Clergy*. C.M.A., Washington D.C., 1950, pp. 4-5.

join the tithing program. On the contrary, those projects which had catered to regular tithers and non-tithers alike, have accomplished little beyond disheartening paying members.

Neither is tithing immune of the much-hated taint of commercialism. The success of any tithing system depends on the regular contributions of the members and on the efficiency of the collectors, sometimes bonded, who will be knocking at home doors once or twice a month. There is always an element of tension between the creditor and the collectors of bills of any kind — telephone, water, insurance and even tithes. This can become a constant source of friction between the community and its pastor, mostly if delinquent members are charged for the ministrations of those sacred functions which are offered for free to tithers.

Can tithing fill up the financial vacuum created by the decrease of income expected from the abolition of the Arancel? In this regard a report drafted by a committee created in 1972 by the CBCP condensely averred: "some dioceses and parishes are experimenting with the tithing system. So far there has been no successful experiment on this".<sup>5</sup> This stinging statement is as true today as when it was written. It can be said, in all fairness, that the Church in the Philippines has not yet found a valid and effective substitute of the stole fee system. As a consequence the problem of how to finance the material needs of the parishes and their pastors and personnel still remains unsolved. A confirmation of this fact is the frantic message of a rural parish priest to his bishop after a few months of tithing in his parish: "I'm starving in the new system". Another parish priest would admit that he had been forced to search for new sources of income after the ambitious tithing project of his parish had failed.

The history of tithing in other parts of the world and during all periods has evinced that it is infected with a similar internal defect or weakness. It was adopted officially in the Catholic Church as early as the end of the third century, and soon it showed its structural flaws. In fact it failed so miserably on most occasions, that the Church had to look for new means of livelihood. Thus the Council of Chalcedon in 451, forbade ordination of any cleric unless he had a *titulus ordinationis*, which could be an assignment to a well-to-do chapel, church or monastery able to support him. The African Church, while ordaining its clergy without such

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<sup>5</sup> Answer to the Questionnaire on the Remuneration of the Clergy. May 10, 1972. (Unpublished).



a **titulus**, enjoined it to earn a living by trade or agriculture. Thus, though the law continued to enforce the obligation of tithes, at times even under pain of excommunication, the Church never stopped in its search for other sources of income such as the proprietary churches in Germany, landed estates in Gaul, the **ius patronatus** in Spain, etc.<sup>6</sup>

At this point one may ask for the reason or reasons behind this poor showing of the tithing system through the centuries. In this connection, there is no gainsaying the fact that tithing will hardly reach the proportions of a successful undertaking unless it conforms to some requirements or conditions, such as the following:

— Both the priests and his parishioners should be adequately acquainted and instructed about the system and its mechanics. The introduction of tithing should be preceded by a thorough and extensive educational and promotional campaign aim at informing the faithful about the reason for shifting to a new financing system as well as the benefits expected to be derived from the change.

It should be borne in mind too, that the traditional arancel system has, by this time, become a part of the lives and customs of the people, and, therefore, any attempt to change it will perforce encounter mounting opposition and resistance in the community.

— The parishioners' stability of residence must be considered, too. A well-organized parish can hardly stand the continuous flow of its parishioners. This is a problem that should be more accutely felt in parishes located within the boundaries of modern, large metropolies where the flow of people seems to be a way of life. This will render extremely difficult a process of continuous education, the taking of a general census and the regular collection of tithes, all essential elements for the success of any tithing system.

— The economic conditions and the social status of the community should not be disregarded, either. This could be gauged through a general census of the inhabitants which will reveal the economic potentials of each individual family and its ability to absorb the burden of regular tithing. It is to say the obvious that families in the upper and middle classes are socially and financially more stable than their counterparts in the lower ranks of

<sup>6</sup> HANNAN. Phil., op. cit., pp. 5, 6, 11, 22.

society. The former usually count with a steady source of income or at least with a stable and well paid job, something that can not be said of the latter. Such comfortable position in the community makes it possible for the privileged class to set aside a regular amount for the support of the parish. Those in the lower bracket, moreover, are not living in such favorable conditions and the payment of tithes may prove burdensome and even incompatible with their economic status. Thus, while tithing may thrive in progressive communities, its chance of success are minimal in underdeveloped towns and in the rural areas.

Although the Church has the right to exact sufficient means of support from the faithful (c. 1496), it has not enacted a law compelling them to do so. Perhaps the closest approach of the Church to the exercise of such right is found in c. 1502 wherein it is stated that whatever pertains to the payment of first-fruits and tithes is to be regulated by the special statutes and laudable customs of each region.

The wisdom behind such ruling cannot be overemphasized. A financing system that makes wonders in a given region or country may fare miserably in another. So, instead of going all the way for a given system the local churches should search for new ways more responsive to the needs of the times and of each region, or still new means could be found to refine the old system in the hope that its worst aspects can be eliminated or at least moderated.

# **SOME RECENT PROTESTANT MARIOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS**

**By**

**Cardinal John Wright**

**Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy**

A notable number of recent publications have been devoted to the Blessed Mother. Their range has been wide and not without significance. Some have been authentically theological; a few of these have been pietistic, inevitably, but most have represented a sincere effort to state the faith and theology concerning Mary in terms updated by Vatican Council II. Others have been abusive in a mood and manner that one had thought to have gone with the winds of an earlier generation of emotional hatred not so much of the Mother of Christ but of His Church, and, indeed Himself.

Recent books have included rationalistic "studies" of a type one had thought passé. For example, Geoffrey Ashe's *The Virgin*, the general message of which is set forth on his first page (properly enough curiously entitled "Ewig-Weibliche") where he quotes the opinion of an Anglican Canon against the traditional Mariology of the Catholic Church and no small part of the Anglican: "The evangelical has a strong suspicion that the deepest roots of the Marian cultus are not to be found in the Christian tradition at all. The religious history of mankind shows a recurring tendency to worship a mother-goddess. Three factors in particular suggest that the cult of Mary may be an intrusion into Christianity from the dark realms of natural religion. First, it seems that historically the earliest traces of Marian devotion seem to come from Christian circles to some extent at least tainted with syncretizing Gnosticism. The second is the ease with which the devotion becomes associated with local holy places so that the faithful make their prayers to our Lady of a particular shrine. May it not be the case, the evangelical wonders, that what we have here is in reality an older religion, a paganism which has been too lightly baptized into Christ and whose ancient features persist under a thin Christian veil? The third factor is an apparent correlation between Marian devotion and an

elevation of chastity to a point of esteem where marriage and sexual intercourse are depreciated if not reprehended. Is the increasing emphasis on a female object of devotion in some way a form of psychological compensation?"

### Attack on Mary

Ashe's book is mild and more or less routine "de-mythologizing". Far more significant in terms of what one suspects is going on at the moment is a book by an apostate Catholic who describes herself an "agnostic". Lest one add to the publicity of this particular "scientific" book by an ex-alumna of a Catholic school in Britain, we shall omit the name of the book and of the author and suggest that the contrived "scholarship" of this singularly vituperative history of Catholic devotion to Mary is better understood if one reflects on a quasi-autobiographical paragraph in the book than if one wades through the erudition that so vilifies the Marian shrines and cult that the **New York Times** apologized for reviewing it in remarkably frank word for the **Times**. Thirteen days after a flood of protesting letters to the publication which prides itself on printing all the news that's fit to print, the **Times** made a qualified retraction. It published nine letters, offered as a "sampling" of all those received, and added: "Publication of this article on the eve of the Roman Catholic Feast of the Immaculate Conception was an unfortunate and entirely accidental coincidence; the **Times** regrets any offense this inadvertent timing may have given to our readers".

Its retraction was printed by another publication under the title "Lady Publishes Unlady-Like Attack on the Blessed Lady". British publications which ran this particular article in whole or in part were not similarly apologetic nor fair.

### A train ride

One summits that the give away concerning the motivation of the article and the roots of its original writing are to be found in a description the British writer gives of a train ride she took to a shrine of the Blessed Mother, a shrine, oddly enough, where the Virgin's chief concern is not conception or parturition, but healing. The passage provides an extended description of the British lady's self-consciousness as she rode in an ordinary train compartment surrounded by working men. What she has to say should be of much more interest to a psychologist studying her than to a self-described historian describing Catholic devotion to the Mother of Christ. She writes: "The train passed through the plain of

Aragon where the mean villages cluster round opulent churches. In Saragossa I changed to a small, country train that would take me to the Spanish-French border, only a few miles from Lourdes in the Pyreness. It was the end of the day, and the train, stopping frequently, took on field hands and labourers and soldiers to deposit them a few villages down the lines to make their way home. I had already found my solitary state a handicap in Spain. The only person who had spoken freely to me for ten days was a hunch-back verger in the cathedral of La Seo in Sargossa who plucked me by the elbow, saying, "Why are you alone?" And then, smiling gently, led me to inspect the array of reliquary heads in silver and gilt on the altar. But in the carriage, the silent, hostile, hungry stares of my male companions were so intense that I wanted to leap to my feet and shout.

### En route to Lourdes

"In that compartment Catholic attitudes were perfectly enacted. The men, dusty, haggard and speechless after work, devoured the female stranger with unashamed eyes as if her impudent situation had forfeited her self-respect and turned her into inanimate concrete. And in these circumstances the female frightened by the scrutiny (although there was nothing violent in it) cannot put herself on a par with the men, but is turned into the bashful, averted, impotent woman that society prescribes. Yet once, when by mistake I caught the eye of a young man, he dropped his gaze almost shyly, and then nudged his companions as if in pride. Thus men are emasculated by the excessive importance they accord to women, and women lose access to existence outside the wary expectations of the male.

"So on my way to Lourdes — appropriately enough — I saw in a flash the Catholic cycle: warnings against perils of the flesh lead to obsession with it, which in turn increases desire. This inspires self-disgust because it has been decreed sinful, and therefore leads to a need for forgiveness which only the sacraments of the church may grant. It is the wheel on which Catholics — men and women — are bound".

### A truer version

The undersigned has visited and spent no little time in some of the places that the lady-like writer finds particularly offensive, notably Rocamador. He has never been in a train crowded with tired workers, old men or, for that matter, peasant boys who would have had the slightest prurient interest in the author of this self-



revealing collection of snobbery and self-conscious fear. In fact, one wonders if there is not at least one so-called "Catholic mentality" that even the most extreme person who abandons the faith does retain, priggishly, at least when she's in compartments filled with men and especially, God forgive them, Europeans. The self-revelation of the "scholar" is far more revealing than anything the scholar writes about the Blessed Mother.

It also suggests, as do other parts of the article, a familiar enough fact not necessarily confined to the realm of religion; it is, in fact, fairly commonplace. When some types of people wish to destroy or undermine a member of a family or a family itself they undermine first of all the mother. Every language is filled with expressions which make this clear, all of them expressions derogatory of the mother of the family. It is almost as if the writer or speaker wishes to imply the unworthiness of the son by using a deprecatory phrase about his mother. Small wonder that the contemporary attack on Christ so often begins with unworthy phrases about his mother; one wonders if this is not a case in point particularly when he reads that the author, an alleged convent school girl, concludes her defamatory article by saying that of course, she does not believe that Catholics who count on salvation, as they say in concluding words of the Hail Mary, are in any possibility of receiving it.

#### Methodist pastor

Far more refreshing and, please God, significant are two Mariology books by other Protestant theologians. One is on the Rosary and is written by a Methodist pastor in England. It is entitled **Five For Sorrow and Ten For Joy**, a consideration of the Rosary, and it is a series of meditations on the mysteries of the Rosary, first published in 1973. The Reverend J. Neville Ward, a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the Methodist Church, is convinced that the medieval Rosary has a profound message for our times, for Catholics and Protestants alike. It is a message of consolation, Scriptural in its background, and reasonable as well as devotional in its content. The author was one of the speakers at the Zagreb International Mariological Congress and his book is widely and profitably read.

According to the Reverend Ward, the Christian who has a rosary in his hands is within an ancient tradition, for no other scheme of prayer has been so widely used in the Christian West. The blurb sheet of his book observes that as one become familiar with its use, the prayers represented by its beads gradually recede to

form a kind of "background music", and the mysteries into which it is divided are before the mind as though one were looking at religious pictures or ikons. The images of these themes for meditations tend to haunt the mind outside of prayer at any time and any place drifting in and out of one's preoccupied consciousness, sometimes only momentary, sometimes staying to unfold new significances and relations to one's personal life, or simply bringing a breath from the world of God's action in Christ into the hurry and stress of the busy day.

For these reasons, to the question: Does everyone in this day and age care less about the Rosary, or is it not outgrown?, the Reverend J. Neville Ward answers: **Absolutely not!**

The other Protestant theologian who offers "A New Protestant Vision of the Virgin Mary" is, strangely, the writer whom Geoffrey Ashe describes as the only contributor to a volume, written some years ago, of Anglican essays on Mariology who dissents from the tendency of his fellow essayists to dissect Mary's cult eruditely without leaving the safety of a Christian ground for the cult of the Virgin. According to Ashe, they never once risk a glance at the paganism behind her, nor do they mention—de Satgé himself does not in the earlier book—that the earliest documented worship of her is not as Christ's mother, a human creature (however holy), but as a divinity in her own right.

### Hopeful Sign

That the same Canon de Satgé should write as he is now quoted by Geoffrey Ashe in *The Virgin* is strong evidence that the chasm between Catholic devotion to Mary and Protestant misunderstanding of her role in Redemption and in history is closing at a rate some of us never expected. This may be due to Ecumenism; it may be due to deepening piety; it may be due to the Spirit of God at work in the world. But it is a hopeful sign of the future direction which christian devotion and theology may be taking.

Canon de Satgé, to be sure, argues that there was much in Catholic developments in the century before Vatican II to nourish the Protestant sense of outrage at the Catholic cult of Mary. He quotes René Laurentin as describing Catholic excesses and enthusiasms but he also quotes Father Laurentin's reasoned account of the modern in Catholic Mariology. Canon de Satgé is not less sensitive to the corresponding sense of outrage felt by Catholics at Protestant slurs upon the all-holiness of the woman who was chosen to be the Mother of God. The Anglican Canon is careful to quote Father Laurentin's description of the true sense of proportion and

the moderating influence of Pope Pius XII in his dogmatic definition concerning the Blessed Mother, De Satgé is particularly fair in his description of the Mariology of the Second Vatican Council and he accurately underscores its great ecumenical significance, even though he qualifies somewhat the intent of the Council Fathers.

### Anglican book

There follows a book which is, to say the least, a fascinating insight into the new Protestant vision of the Virgin Mary. It would be excessive to describe the book as a complete presentation of Catholic doctrine on Mary and it is, in fact, a truly Anglican book. But it is an Anglican book that is open to development and there is no possibility of challenging its fairness nor, indeed, its positive direction so far as the doctrine and cult of the Blessed Mother are concerned. The author points out that it is impossible to be nourished for long by the traditional Anglican diet and to think of the Virgin in isolation from her Son, an object of devotion by herself. What Canon de Satgé says of "the strength and the reticence of the Anglican tradition" is expressed in some verses by G. A. Studdert Kennedy which deserve to be far better known than they are.

### A Lady poem

Entitled *Good Friday Falls on Lady Day*, the poem runs:

And has our Lady lost her place?  
Does her white star burn dim?  
Nay, she has lowly veiled her face  
Because of Him.

Men give to her the jewelled crown,  
And robe with 'broidered rim,  
But she is fain to cast them down  
Because of Him.

She claims no crown from Christ apart,  
Who gave God life and limb,  
She only claims a broken heart  
Because of Him.

To this perhaps one day all Christians will say Amen. In any case a scandalous cause of division among Christians will have been removed when these lines, together with their theological implications, are finally fully understood.

## FOR AN EVANGELICAL READING OF "POPULORUM PROGRESSIO"

By

Henri de Riedmatten, O.P.

**Populorum Progressio** presents itself as an echo of Christ's own voice, springing from the compassion that the Church shares with Him for men in need. It is a lesson of Christian charity in the strongest sense of the word before being a claim for international justice. It is set deliberately in the line of the Church's evangelizing mission, it owes its tone to the latter, it affirms some of its most typical concepts.

• • •

The Encyclical proceeds from "a renewed consciousness of the demands of the Gospel"; its interpretation of the world situation is made "in the light of the Gospel" (cf. 13). It is from the Gospel, in fact, that the Church has "what she possesses as her characteristic attribute: a global vision of man". This global vision of man is the premise of the argumentation of the document. It implies that the Kingdom of heaven, which it is a question of setting up even in this world, is not left out of account at any moment (cf. 13). It is the whole vocation of man that is taken into consideration, this man whose destiny as son of God (cf. 21, 43, 82) is to reach beyond himself continually, for "there is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute and is conscious of a vocation which gives human life its true meaning".

Opening to God is to be understood here in the whole supernatural force of the joyful Message of the Gospel. Paul VI presents a gradation of less human living conditions, experienced by so many individuals and peoples today, and of the more human ones to which it is a question of raising them. Doing this he passes from temporal considerations to eternal perspectives: "Conditions that are still more human are the acknowledgement by man of supreme values, and of God their source and their finality. Conditions that, finally and above all, are more human are faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, who calls us all to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men".

That is why development, the main subject of the document, after being identified as man's growth, is polarized towards salvation in Christ: "Thus it is that human fulfillment constitutes, as it were, a summary of our duties. But there is much more: this harmonious enrichment of nature by personal and responsible effort is ordered to a further perfection. By reason of his union with Christ, the source of life, man attains to new fulfillment of himself, to a transcendent humanism which gives him his greatest possible perfection: this is the highest goal of personal development".



What is said of personal development, the Encyclical repeats in connection with the development of peoples, which it sees geared to the perspective of the fullness of Christ's mystical body: "Man's labour means much more still for the Christian... the mission of sharing in the creation of the supernatural world which remains incomplete until we all come to build up together that perfect Man of whom St. Paul speaks 'who realizes the fullness of Christ'." And in the great perspectives opened towards the end of the document. "This road towards a greater humanity requires effort and sacrifice; but suffering itself, accepted for the love of our brethren, favours the progress of the entire human family. Christians know that union with the sacrifice of our Saviour contributes to the building up to the Body of Christ in its plenitude, the assembled People of God".

It is in this perspective that the participation of Christian in the temporal enterprise of advancement is to be understood. The rightful autonomy of the realities of this world never authorizes them to forget that the *raison d'être* of men and their history is a vocation to a higher order. If the Encyclical says that man "is responsible for his fulfillment as he is for his salvation", these two terms should not be interpreted in isolation from each other but in the subordination of one to the other: fulfillment to salvation. This is the clear meaning of the whole context. It is not superfluous to recall this at a time when the new discovery of the mission of the Christian and of the Church in the modern world in the wake of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, threatens to induce some of the best servants of the cause of human advancement to be silent about the most substantial part of the content of the Gospel: he call to a Salvation and a happiness which, after all, are not of this world even if they are acquired through life in this world. At the same time, Christians are reminded that the exalting task of serving men and peoples in history cannot be carried out without the grace of Christ and because of that is the



object of prayer: "The prayer of all ought to rise with fervour to the Almighty. Having become aware of such great misfortunes, the human race should apply itself with intelligence and steadfastness to abolish them".



It is likewise in the light of the Gospel that the Encyclical tackles the problem of the solidarity among men on which the construction of a better world is based. The world is presented as a family all the members of which, all men, are brothers. The terms "brother", "brotherhood" recur a dozen times in the course of the text. The question is above all to arouse full awareness of this brotherhood: "The world is sick. Its illness consists less in the unproductive monopolization of resources by a small number of men than in the lack of brotherhood among individuals and peoples". This brotherhood must be understood in the strong sense of the Scriptures: we are bound to one another by the common filiation which we have from God. Paul VI repeats the words of his Bombay Appeal: "Man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God".

Relations between brothers are entirely based on love, friendship and affection, other terms which recur continually throughout the Encyclical; terms which suggest a new type of human relations and a far more agreeable formulation of mutual duties than in the case of harsh demands or the cold distribution of a justice which has well-balanced scales but is blindfolded.

The love, friendship and affection in question are always the ones proclaimed and communicated by Christ; they are certainly set at the level of supernatural charity. It is said of the obligations of better-off nations that they "stem from a brotherhood that is at once human and supernatural". The legitimate feelings of jealousy of their national unity among young peoples and pride in their tradition among ancient civilizations "should be ennobled by that universal charity which embraces the entire human family". So the present effort of the Church to help to solve "the social question" which "has become worldwide" (cf. 3), is in perfect continuity of inspiration with all its past contribution "to foster the human progress of the nations to which she brings faith in Christ". She does not cease "to pay tribute to these pioneers who have been too often forgotten" (by the present-day movement of advancement) "who were urged on by the love of Christ, just as we honour

their imitators and successors who today still continue to put themselves at the generous and unselfish service of those to whom they announce the Gospel".



There is no doubt — the whole Encyclical bears witness to it, especially in its sections on "action to be undertaken", "aid for the weak" and "equity in trade relations" — that charity does not prevent but rather demands a scrupulous analysis of the conditions of in quality that reign in the present world and of the socio-economic factors likely to end them. The fact remains that it orders an approach to problems by which the evangelical inspiration is recognizable. It is fashionable today often to have recourse to the style of the prophets of the Old Testament to support affirmation of the rights of the poor and denunciation of the iniquities of the rich. In this connection the Encyclical is no less forceful. It borrows from the Gospel and from the Fathers of the Church the tones with which the avarice of some is contrasted with the want of others. The continued greed of the rich "will certainly call down upon them the judgement of God and the wrath of the poor, with consequences no one can foretell. If today's flourishing civilizations remain selfishly wrapped up in themselves, they could easily place their highest values in jeopardy, sacrificing their will to be great to the desire to possess more. To them we could apply also the parable of the rich man whose fields yielded an abundant harvest and who did not know where to store his harvest: "God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you.'"

The feeling that inspires this "cry of anguish" is not just revolt at glaring injustices but deep suffering at the sight of the extreme poverty of brothers: "No one can remain indifferent to the lot of his brothers who are still buried in wretchedness, and victims of insecurity, slaves of ignorance. Like the heart of Christ, the heart of the Christian must sympathize with this misery".

Avarice is condemned not only because of the injustices it causes, but also because it shuts hearts to the demands of human brotherhood. It is in this sense that "both for nations and for individual men, avarice is the most evident form of moral underdevelopment". The following words are inspired by the concern to convert the rich, and in their greater interest: "All growth is ambivalent. It is essential if man is to develop as a man, but in a way it imprisons man if he considers it the supreme good, and it restricts his vision" (ibid.). So the poor are warned of "this temptation which comes to them from wealthy nations" and which consist in sacrificing superior values to material goods. Furthermore, "the turning toward the spirit of poverty" is put among

the better conditions to which mankind must be raised, together with increased esteem for the dignity of others, cooperation for the common good, and will and desire for peace (cf. 21).



The primary concern of development is always, to repeat the leit-motiv of the Encyclical which has been so widely read, "being more" rather than "having more". "Being more" cannot be quantified nor is it obtained by a mere transfer of resources, however fair it may be. It is a question of another order of realities, "a new humanism which will enable modern man to find himself anew by embracing the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation". This gives us an inkling how the term "development" ties up with that of "evangelization" in the proper meaning of the word.

Many passages from the Apostolic Exhortation **Evangelii Nuntiandi** are a kind of continuation and extension of these teachings of **Populorum Progressio**. All Christians, individuals and Organizations or Agencies, engaged in the enterprise of development, will take inspiration from it if they care about the evangelical authenticity of their action. I am thinking above all of sections II and III of the Exhortation entitled "What is evangelization?" and "The content of evangelization". Paul VI, who refers explicitly on several occasions to what was said in the course of the 1974 Synod of Bishops, dwells on the "profound links between evangelization and human advancement" (EN, 31). These links are of an anthropological order, of a theological order, but above all they are links of "the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man" (ibid.) But the Pope warns against the danger of cutting off work in favour of these values from its close connection in the eyes of the Christian with man's complete vocation and with the most specific part of the Gospel's announcement. Under the title "without reduction or ambiguity", the paragraph following the one we have just quoted draws the attention of "many generous Christians" to the temptation "to reduce the Church's mission to the dimensions of a simply temporal project. They would reduce her aims to a man-centred goal; the salvation of which she is the messenger would be reduced to material well-being. Her activity, forgetful of all spiritual and religious preoccupation, would become initiatives of the political or social order" (EN, 32). That is why "the Church", and what is said here of the Church applies to all Church organizations, to every effort made in her name, "reaffirms the primacy of her spiritual vocation and refuses to replace the proclamation

of the Kingdom by the proclamation of forms of human liberation; she even states that her contribution to liberation is incomplete if she neglects to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ" (EN, 34).

It goes without saying that in practice there is a division of tasks. The intermediate stages must not be blocked with the end. The pedagogy of all advancement demands prudence in the proposals made to the persons concerned. It also goes without saying that collaboration with "men of good will" leads to deep respect for the convictions of everyone, and that, above all, the very nature of evangelization and conversion shrinks from ugly proselytism. Nevertheless, the Christian who operates for the human advancement of his brothers, is never exempt from the wholesome ambition of seeing them, too, touched by the Good News which inspires his own commitment.



Without going into the various consequences of such principles in throwing light on the question, which is continually arising, of relation between "the apostolate" and "human advancement" let us point out in conclusion how much the behavior of all Catholics active in the latter is influenced by its solidarity with evangelization.

Our methods in welcoming applicants, in the planning and implementation and supervision of projects in the field, must bear the stamp of our inspiration. It seems to me that chapter 13 of the First Letter to the Corinthians, the Pauline hymn of charity, is rich in suggestions in this connection. To take inspiration from it will guarantee our actions this value of witness to the Gospel that we are never dispensed from bearing: "Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live" (EN, 21).



The passage just quoted presents us with a kind of summary of the individual and collective attitudes of those who, in Christ's name, make their contribution to the work of human advancement. reactions, our initiatives and our work. For some people, contribu-

tion to evangelization will be carried out essentially at this level. No one will dispense himself too easily, however, from harbouring at least a concern, if the opportunity occurs, to go further and prolong example with the explicit word for "the Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life". How many workers in the field, how many lay missionaries, how many cooperators have already experienced the openings that the service of human advancement offers in this connection, especially in simple and patient personal contact! How many have not remained insensitive and have heard the appeal of their neighbour who is hungry not only for bread but for every word that comes from God!



# **COUNCIL OF THE LAITY OF THE PHILIPPINES FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION OPENING ADDRESS**

**By**

**Bishop Jose T. Sanchez**

In November 1965 the Council Fathers recalled with profound gratitude and joy that "more than a few decades ago the laity in many nations began to dedicate themselves increasingly to the apostolate." This increasing dedication to the laity to the apostolate according to the Council Fathers "received the title "Catholic Action" and it was very often described as involving the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy." The Council Fathers also recalled that "certain forms of the apostolate of the laity are given explicit recognition by the hierarchy, though in various ways," and that "this procedure of the hierarchy is called a mandate." They declared these in the Magna Charta of the apostolate of the laity, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, (Apostolican Actuositatem) where precisely they sounded the clear unequivocal call for the laity to take their own proper role in the mission of the Church not as something mandated by the hierarchy but as something deriving from God himself. "The laity," they declared solemnly, "derive their right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated with Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself". (A.A. 3; L.G. 33)

This clear departure from the prevailing understanding of the lay apostolate which limited its membership to organizations recognized as such by the hierarchy and its extension to every member of the Mystical Body of Christ, has been echoed in our local Church when only year ago, we adopted as convention theme "Every Christian an Apostle". This theme was the crystallization of a feeling that has been with us since Vatican II. Today, there remains no doubt whatsoever that "the **right** and **duty** to exercise the apostolate is a common to all the faithful, both clergy

and the laity and that the laity also have their proper roles in building up the Church" (A.A. 25), that "the Church can never be without it (layman's apostolate)" A.A. 1) and that it pertains to absolutely every Christian (L.G. 33).

### *The Lay Apostolate during Apostolic Times*

Placing the Lay Apostolate in its proper theological and historical perspective, the Council Fathers speaking through the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity declare "how spontaneous and fruitful such activity (lay apostolate) was at the very beginning of the Church." Indeed, no one can read carefully and meaningfully the Acts of the Apostles without visualizing the early Christians giving witness to their faith to the extent of being persecuted and condemned because of their witnessing to Christ, helping as teachers and even as prophets of the **Good News** and the **Way** aside from helping the apostles and the others on whom the apostles have laid their hands in ordination. When persecution compelled the early Christians to flee to other places, these areas became their area of apostolic activity preaching Christ and witnessing to Christ by their exemplary life. Their assemblies for singing psalms, prayers and breaking of the bread, and the love that bound them so closely to each other became a light that for the pagans who were initiated into the knowledge of Christ and his salvation.

The same impression is gathered from reading the letters of St. Paul. One can almost feel and hear the unceasing activities of the early Christians, the collaborators of the apostles, as they went to every known place to bring the Good News to all men. Isn't it amazing, almost miraculous, that in less than thirty years the whole Mediterranean area including the imperial household in Rome and even as far as Spain there were already Christians living intimate community life, celebrating the eucharistic assemblies and giving to the world a new way of life where love was the basic observance? What meaning can we give to the collections made in some Christian communities in order to send them where was need for such help? Among the early Christians, preaching the good news, worshipping together and serving one another both as individuals and as communities were common practices already.

### *The Pre-Vatican II Structures of the Apostolate of the Laity*

This intense apostolic activity of the early Christians in the mission of the Church began to subside when the Church became the Church of the Christian empire. A situation gradually deve-

loped where the lay apostolate gradually became the exclusive right of a few particularly those in the christian government. It became the duty of the christian kings and emperors to defend the Church and conquer lands and peoples for the Faith. It was only when the Church came under attack we might say from within through internal divisions, heresies and schisms and a general secularization emerged isolating christians from the Church that laymen began to act and move in defense of the Church. Lay action and involvement began again to take shape in the XIX century and finally took definite form as Catholic Action during the Pontificate of Pius X. Pius XI gave it a clear and definite direction when the layman's activity in the Church was called the "participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy." Pius XII clarified more the nature and goals of catholic action" and by that time a search for the theology of the lay apostolate seriously took a firm hold in the church. During these times the prevailing idea was that catholic action was composed of the organizations approved and endorsed by the hierarchy in a given nation and coordinated on the diocesan and national levels. It therefore, indirectly excluded an immense majority of church members who were not members of mandated organizations. It also emphasized participation in the apostolate of the Hierarchy instead of a duty and right to participate in the mission of the Church by virtue of the layman's incorporation in that Mystical Body of Christ.

*The Vatican II Thrust on the Apostolate  
of the Laity*

a) Every christian has the Right and Duty to be an Apostle.

The Decrees of Vatican II leave no doubt as to the right and duty of every christian to participate in the mission of the Church. (L.G. 33 ff; Const. on S. Lit. 26-33; Dec. on the Inst. of Social Comm.; Dec. on Ecumenism; Bishops Past. Office in the Church 16, 17 and 18; Dec. on Ch. Educ. Art. 3, 5 and 7; Missionary Activity of the Church, Art. 15, 21 and 41 and Apst. *Actuositatem*). As we mentioned above, the right and duty of every layman with respect to the Apostolate derives from his union with Christ the Head, and that he is assigned to the Apostolate by the Lord himself. The layman's duty and right to the apostolate rest squarely on the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. This is the layman's duty and right regardless of whether there are sufficient number of priests or not.

b) The apostolate of the Clergy and Laity are Different but Complementary.

In the Church we recognize unity of purpose or mission while we acknowledge diversity of service or ministry. Speaking of this A.A. 2 says: "Christ conferred on the apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity, too, share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of whole People of God in the Church and in the world." Since the mission of the Church involves not only salvation in Christ but the renewal of the whole temporal order the apostolate of the laity becomes indispensable precisely in this renewal of the world. Thus, their apostolate takes on a secular character because they live in the world and are responsible to order everything according to the spirit of the gospel.

The elements composing the temporal order have their own intrinsic values and follow their own rules and laws. Unless there are conscientious christians there, these may withdraw from christian ethical values creating therefore a culture where christian values are not reflected, nay even ignored and contradicted. On this, the Council Fathers say: "Many elements make up the temporal order: namely, the good things of life and prosperity of the family, culture, economic affairs, the arts and professions, political institutions, international relations, and other matters of this kind, as well as their development and progress. All of these not only aid in the attainment of man's ultimate goal but also possess their own intrinsic value. This value has been implanted in them by God, whether they are considered in themselves or as parts of the whole temporal order". (A.A. 7) Penetrating these elements of the temporal order with the spirit of the gospel is the special task of the lay apostolate. Hence, the Council Fathers urge the laity to take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own "special obligation." That led by the light of the gospel and by the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, they should act directly and definitely in the temporal sphere. This renewal must be accomplished in such a way that without the slightest detriment to its own proper laws, it can be brought into conformity with the higher principles of the Christian life and adapted to the shifting circumstances of time, place and culture. It is clear that this task cannot be accomplished except by those laymen who are living in these shifting circumstances, in these elements which have their own intrinsic value and governed by their own laws. The Church and her message can only be made present and audible in some situations through the laymen.

This is our challenge! How can we have 25,000,000 catholics exclusive of children to renew the temporal order in our Philippine situation instead of the 1,000,000 more or less involved in the

different associations composing our organized apostolate of the Laity in the Philippines presently? Shall we do this by disbanding the present associations and starting a new mass movement that will open the entrance to the uninvolved millions? Or could we assume that the tested experience and proven loyalty of those now presently involved in the ranks of organized lay apostolate could be open to a new spirit and dynamism so that through them we can arouse a greater involvement of the greatest number of the laity? Whatever be the decision of this assembly, let us never forget that whether a catholic joins or not an organized apostolate, the testimony of a christian life as an individual, as a family man and as a member of civic groups remains as a duty and a right of every member of the church. It must be mentioned that the Church has always blessed these organizations and practical realism will dictate that we have not only national but international groups to act effectively.

*The Threefold Thrust of the Apostolate of the  
Laity Today*

Following the orientation derived from the decrees of the Vatican Council and the implementing instructions emanating from the Holy See and from our Episcopal Conference, there has emerged from the local churches a threefold thrust in the apostolate of the Laity, to wit: Formation, Liturgy and Service. This thrust reflects the threefold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King which He conferred upon the apostles and their successors and therefore to the Church in which the lay apostolate share. It also reflects the three main components of christian life, namely to know God, worship Him and serve Him by following His basis commandment to love one another. Above all, this threefold thrust reflects the main goals of evangelization and mission of the Church. In this regard, Pope Paul VI declares in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 28; Consequently evangelization cannot but include the prophetic proclamation of a hereafter, man's preaching of hope in the promises made by God in the new Covenant in Jesus Christ, the preaching of God's love for us and of our love for God; the preaching of brotherly love for all men—the capacity of giving and forgiving, of self-denial, of helping one's brother and sister which springing from the love of God, is the kernel of the Gospel; the preaching of the mystery of evil and active search for good. The preaching likewise—and this is always urgent—of the search for God himself through prayer which is principally that of adoration and thanksgiving, but also through communion with the visible sign of the encounter with God which is the Church of Jesus Christ;



What are these christian communities? What are their characteristics? What are their goals and their relation to the Church?

The Last Synod of Bishops in 1974 devoted considerable attention to these basic communities or "comunidades de base". A wealth of information came from the bishops representing the whole world. According to the statements aired in the Synod such communities flourish more or less throughout the Church, particularly in South America. They differ greatly among themselves, both within the same region but more so from one region to another. In some regions they have appeared and developed within the Church, preserving solidarity with her life, nourished by the Bread of life, namely, the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist, and united with her pastors. In these cases, they have sprung from the need to live the Church's life more intensely or from the aspiration and search for a more human dimension which larger ecclesial communities can only offer with difficulty, especially in big modern cities where life in artificiality and anonymity. Their aim could be deepening of faith, meaningful worship, fraternal charity, prayer and sharing with each other their hopes and anxieties. They could be people living in small villages, or people already linked by age, culture, or profession, social situation: married couples, young people who already are united in their struggle for justice, brotherly aid to the poor, human development. They could be drawn to each other because of their dissatisfaction with the empty pleasures of the world and a fresh search for meaning in life. These elements may be intensified further by the lack of priests in remote communities.

In other regions, on the other hand, Comunidades de Base have appeared with a spirit of bitter criticism of the Church, which they disdainfully stigmatize as "institutional" to which the set themselves up as the Church of the people, charismatically led by the Spirit and free from any pastoral guidance from the institutional church. Constituted and oriented this way, this later kind of basic communities offers very little guarantee of remaining a truly christian community. Quiet often their inspiration becomes ideological and become instrument of not only of political options and currents of thought but even of political and ideological polarizations. These communities can hardly be called ecclesial communities even if and when they ironically claim to be basic christian communities and parts of the church.

Within the parish, which still remains as the basic ecclesial unit, the growth of these christian communities — whatever might characterize their group: whether neighborhood, profession, social status or common needs and goals — will be hope for the church if:

a) they seek their nourishment from the Bread of Life, namely, the Word of God and the Eucharist;

b) they retain their attachment to the local church thus preventing their isolation within themselves and therefore of condemning the other ecclesial communities;

c) they recognize the authority of their pastors and of the Magisterium;

d) they continuously aspire to grow in christian life and in the fulfillment of the law of love as the basis of more human relationships;

e) they should refuse to be drawn into political polarization and fashionable ideologies but rather maintain communion with the parish, diocesan, national and even international life of the apostolate. On these conditions, the christian communities will become truly the leaven of our ecclesial communities and from within work out the renewal of the whole temporal order.

*The Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI  
"Apostolatus Peragendi"*

On Dec. 10, 1976, Pope Paul VI issued "Apostolatus Peragendi" which established the Pontifical Council for the Laity on the level of a roman congregation for the service of the Supreme Pontiff and the Church. This replaced the "Consilium de Laicis" which was created on Jan. 6, 1967 experimentally and temporarily at the instance of Vatican II to promote the apostolate of Laity in the whole Church. After ten years of experiment and study it became obvious that the reasons for which the Council was set up have greatly increased, and the questions to be faced and resolved have become much more serious and widespread. Therefore, in the words of Pope Paul "we have decided to give this institution fruits of the Second Vatican Council, a **new, definite** and higher form". This confirms, if confirmation were really needed, what we have been saying here that the apostolate of the laity today has become much more urgent, truly indispensable for the fruitful achievement of the mission of the church.

A careful study of the structure of this Pontifical Council and the competence accorded to it and the expectations of the Holy Father from it, clearly indicates how much importance and urgency are given to the apostolate of the laity. The competence of this Council covers everything related to the apostolate of the laity in the Church and the discipline of the laity as. For this purpose the secretaries of several other congregations dealing with the lay

people has been attached to this Council as Ex-officio members. Supervisions of Pastoral Councils has been transferred from the S. Congregation of the Clergy to this Council for the Laity.

It is very significant that the Committee for the Family in Rome has been attached to this Council for the Laity, while keeping its own form and identity. This gives concrete reality to what pervades the whole thinking of the Vatican on the Apostolate of the Laity that the family is a very special and very crucial area of the lay apostolate. This clinches the conclusion that the battle for the family is not won in the realm of doctrine alone but in the realm of life, the life of the married couples themselves.

I feel that the lead given by Apostolatus Peragendi should be gradually reflected in our local church on the national level. A careful study of this Motu Proprio by the members of our Episcopal Conference will hopefully lead to appropriate adjustments in our structures.

Finally, fellow collaborators in our common apostolate, let us open ourselves totally to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He has been working in our midst through our christian communities which maintain communion with their pastors. While there are those specifically anointed by God to shepherd the whole flock of Christ, yet we believe that when we are gathered in His Name He joyfully abides in our midst.

In conclusion, allow me to borrow the exhortation of the Council Fathers: "This most sacred Council, then, entreates in the Lord that all laymen give a glad, generous, and prompt response to the voice of Christ, who is giving them an especially urgent invitation at this moment, and the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Younger people should feel that this call has been directed to them in particular, and they respond to it eagerly and magnanimously. Though this holy Synod, the Lord Himself renews His invitation to all the laity to come closer to His every day, and recognizing that what is His also their own (Phil. 2:5), to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission. Once again He sends them into every town and place where He Himself will come. Thus they can show that they are His co-workers in the various forms and methods of the Church's one apostolate which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of the times. May they always abound in the works of God, knowing they will not labor in vain when their labor is for Him".



# COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN THE MIND OF GOD AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES

By

Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D.

From all eternity the divine mind had formed a secret plan which would only unravel itself gradually in the course of mankind's development, and would reach its zenith in Christ, as St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians: "The plan God was pleased to decree in Christ, to be carried out in the fullness of time, namely, to bring all things together in the heavens and on the earth into one under the headship of Christ" (1:9-10). This is community at its best or unity of all in one, planned by God himself for all mankind, to reach its eschatological fulness when, according to St. Paul, "Christ hands over the Kingdom to the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24).

All other communities are intended as cells or units of this grand community of God, and all community-building in miniature aims to complete and perfect this gigantic plan of God for the unity of all creatures in the one Christ, in love. Consciously or not, the development or evolution of the entire intellectual creation tends towards oneness, for at its very center is Christ who directs all toward that goal. Those who are open to this inward impulse toward oneness, which is none other than God's own Spirit within, urging them on, are building the world of love for which all men long and wait.

The initial and basic cell for all community-building as intended by the Creator himself is the family, and this is as relevant in a Christian country as anywhere else on the face of the globe. We read in the book of Genesis: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one" (2:24). From this union of love proceeds the family, the first of all communities in the human realm. God has implanted the deepest love in the hearts of parents for their children as the whole world bears witness, and children in turn blossom on the love of their parents, forming a closely-knit unit in every part of the world, no matter what their religion be or what degree of education they may have. No one can gainsay the closely-knit ties of a family. Is it any wonder? God made man in his own image (Gen. 1:26) and God is triune. The family reflects in a

certain sense the Community of Three" in the inaccessible Light and infinite Love of the Most Blessed Trinity, where the Love of the Father and Son is so mighty that it blossoms forth in the Third Person of the Trinity, Love Itself.

Therefore the family was so sacred to Christ. He let himself be born into a family to share the love of father and mother, and to experience the oneness that is lived in that community of shared love. He gladly took part in the wedding feast of Cana, for human sexuality was for Christ something most noble and sacred. When asked by the Pharisees "May a man divorce his wife for any reason whatever?" he replied "Have you not read, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and declared, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become as one? Thus they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore let no man separate what God has joined'" (Mt. 19:6). He knew well the harm that would be caused by broken families when divorce is rampant, and, he was determined to lay down the guidelines for his followers that would insure the sacredness of marriage, so that it could be the center of a happy community of love, and thus contribute toward the grand plan of the Father.

But God chose a further means of carrying out this plan to unite man in community. His divine election fell on the family of Jacob, offspring of Abraham, then grown into large tribes; and he formed them into a people, Yahweh's own people, with whom he entered into intimate covenant-relations. They were a mixed group consisting of various tribes descended from Jacob, plus a motley group that had followed them out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38), as well as those groups that joined them later on. But out of this heterogeneous crowd, Yahweh determined to fashion for himself a community that would be a holy and royal people, all bearing the name of Israel, the heir of the promises made to Abraham, that in his offspring all the nations of the world would be blessed. **Israel was God's intended blue-print for his dealings with men of all times.** For that reason he gave Israel inspired writers to write up his dealings with her in the books of the Old Covenant. "You have seen how I bore you up on eagle's wings and brought you here to myself," Yahweh told them through Moses his spokesman, "therefore if you hearken to my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people" (Ex. 19:4-6).

Yet how would this motley crowd become one people, one community with the same aims, the same ideals, the same direction toward the one true God, to reflect his plan for all the nations?



For that purpose Yahweh gave Israel her sacred laws. He never intended his laws to be burdens or restrictions that would weigh her down. That experience came from her own false grasp of law. Yahweh's intention was to give Israel proper attitudes, both toward himself and toward each other; his law was the expression of his loving will, the will of a Father who loves all men and desires only their best.

The first and greatest commandment given to the People of God of old is: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5), and the second is: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Both laws are positive: you shall, not negative: you shall not. If a man truly loves God with all his heart, he will realize the need of loving God's image as himself. The Ten Commandments are but a wider extension of these two fundamental commandments given to Israel. For if I love God, I will worship him gladly, and reject all false idols, such as mammon, I will not abuse his holy name. If I love my neighbor as myself, I will not kill or steal or judge him rashly or abuse his rights. Thus the Law of God was intended to unite God's people in a community of love, and offer the same guidelines to the New Israel, which Israel foreshadowed.

But in time Israel forgot that the Law was only directive and guideline, not grace and strength to carry out those guidelines. The Law did not confer the power to fulfill what was commanded. God intended by this means to bring Israel to realize man's inner weakness and sinfulness, and her need of God her Savior. Of himself man with his corrupt inclinations is not able to love God properly nor his neighbor as himself. His nature is imperfect, corrupt. He needs the help of the Spirit of God. So Israel was given by the Spirit the inspired prayerbook of psalms, and the liturgy of worship, to unite her both in her families and as a nation in community prayer and worship, praising Yahweh and asking his help on the journey toward the goal, longing all the while for the Savior to redeem them.

What was intended to make Israel a holy people, welded together in a community of love, namely the Law, proved to be a stumbling block and occasion of multiple failure. Israel's doctors of the Law led her to the brink of ruin by not learning the intended lesson of man's dependence on God, but **relying instead on their own individual power and strength to keep the Law.** Thus the Law became a burden unbearable, and a choking atmosphere of restriction. Yet God never threw off his people nor desisted from his destined plan. A remnant was always found who would

be open to his will and the inner breathing of his Spirit. In a little Galilean town of Nazareth, the Virgin blossomed in the fulness of time, and God's final step to unite all men into one divine family was about to be realized. God's own Son became one of us, one of the race of man, and in a mysterious way, he planned to unite all mankind and all existing creatures to himself in one Body that is truly his own, with one identical Spirit which is also truly his own. That brings us to the threshold of the Incarnation and to the Paschal Mystery.

The Paschal Mystery! It is the superb salvific work of Christ for the unification of all creation, from the first moment of his Incarnation, in which he determined to channel all his efforts toward complete submission to the Father, and a life of total service to his fellowmen; then on through his Passion and Death whereby he gave himself totally for man; climaxing in his Resurrection and Ascension, with the Pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the believing community; and being consummated in full in his Parousia when the power of the Risen Lord will have penetrated to the uttermost parts of the universe, and regenerated humanity will be forever united in the Kingdom of God's love and holiness.

But we are anticipating. Not long after Jesus entered upon his public life, he formed a community of Twelve to be with him always and to whom he gave his own powers (Mk. 3:13). This little group he gradually formed into the believing community as we find it in the Acts of the Apostles, and later on it would come to be called Ecclesia or Church, the equivalent of the Hebrew "Qahal" designating God's people: called, convoked and formed by him as the object of his designs. But it was necessary that Jesus first carry out the Paschal Mystery and die as the Victim-Lamb of God, in order, as St. John tells us "to gather into one all the dispersed children of God (11:52). This is brought out forcefully by St. Paul: "All of you have clothed yourselves with Christ, and there does not exist among you... slave or freeman, male or female, all of you are ONE in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). God's plan is now made clear to man.

In the opening chapters of the Acts the followers of Jesus are portrayed as a **community** of men and women with Mary in their midst and it is especially noted that they are a **praying community**: (1:14). They are awaiting the Spirit promised by Jesus and this would be like another incarnation by which the believing members of Christ would go out into the whole world and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:26), immersing them into the new atmosphere that is decidedly Christian. This universal brother-

hood is already depicted in the second chapter of the Acts when the believing community under the impulse of the Spirit breaks forth praising God in the many tongues of the known Roman world, symbolizing the power of the Spirit to unite all nations and tongues into one Body, the Body of Christ, with the same Spirit invigorating its members. In the fourth chapter, the portrait deepens: "The community of believers were of one heart and one mind. None of them claimed anything as his own, rather, everything was held in common. With power they bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (4:32f). Truly we have here the blueprint for every Community: one mind and heart, sharing all things, material and spiritual, with the resurrection of Christ as their stamina, and the Spirit of Christ as the unifying element.

What is the building-potential in this community in which Christ lives on and makes himself manifest to the whole world, to transform it gradually but totally? It is love. On the eve of his death, over and over again, the Master gave his own the injunction, which would be the hallmark of every truly Christian community: it is the one mighty force which truly builds heterogeneous groups into one. Listen to St. John recording it for us: "I give you a new commandment: Love one another, such as my love been for you, so must your love be for each other. This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love, for one another" (13:34f). "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments even as I have kept my Father's commandment and live in his love" (15:9). "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (15:12f).

Paul, in his hymn on the excellent gift of love demonstrates why love is so important in building up community-harmony: He says: "Love is patient, love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking. It is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices in the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure" (1 Cor. 13).

Just as Yahweh gave Israel the great commandment of love to make her a perfect community, so Jesus gave his disciples this commandment of loving him by loving one another. But Jesus simultaneously gives his believing community the inner power and strength to carry out this commandment, for he won for us by his Passion and Death his own Personal Spirit of love which is his

greatest gift to us. In the power of that Spirit dwelling within us, we are enabled to be open to one another, to relate to each other even when it is difficult, to build a truly model community of love. "Make every effort," St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "to preserve unity which has the Spirit for its origin and peace as its binding force. There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope given to all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all works through all and is in all" (4, 3-6). Even trials and sufferings cannot thwart the work of the Spirit of love: "We even boast of our afflictions: We know that afflictions makes for endurance, and endurance for tested virtue, and tested virtue for hope, and this hope will not leave us disappointed, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5, 3-5).

But Jesus gave us still more. On the night before he died Jesus instituted the Eucharist as a sign of unity and love, a sign that is efficacious, bringing about that which is signified. For as St. Paul says: "Is not the bread we break a sharing in the Body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16f). It is chiefly by the Eucharist that men are transformed more and more into the one Christ, for its influence makes itself felt in every corner of the globe, bringing men and women of each and every nation of the world into that One Body of Christ, which gives perfect worship to the Father and is the continued recipient of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. To look upon attendance at the Eucharistic sacrifice merely as an obligation to be fulfilled is so inadequate, that it is unworthy of a child of God. Rather, the Eucharistic sacrifice affords each and everyone the greatest means to reach that full and perfect manhood in Christ of which St. Paul speaks in Ephesians (4, 13). Teilhard de Chardin would even see the Eucharist as transforming the matter of the entire universe in a certain sense into the Body of Christ. Perhaps a deeper theological appreciation of the Eucharist will open up horizons not even surmised as yet by the People of God. For in the Eucharist, the Divine Word not only incarnated himself in human flesh, but in a sense, in matter itself.

Coming now to the practical side of our theme, how are we to develop that environment which constitutes a truly Christian community? It is St. Paul again, with his practical bent, who offers us good guidelines. First he reminds us there are various gifts in any community and each person has his or her charism, but the same Spirit is the source of each of them. God it is who is accomplishing the works in each of us. To one is given this ability,

and to another that, but to each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the **common good**. The charisms are not given chiefly for the individual but for the community. After that, Paul draws an important analogy. "The body is one and has many members but all the members, many though they are, are one body. And so it is with Christ. If the foot should say, because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body, would such a complaint be justified? If the body were all eye, what would happen to our hearing? If all the members were alike, where would the body be? The eye cannot say to the hand, I do not need you, anymore than the head could say to the feet, I do not need you. All the members should be concerned about one another. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one is honored, all the members share its joy. You then are the body of Christ, everyone of you is a member of it" (1 Cor. 12).

From this remarkable analogy with the human body, Paul draws striking conclusions for the Body of Christ. It is evident that there must be cooperation and coordination if it is to work smoothly in any community, like in the human body. The vital principle that moves each and every member of Christ's body is none other than the Holy Spirit himself. It is of paramount importance to be aware of this, aware of his directing the community to its destined goal, aware of the necessity of working together with all the other members if we are to build a community of love. This requires much self-control and much self-conquest but it is the overall goal that really counts. We shall surely fail to reach this goal, if, like Israel of old, we rely solely on our own abilities and powers to build a community, for the **Spirit alone can accomplish this task in us and through us**, when we continue to be open to him. Hence the importance of living this reality of the indwelling Spirit.

Paul returns to this in Ephesians: "It is Christ who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, **in roles of service** for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature... through him the whole body grows, and with the proper functioning of the members joined together by each supporting ligament, builds itself up in love" (4:11-16). This is a clear picture of the necessity of service, of supporting one another, of cooperation and coordination in the building of a truly Christian community, be it the family, the parish, the religious community, or any other, worthy of the name.

Paul has one more piece of advice for community-building. It is in his letter to the Philipppians whom he wanted to make the



ideal community for all the others. Luke had worked long and hard there, and one cannot read Philippians without realizing how dear they were to the heart of Paul. This is what he writes to them: "Make my joy complete by your unanimity, possessing the one love, united in spirit and ideals. Never act out of rivalry or conceit; rather let all parties think humbly of others as superior to themselves, each of you looking to others' interests rather than to his own." (Phil. 2:2-4). This difficult advice he motivates by following it up with that sublime hymn to Christ, who though he was by nature God, did not disdain to empty himself and take the form of a slave, humbling himself and being obedient even unto death (ibid. vv. 5-8).

Cooperation, coordination, service of one another, sincere humility and reliance on the Spirit of God within, these are the practical points Paul offers for genuine community-building among Christ's followers.

The night before he died, Jesus prayed to the Father from the depth of his heart. That prayer will not go unheard. It was for the final fulfillment of the plan of the Father. These are his words: "I do not pray for the Twelve alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you... I have given them the GLORY you gave me that they may be one, as we are one... I living in them, you living in me... that their unity may be complete. So shall the world know that you sent me, and **that you loved them as you loved me**. Father, all those you gave me I would have in my company where I am, to see this glory of mine which is your gift to me, because of the love you bore me before the world began. Just Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you: and these men have known that you sent me. To them I have revealed your name, and I will continue to reveal it, so that your LOVE for me may live in them and I may live in them" (Jn. 17:20-26).

When that shall have come to pass, the community of God's plan shall have reached its fulfillment. All one in Christ, Christ living in them as one loving family, and the Love of the Father for the Son filling each one of that mighty family, so that there is an eternal community of love.

# THIRD WORLD THEOLOGY

*Statement of the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third  
World Theologians, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania,  
5 - 12 August 1976\**

## Introduction

(1) We, a group of theologians of the Third World gathered at Dar-Es-Salaam, 5-12 August 1976, having spent a week together in common study on our role in the contemporary world are convinced that those who bear the name of Christ have a special service to render to the people of the whole world who are now in an agonizing search for a new world order based on justice, fraternity and freedom.

(2) We have reflected from our life experience as belonging to the oppressed men and women of the human race. We seriously take cognizance of the cultural and religious heritage of the peoples of the three continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. We have expressed our view of history, our perspective on the churches and our expectations for the future. We invite all persons doing theology in the churches to consider our presentations and participate with us and all those who are struggling to build a more just world in order that the believers in Christ may truly be involved in the struggle towards the realization of a new world order and a new humanity.

## PART I

### THE THIRD WORLD POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

(3) As we are increasingly aware of the impact of the political, social economic, cultural, racial and religious conditions on theology we wish to analyse the background of our countries as one point of reference for our theological reflection.

(4) The concept of the Third World is a recent one referring to the countries outside the industrialized capitalist countries of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand and the socialist countries of Europe including the USSR.

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\* The text is by courtesy of IDOC.

(5) The economic standard of living of these countries is low; they are technologically less advanced; mainly agricultural in production; their terms of trade are unfavourable and deteriorating; capital accumulation is small; their external debt is large and growing. The 'Third World' is divided into the free enterprise countries to the Western powers and the socialist countries which generally cut themselves off or have been cut off by the capitalist powers.

(6) The Third World countries are rich in natural resources as well as in their cultural and religious traditions which have given a deep meaning to their peoples' lives. These countries have been historically slow and late in technological development, in modernizing education, health, transportation, and in the general growth of their economies. Traditionally the masses have been subject to long term exploitation by their rulers and chiefs or aristocracy. However, prior to colonization by the Western powers they had a rather self-reliant economy, with a strong sense of communal solidarity. In certain respects some of these areas were superior to the West in sciences, technology, agricultural and industrial methods, architecture and the Arts. Religions with profound philosophies of life and cultures have been the soul of these peoples for many generations.

(7) **The principal cause for the modern phenomenon of the underdevelopment of the peoples of the third world is the systematic exploitation of their peoples and countries by the European peoples.** From the end of the fifteenth century a large scale and unprecedented expansion of the European peoples brought most of the rest of the world under their military, economic, political, cultural and religious domination. For them it was a triumph of military technology, adventure and zeal to 'civilize' and 'christianize' 'the pagans'. While they contributed to a process of modernization in the colonized countries, they reaped enormous material benefits in the process. They plundered the riches of the Americas, Asia and Africa. Gold, silver, precious stones and raw materials were taken to add enormously to their capital accumulation. Their countries grew in wealth and power by the underdevelopment of these conquered and colonized countries.

#### **(8) Mechanisms of Underdevelopment and Domination:**

(a) **The Western powers took over all the temperate lands which they could populate with their own peoples. Where the numbers were few and relatively weak militarily, they exterminated the native populations** — as in North America, parts of South America, Australia and New Zealand. This was a simple solution with only a few people left to remind us of this most heinous genocide of human history.

(b) In other areas the Europeans settled down alongside the local populations subjugating the latter to their dominations; thus southern America, Central America and Southern Africa. In South America intermarriage has produced a large mestizo population, while the domination continues to be that of the settlers.

(c) In most of the countries which were thickly populated, imperial power was established following the penetration by traders and sometimes of missionaries. Only a few countries like Thailand and the hinter land of China escaped this process. The Russians on the other hand expanded southwards and eastwards up to Alaska.

(d) In the process the Western powers allocated to themselves the free or freed land spaces of the earth and established new sovereign states in them to preserve the land base of raw materials and power for ever for themselves. Everywhere they established a pattern of economic exploitation in their favour. They thus exterminated entire peoples enslaved millions, colonized others and marginalized all, thus laying the base of their development and the underdevelopment of the third world.

(c) The colonizers undermined the economy of the colonies for their advantage. They made their colonies suppliers of raw materials based on cheap labour and markets for their finished goods. They expropriated fertile lands of the oppressed peoples, set up plantations of sugar, coffee, tea, rubber, etc. ... They transported millions of peoples from one country to another to serve as slaves or indentured labour. Thus the Black population in the Americas and Indians in Africa, Malaysia, Srilanka and the Pacific and Caribbean Islands. Paying a mere subsistence wage to the workers and charging high prices for their exports the colonial powers were able to add further to their capital stock. They continued the pillage of the raw materials of these countries of oil, tin, bauxite, copper, timber, gold, silver, diamond ...

Thus during centuries the Western European peoples had a free hand in Asia, Africa and South and Central America, North America having become independent joined the race for colonial power, along with Germany, Italy and Japan.

(f) As political independence was gained by these colonies, beginning with the Latin American countries in the last century, a new form of exploitation consolidated itself. In Latin America, Spain and Portugal lost their dominance to be replaced by Britain, the U.S.A. and other Western European countries as the economic colonizers.

In Asia and Africa too the gaining of political independence led generally to the transfer of power to the local elite that continued the economic system established by the colonial powers. Since the 1950's the mode of economic exploitation by U.S.A., Western Europe and Japan of Third World countries has been further strengthened by the horizontal and vertical integration of companies. We have thus the growth of giant Multinational Corporations (MNC) based generally in U.S.A., Western Europe and Japan that have enormous economic, political and cultural power of domination over entire lines of production and commerce. The MNC's have made the exploitation of the poor countries such a fine art, with the advantage of the most developed technology, that the gap between the rich and the poor in the world and within the countries continues to grow.

(g) As we have spoken of imperialistic and political domination. The oppression of blacks and other races in different areas has been brutal and constant.

Women have been discriminated against and oppressed in all levels of both society and the Church. Their condition has not changed in the new independent countries of the Third World. The forms of oppression (political, economic, racial, sexual) have their own identity. They are interrelated and interwoven in a complex system of domination.

(h) In this centennial exploitation of the Third World by the Euro-American people the cultural subjugation of the weak has been important tool of oppression. The languages, arts and social life of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas were cruelly attacked by the colonizers.

Unfortunately, the Christian Churches were in a large measure an accomplice in the process. The very sense of spiritual superiority of Christians gave a legitimation for conquest and sometimes even extinction of 'pagans'. The theology of the colonizers in most cases was thus attuned to the justification of this inhumanity; and is this not substantially what has passed for Christian theology during many centuries in its relationship to the oppressed peoples?

(9) **The People's Republic of China** has entered a path of self-reliant growth based on **socialism** and the people's participation in the direction of agriculture and industry. By cutting themselves off from the capitalistic system they have been able to reverse the trend of continuing underdevelopment that characterized the colonies and the newly independent 'free enterprise' countries. North Korea, North Vietnam and Cuba took similar lines with appreciable results. In recent months South Vietnam, Cambodia and



Laos, in Asia, and Mozambique, Guinea Bissau and Angola in Africa, have opted for self-reliant socialist development. Tanzania is attempting a socialist approach without going the whole way of eliminating free enterprise. Other countries in the Third World have varying degrees of socialist experimentation: e.g., Burma, Algeria, Srilanka, Ethiopia.

(10) **The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, considered the Second World** often render assistance to the oppressed peoples of other countries in their struggles for liberation — as in Cuba, Vietnam and Angola. They are a valuable counter-balance against imperialist domination by the North Atlantic powers, along with China and the non-aligned powers of the Third World.

(11) **However Socialism too has its own problems to resolve** — especially in relation to the safeguarding of human freedom, and the very price of the revolutionary process in terms of human lives. The 'aid' given by the socialistic countries while being generally on better terms than that by capitalist countries is also not altogether without strings and disadvantages to the recipients. The foreign policies of the socialist countries tend sometimes to be according to their national self-interest and thereby even to divide the anti-imperialist cause. Further our information concerning socialist countries is rather limited due to the barriers of communications.

(12) **In recent years, the very sharpening of the contradictions of capitalism** have increased the tensions in the dependent free enterprise countries of the Third World. The rising expectations of the peoples have led to much unrest and revolt. The response of beneficiaries of privileges has been — generally in collaboration with foreign powers — to set up military dictatorships, declare martial law or emergency rule as in most countries, of Latin America, Asia and Africa. We witness today a growing repression of peoples' movements, imprisonment without trial of political dissidents, and a trend towards sophisticated and inhuman torture in these countries. Thus, human freedom is a victim in most parts of the Third World. Conflicts among Third World countries further worsen the condition of the masses of the people. Tribalism, casteism and other forms of religious, racial and sex discrimination are further lines of exploitation.

(13) **In international affairs** desperate efforts are being made by the Third World leaders to obtain better prices of their exports, to ensure integrated commodity agreements, reschedule external debt, control or eliminate MNC's and military bases, regulate the transfer of technology as through UNCTAD IV. From within the capitalist framework the OPEC countries mainly of the Middle East, have been able to obtain for themselves enormous quantities of

Petrol dollars by the method of confrontation against the consumers of petrol. This has greatly harmed the development plans of petrol importing poor countries.

(14) A theology of the 'Third World' has to take into account this historical situation. It has to ask: What role has the Church been playing throughout these developments at each stage and in every situation? How did Christians react to this phenomenon of the Western invasion of other peoples? What was the prevailing theology? How does Christian theology relate to today's continued exploitation in the World? What is its contribution to the building of a just society? What contribution will the Church make to the liberation of the oppressed who have long suffered due to sexist, racial, and class domination?

### PART II:

#### The presence and role of the church in third world countries

(15) The Christian Churches, while taking their origin from Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the Scriptures, are institutions composed of human beings and hence subject to human weakness and conditioned by their socio-cultural environment.

(16) Christianity was born in Asia — and reached Africa before it spread in Europe. According to reliable tradition the oriental Churches in India trace their origin to the work of the Apostle Thomas, and the Church in Egypt was begun by the Evangelist Mark at the dawn of the Christian Era. Christianity flourish in Ethiopia, North Africa and parts of Asia in the early centuries, after Christ.

(17) However the present day Churches of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean have their source in the missionary zeal of the European and North American Churches. The Christianization of Latin American and parts of Asia and Africa, was mainly the task of the Spanish and Portuguese missionaries. In a later phase, missionaries from the other European countries spread the Christsian faith — both Catholic and Protestant to the corners of the earth. In Korea, lay Christians from China made the first converts and developed Christian groups for several decades without a clergy or European missionaries.

(18) Missionaries who left their countries to spread the faith in the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America were persons generally dedicated to the spiritual welfare of humanity. They often underwent severe hardships of a physical and psychological nature. Their labours have given birth to the Christian communities of these continents and these are a testimony to their zeal and devotion.

(19) All the same the missionaries could not avoid the historical ambiguities of their situation. Oftentime and in most countries they went hand in hand with the colonizers — both traders and soldiers. Hence they could not but be, at least partially, tainted by the designs of the searchers for gold, spices, lands, slaves and colonies. While they were zealous for souls, they tended to think that the commercial and military expansion of Western peoples was a providential opportunity for the salvation of souls and the spread of the evangelical message. Thus they collaborated in the colonial enterprise, even when their Christian consciences sometimes felt revolted by the atrocities of the brutal colonizing process. Hence it is necessary to distinguish their good will and the substance of the Christian gospel from the actual impact of the Christian missions in these countries.

(20) The missionaries could think of the spread of Christianity in terms of transplanting the institutions of their Euro-American Churches within, of course, the framework of imperial domination. Thus the new Christians were segregated from their fellow human beings, alienated from the traditional religious, cultural heritage and their community way of life. This process strengthened their hold on the new believers. The liturgy was imported wholesale from the 'mother Churches'; so were the ecclesiastical structures, and theologies. A pietistic and legalistic spirituality common in Europe at the time was introduced in the new churches also. In later times, the Western educational system was spread in the colonized countries largely through the services of the Churches. We have thus the establishment of Christian Churches in these continents more or less as carbon copies of European Christianity, however adapted to the subject situation of the colonized.

(21) In the phases of Western expansion the Churches were allies in the colonization process. They spread under the aegis of colonial powers; they benefited from the spread of empire. In return they rendered a special service to Western imperialism by legitimizing it and accustoming their new adherents to accept compensatory expectations of an eternal reward for terrestrial misfortunes including colonial exploitation. The crafty merchants and soldiers of the West were not slow to see and take advantage of

the presence of missionaries among their captive peoples. The gospel was thus used as an agency for a softening of national resistance to the plunder by the foreigners and a domestication of the minds and cultures of the dominated converts. In fact, the foreign powers often gave the Christians a privileged position of confidence within their arrangements for the administration of the countries. In the process Christian teaching got badly tainted by the search for selfish gain of the peoples who called themselves Christian and exercised power in the name of emperors and spiritual rulers.

(22) The theology of the Christian Churches at this time not only suited the colonization process but was also fed by it. The sense of military and commercial superiority of the European peoples was underpinned with the view that Christianity was superior to other religions which had to be replaced by 'the truth'. Theology for centuries did not seriously contest the plunder of continents, and even the extermination of whole peoples and civilizations. The meaning of the message of Jesus Christ was so blunted as not to be sensitive to the agony of whole races. These are not merely sad historical realities, but the immediate predecessor of contemporary Western theologies. For these latter have not yet learnt to contest the successors of the colonizers — viz. the powerful countries of Europe, North America and Japan. Nor have they evolved a theology to counteract the abuses of the heirs of the colonial merchants, viz. the giant predatory multinational corporations of today.

(23) The Christian Churches in the tri-continental colonial situation fostered educational and social sciences which helped improve the conditions of the population of these countries. Unfortunately their value patterns were such as to fit into capitalistic domination and hence were largely academic and individualistic. With the result that the leadership to whom independence was granted in the colonies (except after a revolutionary struggle) were generally persons schooled in the Western capitalistic tradition. In this way the Churches — perhaps unwittingly — contributed to the formation of local elites that were to be the subsequent collaborators in the on-going exploitation of the masses of the people even after political independence. The social services too, while relieving immediate needs, failed to generate a critical social conscience or support the radical movements for social justice. The Churches thus generally continued to be a sort of ideological ally of the local middle classes that joined the power elite and shared economic privileges with the foreign companies that continued even after political independence in Latin America from the 19th century and in Asia and Africa after the mid 1940s.

(24) We see in the Churches in the three continents the growth of a 'liberal' trend in more recent decades, as a successor to the traditional 'conservative' position. The liberal trends are in favour of the adaption of the Churches to the indigenous cultures to the operation of parliamentary democracy within the framework of free enterprise capitalism. Local religious, priests and bishops have replaced the foreign ones. The theology was thus adapted to suit the post independent situation. However, there was not yet a fundamental alliance of the Churches with the masses struggling for radical social justice.

(25) In more recent years there are groups of Christians all over the world beginning to understand the situation of the exploited peoples more sensitively and more correctly. The leaderships of the Churches such as the Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches have given an impetus towards the commitment of Christians for the building up of a just world and for openness to the other religions and ideologies in the world. Several local Churches, Regional Conferences and Episcopates have supported this trend e.g. The Bishops' Conference of Medellin (1968).

The movements of liberation of the peoples from foreign domination now receive more support from the Churches as in the World Council of Churches contribution to the combat against racism. The Church groups are beginning to be more conscious of the injustices in the economic system. Human rights are now being defended by Christian groups including some Church leaders in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Orthodox Churches have struggled along many centuries against different forms of oppression and thus preserving their religious and cultural identity. Orthodox theologians share in the process of renewal as they address themselves to the task undertaken by the Early Fathers of the Church, namely, to find the relevant expression of their faith in struggling against alienating forces and finding renewed meaning for the Christian faith in the present world.

(26) A new vision of a theology committed to the integral liberation of persons and structures is now being developed in the very process of participation in the struggles of the people. This takes different forms in different regions. In Latin America, the 'theology of liberation' expresses this analysis and commitment. In Cuba and Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau groups of Christians have been involved in the revolutionary struggles. In Southern Africa some Christians are also in the centre of the struggle for liberation. Christian rulers in countries like Tanzania and Zambia search new ways of realizing the gospel ideals in the con-



temporary world. In Asia the Christian groups have been in the forefront of the struggle for human rights especially in South Korea and the Philippines.

(27) The study of the traditional religions, the promotion of indigenous spirituality are preoccupations of Christian Groups in Asian and African countries. In several parts of Africa and Asia serious efforts are being made towards the development of indigenous theologies and liturgies, especially theology of religions. The building of truly authentic local Churches is a major preoccupation of many theologians in these countries. Latin America has generated new groups of witnesses to the radical gospel of liberation in almost every country of the continent. Various groups such as women, youth, students, workers and peasants are now contributing much to the renewal of the churches and of a theology relevant to their situations.

(28) There are thus signs of hope in the presence of the Churches in these countries. The search for self-reliance, the participation in the peoples' struggles the indigenized liturgies, the emerging relevant theologies the modern ecumenical movement, renewal efforts in many churches and the relative openness to socialistic changes are harbingers of a more radical christianity.

(29) However a deep challenge remains to be faced. The Churches are still burdened by the traditions theologies and institutions of a colonial past while the countries want to move rapidly into the modern world and peoples clamour for radical change in favour of justice and freedom, all round, inculturation and increased inter-religious dialogue and collaboration.

### PART III:

#### Towards a Theological Approach in the Third World

(30) We affirm our faith in Christ our Lord, whom we celebrate with joy, and without whose strength and wisdom our theology would be valueless, and even destructive. In doing theology we are seeking to make the Gospel relevant to all people, and to rejoice in being collaborators, unworthy as we are, in fulfilling God's plan for the world.

(31) The theologies from Europe and North America are dominant today in our Churches, and represent one form of cultural domination. They must be understood to have arisen out of situations related to those countries, and therefore must not be uncritically adopted without our raising the question of their relevance

in the context of our countries. Indeed, we must, in order to be faithful to the Gospel, and to our peoples, reflect on the realities of our own situations and interpret the word of God in relation to these realities. We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on praxis of the reality of the Third World.

(32) Interdisciplinary approach in theology and the dialectical inter-relationship between theology and the social, political and psychological analyses need to be recognized. While affirming the basic goodness of creation and the continued presence of God's Spirit in our World and history it is important to bear in mind the complex mystery of evil, which manifest itself in human sinfulness and the socio-economic structures. The inequalities are diverse, and account for many forms of human degradation, and necessitate our making the Gospel the 'good news to the poor' that it is.

(33) The Church, the body of Christ, needs to become aware of its role in today's reality. Not only should it not remain insensitive to the needs and aspirations, but also it must fearlessly announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ, recognizing that God speaks in and through our human needs and aspirations. Jesus identified himself with the victims of oppression, thus exposing the reality of sin. Liberating them from the power of sin and reconciling them with God and with one another, he restored them to the fullness of their humanity. Therefore the Church's mission is for the realization of the wholeness of the human person.

(34) We recognize also as part of the Third World the influence of other religions and cultures, and the need for Christianity to enter into a dialogue with them in humility. We believe that these religions and cultures have a place in God's universal plan and the Holy Spirit is actively at work among them.

(35) We call for an active commitment to the promotion of justice and the prevention of exploitation, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, racism, sexism, and all other forms of oppression, discrimination and dehumanization. Our conviction is that the theologian should have a fuller understanding of living in the Holy Spirit, for this also means being committed to a lifestyle of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed and involvement in action with them. Theology is not neutral. In a sense all theology is committed, conditioned notably by the socio-cultural context in which it is developed. The Christian theological task in our countries is to be self-critical of the theologians' being conditioned by the value system of his environment. It has to be seen in

relation to the need to live and work with those who cannot help themselves, and to be with them in their struggle for liberation.

There was a considerable measure of agreement in the area of the need to do **theology in context** as described above; furthermore, we recognize that our countries have common problems. The analysis of the social, economic, political, cultural, racial and psychological situations showed clearly that the countries of the Third World have had similar experiences of which account should be taken in the task of theologising. Nevertheless, obvious differences in situations and consequent variations in theology were also noted. Thus, while the need for economic and political liberation was felt to offer a vital basis for theologising in some areas of the Third World, theologians from other areas tended to think that the fact of the presence of other religions and cultures, racial discrimination and domination and related situations such as the presence of Christian minorities in predominantly non-Christian societies, reveals other equally challenging dimension of the theological task. We are enriched by our common sharing and hopefully look forward to the deepening of our commitment as Third World theologians.

(37) As we began, so we must end. Our prayer is that God would make us faithful in our work and do his will through us, and continually unfold before our eyes the full dimensions of the meaning of our commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Conclusion

(39) Our encounter has been brief but dynamic. We are, however, conscious of having shared in a historic session. The President of Tanzania Julius K. Nyerere added light and warmth to our conference by his presence at several of our sessions. We are convinced that what we have one through these days is a unique experience of theologizing from as if were, the other side of the earth and of human history. Rarely, if ever, have theologians of our three continents and solely from among the oppressed peoples of the world met together to re-evaluate their thought, their work and their lives. From it certain creative insights have come forth. As we share them with others we humbly pledge to continue our work together to try to comprehend better the plan of God in Jesus Christ for the men and women of our time.

We have spoken from the depths of our lived experience. We kindly request all to accept our statement as a sincere expression of our consensus from our knowledge of what our peoples have gone through over centuries. We hope it will be of some service in spreading genuine and frank understanding among the peoples of the world.

# HOMILETICS

by

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

## I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(September 4, 1977)

**First Reading:** Wisdom 9:13-19

**Second Reading:** Philemon 9b-10.12-17

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 14: 25-33

**First Reading:** These verses are taken from a prayer composed by the author and placed on the lips of Solomon of old, in line with his prayer asking God for wisdom in 1 Kgs. 3:6-9. It contrasts the greatness of the all-knowing God with weak, timid man. His spirit often aspires to accomplish great things, but he is weighed down by his "flesh". He scarcely can acquire proper knowledge of things on earth, much less of heavenly realities. But with God's Wisdom and God's Spirit guiding him, all is well; he will learn true wisdom and reach his destined goal.

**Gospel Reading:** Turning to the great crowd that had gathered about him, Jesus spoke clearly of the requisites for following him. These can be grouped under three headings: 1) Love of Jesus must prevail over love of kin, no matter how close the relationship (v. 26). 2) it must prevail over love of self and even one's own life (vv. 26b-27). 3) It must prevail over one's love for material goods (v. 33). Two parables are placed between the second and the third requisite, which illustrate all three, namely, discipleship is no small matter. Mature deliberation is required to accomplish it, and willingness at all times to meet the requirements. One must count the cost and have a courageous spirit of constant sacrifice. The cost is the sacrifice of love of kin, of self, and of material goods, whenever they stand in the way of love of Christ.

The "tower" can only be a watch-tower erected by the common people in the vineyard with a double purpose: 1) to serve as shelter in time of harvest, 2) an observation point to thwart the

attempts of thieves and prowling animals. To build one sufficiently high and strong may take up a good deal of the common man's resources. Again, petty kings were frequently at war with one another. Mature deliberation would be required to compute the expenses of an expedition, otherwise one risks defeat and frustration.

**Second Reading:** The shortest of Paul's letters contains a lesson of great depth. Onesimus, guilty of theft (v. 18) and runaway slave of Philemon, a wealthy citizen of Colossae, is converted by Paul in prison. Paul would have liked to retain him as a helper but recognized Philemon's rights over him, for slavery was part of the social stratum of the day; so he sent him back to him, calling him his son, and requesting Philemon to receive him back as a brother, a Christian. The request reveals both deep love as well as prudent tact on the part of Paul, and he lays the foundation for the Christian view on slavery in his actions.

## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (September 11, 1977)

**First Reading:** Exodus 32:7-11.13-14

**Second Reading:** First Timothy 1: 12-17

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 15: 1-32 (or: 1-10)

**First Reading:** The power of prayer is admirably exemplified in Moses, the friend of God and mediator of his sinful people, who have fallen into idolatry, thus defying the Lord and defaulting from the one true God. Notice that the Lord does not even call them his own people anymore, for he intends to reject them. In utter self-forgetfulness, Moses pleads for his people by reminding the Lord of all he had done already to deliver them, and of his oath to their forefathers. His prayer wins the day.

**Gospel Reading:** Three parables are brought together revealing the divine compassion for the wayward sinner.

1. **The lost sheep:** a picture of a typical Palestinian shepherd with a good-sized flock all his own. Each morning he leads them to pasture and back again in the evening. Pasture land is often hard to find, and the sheep, being somewhat scattered, are apt to be allured by hidden plots of green, and then get lost. A true shepherd feels the loss of even one of his sheep and spares no effort until he finds it, though it means leaving the rest of the flock meantime to a trusted friend. When found, no angry word,



no punishment is meted out to the bleating, frightened sheep, only compassion. Gently he lifts it to his shoulders and presses it to his cheek. The sheep is safe, the shepherd is glad, and so are his boon companions.

In the lesson Jesus reveals the joy, of heaven when sinful man returns to his God. Since everyone is in need of repentance the "righteous" can only mean the self-righteous in their own eyes. They are not pleasing to God.

**2. The lost coin:** A household scene of the poor in Palestine. The coin represents a day's wage and meant much to the poor peasant. Sometimes, these coins are made into a necklace, and if one is lost, the necklace cannot be used. Only a very diligent search regains the lost coin, and the woman's joy is so great that she shares it with her neighbors. Jesus concludes with the same lesson as before: God pursues with great love the heart that has wandered from him. It is his property, his ornament; his one wish is to regain it, for it is of priceless value in his eyes.

**3. The repentant (prodigal) son:** Explained in detail on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Bol. Ecl., Jan.-Feb. 1977, pp. 102-104).

**Second Reading:** An outpouring of gratitude on Paul's part for his apostolic calling, despite his once having been a bitter persecutor of Jesus. He became an object of divine compassion because he had acted in ignorance and was motivated by false zeal. Acknowledging the immense favors accorded him, he sees clearly that before God all men are sinners and in need of the Savior, Paul himself needing him above all. Others will take courage and find their way to God in view of what happened to him. This mystery of God's mercy makes Paul break out in adoration and praise.

## TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (September 18, 1977)

**First Reading:** Amos 8: 4-7

**Second Reading:** First Timothy 2: 1-8

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 16: 1-13 (or: 10-13)

**First Reading:** Amos, as God's mouthpiece, excoriates the wealthy merchants for their total disregard of social justice. They can hardly wait till the feastdays of rest are over so they can ply again their grossly dishonest business and shameful transactions. He inveighs against them not as a sociologist but as the bearer of

God's word. Israel's sins constitute rebellion against God who has made man in his image, and expects man to show mercy and loving kindness to the poor and defenceless, as he had shown to Israel.

"Ephah" is a dry measure and "shekel" a unit of weight and also a coin of this weight. It is difficult to see how the Lord would swear by the pride of Jacob if that refers to Jacob's arrogance; rather it refers to himself as the true Pride of Jacob. Israel's sins cannot go unpunished.

**Gospel Reading:** In this parable of the shrewd manager, the picture is this:

a. **Called to account:** a wealthy landlord controlled the country far and wide, with tenants renting the land and paying off the yearly rents in produce instead of cash. According to prevailing custom, the management of the estate was entirely in the hands of a head-manager, who leased the farms to growers of olives and grain, collected the rents, and took care of the accounts without the owner himself dealing with those matters. But carelessness, bad management or dishonesty resulted in considerable losses for the master, and eventually the bad state of affairs is brought to his attention. The manager is called to account. His silence admits his guilt. He is told to bring the account books. Dismissal is at hand.

b. **Unusual shrewdness:** In these straits the manager shows great cleverness. He is unaccustomed to hard manual labor, and unfit for it: Begging is abhorrent; one thing remains: he will ingratiate himself with the tenants and feather his own bed before dismissal goes into effect. He still has the account-books, so in haste he calls the tenants one after the other. He reduces their standing debt either by dishonesty, or, (according to some authors) by knocking off his own share of the produce of that year, which was coming to him as wages. In either case they are "indebted" to him, and in turn, take good care of him after dismissal.

c. **Appraisal of the landlord:** He is struck by the man's cleverness to provide for himself, and is forced to admit that he acted with much foresight, when it came to his own advantage.

From this cleverness in providing for himself with the goods of this world Jesus draws the lesson. His followers, the children of light, ought to employ similar shrewdness and forethought in providing for their eternal welfare. Even material goods can pave the way to the Kingdom of God if used properly, especially in helping the poor. Money cannot be taken along into eternity, but if put to proper use on earth, it can insure a welcome in eternity.

To offset any misunderstanding concerning the meaning of the parable, Luke adds telling words of Jesus about honesty, and fidelity in small matters. Moreover, if a man cannot be trusted with someone else's goods, will he be any more reliable with his very own? Finally, a last short parable pits money against God and warns that one cannot be totally dedicated to both at the same time.

**Second Reading:** A plea for public prayer for all men, emphasized by use of four expressions, four being the symbol of the universe. Those in authority should receive greater attention, so they will let man serve God in peace. God made all men, and Christ is the Mediator who died for all. Therefore it is the divine will that all be saved, a clear statement of great theological importance. Paul urges public prayer in the spirit of brotherly love, in order that the will of God be accomplished, and not frustrated by man's abuse of his free will.

## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (September 25, 1977)

**First Reading:** Amos 6: 1a.4-7

**Second Reading:** First Timothy 6: 11-16

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 16: 19-31.

**First Reading:** The prophet Amos castigates the wanton luxury of the Northern Kingdom (called Joseph because consisting chiefly of descendants of the two sons of Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh). They give no thought whatsoever to the evil conditions existing in the land. (Assyrian) exile is their doom.

**Gospel Reading:** A parable on true values. The picture is like a scene on the stage:

a. **In this life:** Two actors:

1) A wealthy Epicurean in fine clothes, banqueting daily sumptuously, with no thought of God or his Law concerning a share to be given to the poor (Is. 58:7), no heart for the desperately needy at his door, selfish and self-centered.

2) Lazarus, a beggar in need, famished and diseased, helpless and forsaken, with not even enough strength to keep away the mongrels from his sores; yet, evidently trusting in the Lord as his name Lazarus signifies: God is my help.

b. **In the after life:** the tables are turned. Three actors.

1) Lazarus: ended are his hunger and misery; he enjoys the express favor of heaven (borne away by angels) and perfect contentment (symbolized by "resting on Abraham's bosom").

2) The rich man: relegated to torments of fire and thirst in Sheol; painfully realizes his pamperings and enjoyments are at an end; great remorse at seeing the happiness of the beggar Lazarus.

3) Abraham: refuses even a drop of water to be brought by Lazarus to the once wealthy man now turned beggar! With death, the lot of man is fixed (vv. 25f). Refuses to send extra help to his brothers, because the revealed word of God is sufficient if heeded. Refuses an extra-ordinary shake-up for his brothers, like a return of someone from the dead, because he who neglects the ordinary means of salvation, will not be affected even by an apparition from the dead.

The lesson is clear: Wealth does not indicate man's true worth before God. True values are in the heart and not in external appearance. A despicable beggar may be God's favorite. Moreover, heaven must be won by the means at one's disposal, in the span of one's lifetime. There is no re-incarnation! Let the rich use well their riches, and let the poor trust in the Lord, bearing their lot patiently, if no human help is available. If ordinary means of salvation are neglected, no miracle will suffice to change a man's heart. This is exactly what happened when the proud and the rich in Israel refused to accept the proclamation that Christ had risen from the dead and was their sole means of salvation.

**Second Reading:** Paul depicts the Christian ideal for Timothy, dedicated as he is to God. He will welcome the challenge of the battle against evil, and carry out faithfully the commitment promised in baptism. Like Christ before Pilate, he is to bear witness to the truth, and he is charged to keep intact the whole deposit of faith until the Savior comes in glory. The thought of the Parousia of Christ makes Paul break out jubilantly into a doxology of praise of Christ as King, Lord, and God.

## BIBLICAL NOTES FOR OCTOBER

### TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 2, 1977)

**First Reading:** Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

**Second Reading:** Second Timothy 1: 6-8, 13-14

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 17: 5-10

**First Reading:** The prophet Habakkuk, living during the years immediately preceeding the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., is intensely occupied with the problem of evil. Evil was rampant in the Kingdom both from internal corruption and because of enemy oppression. Daringly he asks God how he can allow things to go on like that for his chosen People. The Lord answers that, although he is long-suffering and patient, evil will most surely be punished one day, while the just man who is steadfast in his fidelity to God, despite surrounding evils, will be rewarded with enduring life. St. Paul sees a deeper meaning here: it is faith in Christ that obtains for man true supernatural life.

**Gospel Reading:** Speaking in figurative language, Jesus points out that the smallest spark of faith can accomplish what mere human endeavors can never attain. The importance of man's accomplishments are not to be overstressed. Jesus proceeds to show his apostles that as God's servants in his vineyard, they are expected to do his will, and he is not indebted to anyone for the work he is doing. The servant's duties are to serve the master, and he can expect no special thanks for doing his duty. So too, the fundamental disposition of God's servants is humble service, for that is expected of them. However, it is not that the servant is useless or unprofitable, as some translations have it. The servant in the picture is neither useless nor unprofitable. Jesus means that we are to remember that we are but servants, and we should always know our place.

**Second Reading:** By the imposition of Paul's hands, Timothy had received a special outpouring of the Spirit, making him a minister of Christ. He was thus enabled to bear witness to Christ courageously and with great love although by nature he may have been somewhat timid. Timothy is exhorted to let himself be renewed in that same Spirit, so as to preach the Good News faithfully as entrusted to him by Paul, and to suffer loyally for Christ's sake. That is the mark of true discipleship.



**TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**(October 9 1977)**

**First Reading:** Second Kings 5: 14-17  
**Second Reading:** Second Timothy 2: 8-13  
**Gospel Reading:** Luke 17: 11-19

**First Reading:** Only after the pagan Naaman had obeyed the prophet in Israel, and performed the sevenfold washing in the Jordan out of sheer faith in the word of the prophet of Yahweh, was he healed of his leprosy. He then loudly professes his faith in Yahweh. His request to take back soil for sacred purposes merely reflects his esteem for the land which the true God had so favored, similarly as Christians request soil from the Holy Land for sacred purposes.

**Gospel Reading:** Again there is a test of faith as in the case of Naaman. Only after the test is met are the ten lepers cured. Jesus commands them first to obey the law concerning lepers who had been cured. It is in carrying out this command that they are cured. Nine of them were Jews and one belonged to the mixed and despised race of the Samaritans. The nine took God's favor for granted as coming to Abraham's offspring. The stranger did not. He returned with genuine gratitude and expressed it profusely. The reaction of Jesus registers surprise and disappointment at the ingratitude of the nine. Many ask for favors from God but few return thanks to him on receiving them.

**Second Reading:** Christ's resurrection is the central theme of Paul's preaching, and his strongest motivation for suffering. If he is unable to continue preaching, others will do so. But suffering he welcomes, for it brings salvation to all who are chosen. Dying with Christ must be experienced throughout the life of a Christian, but the end is eternal glory in resurrection. That goal, however, will not be reached unless we are faithful in all trials to the end. To deny Christ in our trials on earth will merit rejection by Christ in the end-kingdom.

**TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**(October 16, 1977)**

**First Reading:** Exodus 17: 8-13  
**Second Reading:** Second Timothy 3: 14 to 4:2  
**Gospel Reading:** Luke 18: 1-8

**First Reading:** A nomadic tribe tries to hinder Israel's passage through the wilderness. To oppose God's People is to oppose God,

so Yahweh fights for his People. Yet it was not the fighters who won the victory for Israel, but Moses the friend of God who spent the entire day in supplication and prayer, marking him as the mediator between God and his People. His hands were held in the form of a cross, prefiguring the final victory of Christ over the archenemy of God's People by his salvific death.

**Gospel Reading:** Perseverance in prayer despite obstacles is graphically brought home by today's parable. The scene unfolds thus:

a. An unscrupulous judge, who cared nothing for God's laws sat in court. He had lost all regard for human opinion and was bent only on his own gain.

b. To such a grim arbiter a widow betakes herself in desperate need. She is helpless, being a poor widow, she has no bribe to offer, or can she show any advantage to the judge for taking up her case. But she demands the justice of the law, because her adversary seemingly reduced her to her present need. But at first the widow receives no satisfaction at all and the case seems hopeless. Determined to win her case, the widow returns again and again to importune the judge with her demands.

c. Tired of her incessant clamoring, the godless judge takes up her case just to get rid of her, and gives her full redress. So the widow won her case without any other means but persistent appeals.

A parable consists in a prolonged comparison. Its lesson must be drawn from the point of the comparison. Here it is the ceaseless importuning of the helpless one that obtains desired results despite delays and other obstacles encountered. The lesson is evident. If a godless judge can be moved by ceaseless importuning, all the more will the all-just God be moved by the pleas of his elect. In every tribulation let the faithful be steadfast in confident prayer. In his own time God will surely hear their plea.

**Second Reading:** Paul exhorts Timothy to remain faithful to the teaching received (tradition) and to the Scriptures, which culminate in Christ, the object of our faith and the source of all salvation. All Scripture is of divine origin, for it was written by men under the special influence of the Holy Spirit. Its purpose is sacred: to make man holy and equip him for his sacred calling. In solemn terms, Paul reminds Timothy of his serious obligation to proclaim the Good News. He is not to be deterred from this task by any and glorious King are the powerful motives used by Paul to exhort Timothy to his task.

## THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 23, 1977)

**First Reading:** Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 35: 15b-17, 20-22a

**Second Reading:** Second Timothy 4: 6-8, 16-18

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 18: 9-14

**First Reading:** The Lord is an all-just God. Though the weak and lowly may at times be cruelly oppressed and neglected by man, God is their advocate and will defend their cause. God's true servants humbly realize that God alone is their Savior, and their persevering prayer will always win out, for God loves justice and hates wickedness.

**Gospel Reading:** For self-righteous people who despised everyone else Jesus told today's parable. It develops in three scenes:

a. **Two types of men at prayer:** In the Temple-court two men are praying: one represents the self-righteous, the other represents one who is aware of his wretchedness. The former is punctilious in all legal observances, but is woefully lacking in proper interior dispositions; the latter broke the law often by defrauding and cheating, but, being more in contact with life's miseries, he is more aware of man's true self and his great need of God.

b. **Prayer contrasted:** 1) Choosing a conspicuous place to be seen by all, the Pharisee pretends to thank God but in reality is merely boasting that he is better than anybody else, and he despises them all. 2) Choosing a humble position, the tax-collector both in word and deed gives sign of genuine contrition, openly admits his wrong-doing, compares himself with no one, and appeals in his misery to the infinite mercy of God.

c. **Christ's approval:** Only the tax-collector won God's favor, not the proud, boasting Pharisee.

It is clear from the lesson that self-complacency about one's works does not bring down God's blessing and favor. All men are sinful and need God's mercy. To recognize and admit this brings one close to God. The Pharisee was utterly unaware of his wretchedness. God's law is chiefly concerned with man's interior dispositions. Re-echoing the Lord's final word, St. James exclaims: "God resists the proud but bestows his favor on the lowly" (Jam. 4:6).

**Second Reading:** Paul describes his imminent death as a sacrificial offering giving worship to God and salvation to men. He has been true to his commission given him by the Lord. His reward is with the Lord who also rewards all who live the Christ-life till he comes. Abandoned by human help in the first hearing (of the

second trial, or possibly the first trial), Paul won his case, assisted by the Lord himself. He was thus enabled to bear witness to the Good News still more: either in subsequent journeys after the first trial, or before all the pagan judges present in the second trial. Paul is referring to his being released from earth's trials and entering the heavenly abode.

### THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 30, 1977)

**First Reading:** Wisdom 11:23 to 12:2

**Second Reading:** Second Thessalonians 1:11 to 2:2

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 19: 1-10

**First Reading:** A beautiful passage depicting 1) God's infinite greatness. In comparison, the entire universe is but a tiny grain used for a weight in the scales, or like a tiny drop of dew. What a terrific contrast! 2) God's infinite mercy, which proceeds: a) from his all-mighty power; knowing the weakness of little man, he overlooks man's failings; b) from his infinite love. In love he created every least being, and he cares for each of them, preserving them in existence.

**Gospel Reading:** An instance where the Lord expressly turns his attention to a wealthy person. As a tax-collector, he was despised and hated, because he collected the taxes from God's People for the hated Romans, often defrauding the poor to fill their own pockets. But in this case, Zachaeus had used his wealth to good purpose, and his earnest desire to encounter Christ won the Lord's approval. Jesus does not disdain to enter his house, for he is the Savior of all, rich and poor alike. All men are sinners and need the saving healing of Jesus. The entire scene is vividly depicted and even amusing in some details.

**Second Reading:** If the Christians are to be worthy of their call, and carry out the works of faith, it will be the powerful working of God who accomplishes it in them. For that Paul prays, since it will accrue both to the glory of Christ and to their own. Precisely this is the important angle of their striving, not whether the Coming of the Lord was imminent or not. Rumor from several sources had it that it was. Paul sets aside all such notions. The life of a Christian has deeper realities to live for.

## II. HOMILIES FOR SEPTEMBER

### WHAT CHRIST EXPECTS OF HIS FOLLOWERS

September 4, 1977 (Twenty-Third Sunday)

**The Human Situation:** We read in the second book of Maccabees (6:18) that the aged Eleazar who was being forced to transgress the Law, stoutly refused. Some of his old friends took pity on him and taking him aside, advised him merely to pretend to eat the sacrificial meat prescribed by the pagan king, but in reality to eat food prepared by himself. In this way he would escape the death penalty. Eleazar abhorred such pretense. What an example to give to the youth, he countered! And if I avoid punishment of men for some time, I shall never, whether alive or dead, escape the hands of the Almighty! With that he went to his death nobly and gloriously. Eleazar lived up to his inner convictions.

**The Good News:** In a country predominantly Christian, it is not too difficult to consider oneself Christian by attending Sunday services, receiving the Sacraments from time to time, paying Church dues, sending children to Catholic schools, and many such external activities. Yet, such a person could be quite far from the real Christian spirit that Christ demands of his loyal followers. What are our attitudes toward those things that Christ taught concerning the inner man of the heart? Things that lead away from him, such as occasions of sin, be they person, places, human transactions, evil literature, or the like. Did he not say that what comes out of the mouth, not what goes into it pollutes a man? And again, has he not warned that if the eye is an occasion of sin, we should pluck it out. Likewise, if the hand is an occasion of sin, to cut it off. Surely he is not wanting us to mutilate the body on every occasion of sin, for that would not have the desired effect. The eye and the hand are intended by him to be taken figuratively: whatever is as near and dear to us an eye or a hand, but leads into serious sin which separates us from Christ, must be parted with. It is always necessary to prefer Christ to anyone or anything, no matter how dear, if it stands in the way.

Or, what is our attitude toward social justice? Decent wages for our servants and employees, decent living conditions, provision for sickness and old age for those who work for us, proper time for recreation and for their religious Sunday duties? If our value-judgments do not come up to his in these matters, we may be Christian in name, but hardly in fact. For if Christ went so far as to say: "Give to the man who begs from you" (Mt. 5:42), how much more does he expect us to give what is due to those who are not begging from us, but working for us to gain a livelihood



for themselves and their families! There are people who give large sums of money to public causes, and even to church activities, but who are extremely parsimonious toward those over whom they hold immediate control. Yet, charity begins at home, as the old saying goes.

Again, what are our reactions when some relative or friends come between Christ and us with their schemes, suggestions and plans, dubious or even downright dishonest? Do we have the courage to resist this pressure to act against our Christian principles and convictions? No one is allowed to stand in the way of Christ. Did he not say in today's gospel: No one can be his follower unless we opt for him, even if our closest relatives stand in the way? Nor can we be his follower if we allow our selfish cravings to enter forbidden avenues, even though those paths would enrich us with power and wealth, and thus take us away from our sole salvation, Christ the Lord. In this life a choice must be made: Whoever would save his life here below, that is, give in to each and every whim and urge, will surely lose it, but whoever loses his life for his sake, that is curbs those unlawful inclinations and urges, will find it (Mt. 16: 25). Christ demands much, but rewards most generously.

Again, what is our reaction when the cross enters into our lives in the form of sudden setbacks, sickness, accident, loss of money similar hardships? Can we recognize Christ's cross in these happenings and remember his words: "Anyone who does not take up his cross cannot be his disciple?" The cross may be our own character faults, or the people we live with, the people placed over us, or the world situation we are part of. The Savior demands that we carry the cross, not moan about it. With love for all, even our enemies, we shall prove to be his true followers. From today's gospel we see that it takes much courage and constant striving to be a real follower of Christ. The call is great, but so is the challenge.

**Our Response:** It is not easy to live consistently the Christian commitment we have taken upon ourselves in baptism. But Jesus by his passion and death has won for us his own Spirit who is all powerful and who is assisting us, abiding with us always. If we use the means at our disposal, the Spirit will enlighten us and assist us to be true and loyal followers of Christ unto the end. And the end is the glorious beginning of life eternal!

## DIVINE COMPASSION

September 11, 1977 (Twenty-Fourth Sunday)

**The Human Situation:** On Friday, August 2, 1968, an hour before dawn a strong earthquake shook Manila. Disaster concentrated on one particular building called Ruby Towers. It was six stories high and covered an entire block. Three hundred persons died in the disaster but almost as many were rescued, because for eleven days, six thousand volunteers from all ages and stations in life went to work with hands or pick and shovel, moved with compassion for those unfortunate ones. What an admirable example of selfless love for persons who were total strangers for the most part. They were all God's children who needed help.

**The Good New:** When spiritual disaster overtakes a man and he falls into sin away from God, the Lord does not abandon him to himself in his sinfulness, and it would be contrary to the lesson of love he thought us, to despise such persons and to want to have nothing to do with them. Like the shepherd in today's gospel, the Savior goes in search of his lost sheep. It is his possession and he himself takes the initiative to rescue it, as is so beautiful depicted in Francis Thompson's poem, "The Hound of Heaven". The Lord himself gave existence and life to that particular person, endowed him with many gifts of body and spirit, gave up his only Son to death for his sake, and imparted his Spirit to him as a pledge of immortality. Shall he not seek it out now that it has gone lost? Like a tender and loving shepherd, God pursues the wayward heart to bring it back to himself.

In the large city of Paris in France, a young lad decided to run away from parental care and love. The parents were grief-stricken, for they had given the boy every means of happiness and fulfillment. Every search and inquiry was of no avail. Then they tried one last resort: they had large placards made and placed all over Paris. The placards bore this message: "Son, come back, We love you. Signed... mother and father". And the lad came back. Many a sinner returns to God because of the thought of God's divine compassion and love as depicted in today's gospel. He is like the woman who lost the coin, so necessary and dear to her, and who searched frantically till she had it again in her possession. Still more, he is like the father of the prodigal who could not wait for the son's return, but ran out to meet and embrace him, and shower him with totally unexpected kindness. (See biblical notes for today). Such is God's love. He has a hundred ways to draw the sinner back to himself: the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, the good example of others, a seemingly casual remark or reading-

matter, a heavy chastisement, a sudden recognition of one's misery and one's need of God.

God does not want the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live. Divine compassion has brought back many a hardened sinner known to us from the pages of history, but also many unknown who glorify God's compassion for all eternity, now that they are forever in the mansion of the Father, safe at home in his embrace.

**Our Response:** It is risky to postpone conversion, for God is all merciful but the will not be mocked. Even one passion uncontrolled can bring one to the brink of spiritual disaster, as it did Judas. Decision now! Jesus stands at the door and knocks (Rev. 3.20).

### CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD WISER?

September 18, 1977 (Twenty-Fifth Sunday)

**The Human Situation:** Printed in a Communist paper some years ago was this boast: "We Communists will win. We are determined to win, we are ready to pay the price. We give all we can of our pay, we give our spare time and part of our holidays. But you Christians give little time and money for the spread of the Gospel. We shall win, because we are convinced of our Communist message, because we are ready to sacrifice all, even our life, for our cause. But you Christians won't even dirty your hands".

**The Good News:** It is not true that all Christians are apathetic toward the Kingdom of God and Christ's Gospel message of salvation. Many are truly devoted to promoting religious activities and fostering good works of all kinds, be they men in high position, successful business men or common day laborers or students. Many do use their resources as suggested by the Lord to do good to others, and carry out Christ's commandment of love. But the Lord in today's gospel does state that many of the children of this world put far more effort in succeeding in their affairs, or advancing their career, than many Christians do with regard to what is of much higher value: attaining true happiness in Christ which will last forever, and spreading the Good News by word and deed to their fellowmen so that mankind come to know Christ and share in his riches.

All readily admit that the majority of peasants are obliged to put almost all their time and effort in trying to feed and clothe a growing family. Far from being worldly-minded, such people are helping build God's reign on earth in their own way. Often they are happier in their simple life-style and their deeply religious convictions than many well-to-do people. The Lord has rather in mind those who are clever enough to get ahead in life. They put in long hours on their projects, plan carefully, proceed shrewdly, and let no stone unturned to reach the peak of worldly success. They examine the latest methods and adopt them, buy the most up-to-date machinery, and espouse the surest policies. Such effort is bound to be crowned with success in the world.

Are most Christians as diligent in channelling their efforts toward lasting values? Did not Jesus tell us in the sermon on the mount: "Do not lay up for yourselves an earthly treasure. Moths and rust corrode, thieves break in and steal. Remember, where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Mt. 6: 19-21). Jesus pronounced the poor as blessed, for even if they had little of this world's goods, their hope was the reign of God which they would share abundantly. Once he told his followers to invite the poor and the lame and the sick when they gave a dinner so that they could not repay with this world's goods, but reward would be stored up in the resurrection of the just (Lk. 14:12-14). In all these instances, Jesus is aiming at keeping our minds on gaining the kingdom of God, and on obtaining things of true and lasting value.

Many zealous people of other confessions, such as Jehovah Witnesses, Sabbatists, and others, can put us to shame by their continued efforts to make converts, sell their literature, preach and argue their point. Catholics can do the same. Youth is inventive. We have a genuine message, and solid wares to peddle. The Christian message is all satisfying. It only needs to be presented correctly and appealing, and it will be lived with energy. It is surprising what any group of men or women can accomplish if they are determined to promote true Christian values. They must set to work with determination, cooperation and guided purpose. Many a parish and many a school bears witness to splendid deeds for Christ and one's fellowmen. For such as these, the children of the world are not wiser. They themselves have discovered where true values lie.

**Our Response:** If there are such activities in your parish or school to promote God's reign on earth or help others in their needs,

join them and give it your best. If there is none, try to speak to others about getting it started. Those who have the true faith should be the most zealous in spreading it.

## TABLES TURNED

September 25, 1977 (Twenty-sixth Sunday)

For the homily on the gospel, develop the parable as given in detail in the biblical notes for today. Draw out the picture in detail and elaborate on the many lessons contained in it as given there.

## II. HOMILIES FOR OCTOBER

### CORRECT ATTITUDES IN THE SERVICE OF GOD

October 2, 1977: Twenty-Seventh Sunday

**The Human Situation:** When Napoleon came to power, St. Vincent de Paul had already founded the Daughters of Charity. One day, someone was praising to the skies the works of philanthropy of a certain gentleman, when Napoleon interrupted him saying: "Give me a Daughter of Charity any time". He knew only too well that the simple, humble faith and loving service of a Sister accomplished more for the real good of man than all the external works of philanthropy, for God was working his marvels in the humble servants of his choice.

**The Good News:** Some people are inclined to think that God owes them a reward for the labors they perform for him. Day after day they serve him in one way or another in caring for those in their charge, in the service of the public, in various undertakings for the common good. They live with the impression that God owes them good health so that they can carry on their work, a decent wage so that they can raise their family and give it a decent education. Their relationship to God is in the form of a contract: I'll serve you, Lord, but I expect you to reward me with your blessings.

God will reward every good deed, but he owes no one anything. He is not obliged to anybody. That is just the lesson today's parable.



We are servants in the service of the Most High, and service is expected of every servant. Does the lady or the master of the house pour out her thanks to the servants who clean the house, prepare the meals, act as guard, chauffeur, gardener or laundry-woman? That is their duty. Truly Jesus has said: "I no longer call you servants, but I call you friends" (Jn. 15:15), yet this is sheer goodness and love on his part. And if the good God has promised to reward everyone according to his works this is the action of divine generosity and love, not a result of justice owing it to us. God is never outdone in generosity and rewards even a cup of cold water given to Christ's little one (Mt. 10:42). But as soon as man thinks that God really owes him salvation or the goods of this life, he is barking up the wrong tree.

That is why today's gospel begins with the great efficacy of faith in performing great deeds. All that man accomplishes by himself is really nothing in God's sight compared to what God can do by means of a man of faith. Jesus illustrates this by the figure of a sycamore tree (black mulberry), the roots of which are so strong that it can stand for six centuries, despite the storms to which it is exposed. Yet, to make clear the dynamic power of faith, Jesus says that a mere word spoken in genuine faith can accomplish marvellous things, illustrated by that same sturdy sycamore tree being up-rooted and transplanted into the sea! The apostles were wondering how they could carry out the difficult demands of the Master. Not by your own energy, he makes clear to them, but by relying totally in faith on God's power.

**Our Response:** Man is inclined to boast of his accomplishments, and often that gets on the nerves of the listeners. It takes solid virtue to think humbly of oneself and realize that 'unless the Lord builds the house, we build it in vain' (Ps. 127). Yet it is the humble man who quietly goes about doing his duty that is pleasing to both God and man. Our Blessed Savior never went about boasting of his accomplishments, but he attributed all his works to the Father working in him. This is our model.

## BASE INGRATITUDE

**October 9, 1977: Twenty-eighth Sunday.**

**The Human Situation:** A juvenile delinquent on parole was taken in by a family who already had five children of their own. He made such a good impression and pleased the whole family so much that they decided to adopt him and consider him as equal to the

rest. On Sunday night he stayed out late, and when he returned, the mother, who had stayed up waiting for him, gently admonished him and reminded him of the time he should be in. He said nothing and retired. Early next morning when the father was off to work and the children already at school, he stole down to the basement where the mother was washing clothes, and with a sledgehammer, knocked her down and beat her to death. Then he fled. The father on returning could only weep and shake his head. "He killed my wife", he said between sobs, "and we loved him so". Who can understand the human heart with such base ingratitude?

**The Good News:** Gratitude is the mark of a noble soul. The Heart of Jesus overflows with gratitude. How often in the gospel we read of him praising and thanking the Father for all he had done: for revealing his secrets to those of childlike disposition (Mt. 11:25), for hearing his prayer in the raising of Lazarus (Jn. 11:41), but especially when he instituted the holy Eucharist, which is the very sacrifice of thanksgiving, for Eucharist means thanksgiving. A dutiful Son of God, as our Brother, gives thanks to the Father for all the wonderful things given to his brothers and sisters, who often forget to thank God in their turn. He offers himself as a thanksgiving-sacrifice worthy of the God who is all good and munificent.

Lack of gratitude, on the other hand, betrays great self-centeredness. All ten lepers came and expressed faith in the power of Jesus to cure them. All ten stood the test that they first go and show themselves to the priest, which was the requirement of all lepers who were cured. This command of Jesus tested them because they were only cured while they were on the way. But as with so many people who receive a favor from God which they were asking for, the nine were so much wrapped up with this new life and the possibilities it gave them, that they completely forgot the Benefactor who had bestowed it. Jesus certainly expected all ten to show some sign of gratitude. He expresses surprise: Where are the other nine? Were not all ten cured! What made it worse was that the only one who returned to give thanks was the very one whom the others, who were Jews despised, he being a Samaritan, and the Jews considered them half-pagan, strangers to the Covenant not worthy to be called children of Abraham. Yet it was the lone Samaritan who returned and gave loud thanks, falling on his face before the Lord.

Ingratitude is so base that even Jesus, who is otherwise so undemanding and so selfless, cannot let this pass by without commending: Where are the other nine! He was displeased that the very ones who prided themselves as children of Abraham should be so lacking in a fundamental trait of human nature, that they took

all God's favors for granted, as if they had them coming to them. Yet in this they are followed by many down to our own day. We can learn from St. Paul to foster true gratitude to the Lord. In almost every letter right after the salutation he breaks into a word of praise and thanksgiving for the faith of his converts, their love shown in many deeds, their hope of their calling. Paul had learned the lesson well from the Master.

A coast guard, hearing the cries for help, dove into the waters of the sea and pulled out a drowning boy. He administered mouth to mouth respiration until he revived him. In the excitement he had torn somewhat the boy's bathing suit. After letting him rest sufficiently, he inquired where the lad lived and then led the boy back to his home and gave him to his mother. The mother took at the torn bathing suit and let out a volley of angry words at the coast-guard. Later on he told his companions: I did not expect any special thanks or any sign of gratitude, but neither did I expect to get calling down and a bitter berating for what I had done. Such is the mark of ingratitude. The great favor is taken for granted. The small defect or lack is bitterly criticized. When will man learn to be truly human?

**Our Response:** Many people make novenas for favors to be granted. How many do so in thanksgiving? Thanksgiving masses for favors granted are few in comparison with those offered for special intentions or for the faithful departed. People often say prayers before meals, especially children, but run off forgetting to say a prayer of thanksgiving after meals. A well-brought up child has learned to say "thank you" for anything received. The one who has not received this training accepts whatever he can get but with no word of thanks and no sign of gratitude. Ingratitude comes quite natural to a growing child. Gratitude must be learned. Only when the child learns how dependent he is on others will he be truly grateful for what they do for him.

## NEVER GIVE UP

**October 16, 1977: Twenty-ninth Sunday**

**The Human Situation:** Eddi, aged thirty-two, braved choppy seas with his wife and six others after abandoning their ill-fated sailboat and clinging to a raft off the coast of Negros Occidental. Sharks overtook them as they were getting closer to shore. Three of them perished by the sharks but the rest fought on. Three days and three nights without food, they never gave up hope that they would be rescued. It was the thought of their four children

they had left behind that gave Eddi and his wife courage to hope and pray until they were rescued and safe on shore.

**The Good News:** The blessed Savior made a solemn promise: "Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. For the one who asks, receives; the one who seeks, finds; the one who knocks, enters (Mt. 7-7-8). There are no strings attached to this promise. There are no conditions. Jesus assured his followers that if they ask God, they are certain to be heard. That is the lesson of today's parable. It was specially spoken for those who have been praying unceasingly for a longer time and still do not experience that their prayers are answered. Yet, we must not lose heart, St. Luke tells us at the outset, for just as the poor widow kept coming back again and again until her case was won, so the Christians must never lose hope, never give up, no matter how dark the day and trying the circumstances. God will hear their prayers in his own time. He will vindicate the oppressed, and liberate the down-trodden.

It is not easy to keep praying when heaven seems to turn a deaf ear to our prayers. Man is easily discouraged for his sight is short-ranged while that of God is long-ranged. The parents of John the Baptist had undoubtedly prayed long and fervently for a son until they were advanced in years and all natural hope for offspring was gone (Lk. 1:18). Yet just when things looked impossible, the Lord gave them a son who was the greatest of all the prophets, even becoming the forerunner of the Messiah-King of Israel! Of Jesus himself in the Garden of Gethsemane it is written that again and again he begged the Father to let the cup of suffering pass by him, yet he added at once: "Not as I will but as you will" (Mt. 26:39). More graphically still the same scene is narrated in the letter to the Hebrews, when it says that Jesus "offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to God, who was able to save him from death" (Hb. 5:7) and the sacred author adds: "He was heard because of his reverent submission" (v. 7). He had submitted to the Father and the Father had given him strength to go through the ordeal, so that "he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (v. 9). That was after all why he became man: to save us, so that was in reality his true prayer. This gives us some insight as to how God hears prayers. Jesus said: Ask, and you will receive. He did not add: You will always receive what you ask for. That is why he added the parable of the boy who asked bread from his father. Would the father give him a stone instead? (Mt. 7:9). But perhaps what he is asking for is in reality harmful for him, like a stone would

be. God will certainly hear his prayer, because God is a loving Father, but it will be something which will be for his good.

When Paul was given "a thorn in the flesh" and a very annoying trial to hinder his work, he begged the Lord three times that it might be taken away. The Lord did not take it away. He said instead: "My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection" (2 Cor. 12:9-10). Paul then boasted of his weaknesses in order that the power of God be manifested in him. His prayer was heard on a much higher level than he had expected. He obtained the strength to bear up in his trials and be perfected by them.

**Our Response:** Determination to win out is the first step to success. Many a battle has been won, even when things looked hopeless, because the man in charge refused to give up. He never lost hope. And finally success was the outcome. Only those English martyrs at the time of Henry and Elizabeth the First, who doggedly perserved in praying and hoping, remained faithful to the end. Many defected when the years dragged on and no liberation was at hand. We must pray always and never lose heart. Only then is victory sure.

## HE WHO HUMBLER HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED

**October 23, 1977: Thirtieth Sunday.**

**The Human Situation:** From early childhood, Therese of the Child Jesus had a burning desire to love God and give herself for the salvation of souls. To attain this end, she practiced no showy piety, no great acts of penance. On the contrary, she has given the world her "little way" of simplicity, confidence and love. As a Carmelite nun, for nine years she endeavored to be at the service of everyone. At her death no one guessed her great sanctity. Twenty-seven years later she was canonized, setting aside all previous records. God exalted her by having the Holy Father proclaim her patroness of all missionaries. A perfect example of greatness consisting in littleness, and doing small things out of great love.

**The Good News:** The biblical notes for this Sunday offer ample material to show that it is the humble heart that pleases God. The proud he rejects.



## SEEKING AND FINDING CHRIST

October 30, 1977: Thirty-first Sunday.

**The Human Situation:** Catherine de Heuck, in her book, "Poustinia" tells us of a wealthy Russian, who became so enamored of Christ that he gathered up all his money and distributed it to the poor. Then with a simple garment and staff, a loaf of bread in his bag, no shoes on his feet, he spent the rest of his life as a pilgrim. Yet more: he was recognized one day on the steps of a cathedral in Kief, with many other beggars. His hair was disheveled, his eyes had a vacant stare, his face was grimy. When asked why he let himself be taken for an idiot and a retarded person, he answered: "I am atoning for the men who called Christ a fool in his lifetime and for centuries after". How many would be willing to imitate that aspect of the passion of Jesus, and let themselves be regarded as idiots and fools!

**The Good News:** Zachaeus, in today's gospel, was a wealthy man, but surprisingly, he not only gave large sums to the poor as many wealthy persons do with generous hearts, but even half of his possessions. And in case he had defrauded anyone, he did not only make up, but restored four times as much. Certainly a man of sincere heart. This sincerity won for him the grace to seek out the Savior, and to obtain the grace of salvation. He is not ashamed to go to amusing extremes to obtain his goal. Being a man of short stature, one of his rank and file could easily have had servants lift him high on a conveyance, or command the crowd to make way. Instead, he did not deem it below his dignity to climb a tree in order not to miss seeing the Savior. Jesus is won over by this eager and searching heart. How easily the Master could simply had acknowledge the man's good will with a nod, and passed on. But no! He stops, and calls to Zachaeus, with everybody looking up at the man in the tree. "Zachaeus, hurry down, I mean to stay in your house today" (Lk. 19:5).

With joy that knows no bounds, Zachaeus comes hastily down, and receives the Savior in his home. Of course there is murmuring and complaining. All tax-collectors were considered base men, sinners, are were despised for they were in the service of the Romans in order to collect the taxes from the people. They were known to defraud, to squeeze all they could out of their fellowmen,

in order to swell their own pockets. But Jesus sees the heart. He cares little what people think. Zachaeus is sincerely seeking him. That is enough. The Savior will come and dine with him.

Christ came to save all men, rich and poor alike. What he wants is the heart, the interior disposition of sincere repentance. It matters little to him whether the one seeks him if a man of rank and file, or a poor laborer, whether it is a tax-collector who had gone astray, a Magdalen in devious ways, or anyone of the despised crowd. All men need a Savior and that is why he became one of them. Seek, and you will find, he had said. Each and everyone who seeks Christ will surely find him and enjoy his friendship. "Here I stand, knocking at the door" he tells us in the book of Revelation (3.20). "If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me". Let the weary heart turn to Christ because he said. Come to me, all you are weary and overburdened, and you will find rest for your souls (Mt. 11:28:). Man need only open his heart to Christ, and the Lord will enter in, as he came to the house of Zachaeus that day. "For the Son of man has come to search out and save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

When people complained about Mother Teresa of India, that it was a waste of time and money to take the dying off the streets into her homes, since they would only die in a day or two anyway, Mother Teresa replied: "I can give that person at least one day of love". Who knows how many persons have found Christ in the warm embrace of Mother Teresa! They may never have read of Christ, but they experienced his tender love and care in the person of her who represents him so forefully, and incarnates his love again for poor fallen man.

**Our response:** There are many who are seeking Christ, though they may not be aware of it. And there are many ways of bringing others to Christ. But the best way is by our own personality, letting the countenance of Christ shine forth in our words and deeds, so that our fellowmen find strength and refreshment in their weary journey of life. Many are the wounds of mankind today, and only the healing power of Christ's Spirit can bring them soothing refreshment. It is up to the members of Christ to make known his love and his mercy, that sincere persons of all ranks find him who is the salvation of the world.

Department of Public Works and Communications  
Republic of the Philippines  
BUREAU OF POST  
Manila

SWORN STATEMENT  
(Required by Act 2580)

The undersigned, FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P. editor of the BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, published monthly except April-May, in English, Spanish and Latin, at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby submits the following statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by Act 2580, as amended by Commonwealth Act No. 201.

<i>N a m e</i>	<i>Address</i>
Editor: Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
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Owner: University of Santo Tomas .....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Publisher: University of Santo Tomas .....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Printer: Novel Publishing Co., Inc. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Office of Publication: Univ. of Santo Tomas ....	U.S.T., España, Manila

In case of publication other than daily, total number of copies printed and circulated of the last issue dated June-July 1977.

1. Sent to paid subscribers .....	1,700
2. Sent to others than paid subscribers .....	150
T O T A L .....	1,850

(Sgd.) FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.  
Editor

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 18th day of June, 1977 at Manila, the affiant exhibiting his Residence Certificate No. A-234257 issued at Manila on January 11, 1977.

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Notary Public  
Until December 31, 1978  
TAN-1473-543-5  
PTR No. 074408E