

# **BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS**

**TO REVIVE AND TO RENEW CATECHESIS  
OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE FAITHFUL**

**Pope Paul VI**

**MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

**Synod of Bishops**

**SPEECHES OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO THE  
SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON CATECHETICS**

**Cardinal Sin, Archbishop Mabutas  
and Bishop Piamonte**

**CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AFTER VATICAN II**

**Jordan Aumann, O.P.**

**THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES**

**Magin Borrajo, O.P.**

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

<b>EDITOR</b>	EFREN RIVERA, O.P.
<b>ASSOCIATE EDITORS</b>	POMPEYO DE MESA, O.P. REGINO CORTES, O.P. JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P.
<b>EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS</b>	FRANCISCO DEL RIO, O.P. JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P. QUINTIN MA. GARCIA, O.P. FIDEL VILLARROEL, O.P. LEONARDO LEGASPI, O.P. LAMBERTO PASION, O.P.
<b>BUSINESS MANAGER</b>	FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

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

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**


---

**EDITORIAL**

210 THE CHURCH, BUSINESS AND POLITICS

212 IN THIS ISSUE

**DOCUMENTATION**

- Pope Paul VI

213 TO REVIVE AND TO RENEW CATECHESIS OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE FAITHFUL

- Synod of Bishops

218 MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- Cardinal Jaime L. Sin  
Archbishop Antonio Mabutas  
Bishop Alberto Piamonte

213 SPEECHES OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON CATECHETICS

- Archbishop Antonio Mabutas

239 REPORT ON THE FIFTH ROMAN SYNOD OF BISHOPS

- Felix Bautista

247 RP SYNOD CONTRIBUTION ANALYZED

- Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Pichachy  
and Archbishop Josep L. Bernardin

251 PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE SYNOD

- Pope Paul VI

257 TO BISHOP LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P.

**FEATURES**

- Jordan Aumann, O.P.

258 CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AFTER VATICAN COUNCIL II

- Magin Borrajo, O.P.

271 THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

- Florencio Testera, O.P.

279 MYTH AND REALITY: CHURCH MARRIAGE TRIBUNALS IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Hermann J. Graf, S.V.D.

292 CON-CATHOLIC GODPARENTS?

**HOMILETICS**

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

296 I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR APRIL AND MAY

303 II. HOMILIES FOR APRIL AND MAY

## EDITORIAL

# The Church, Business, and Politics

Should the Church concern itself with the world of business and politics? Once more this question is raised in the light of our present situation in the Philippines. As far as business is concerned, the most recent answer has been a clear YES. As far as politics is concerned, the latest answer is a qualified NO.

On February 25, the General Assembly of the Bishops—Businessmen Conference for Human Development (BBC) met at the residence of the Archbishop of Manila to finalize and approve a Code of Ethics for Philippine Business. The Code offers guidelines to be followed by businessmen who wish to discharge their social responsibilities as Christians in today's world which too often uses business as a means of amassing wealth at the price of manipulating and exploiting the poor masses. It seeks to convert businessmen into advocates of social justice and total human development.

We cannot but praise the adoption of the Philippine Businessmen's Code of Ethics. But we must also express the caution that it is, after all, just a beginning. Will businessmen, and especially, the giant business Corporations, actually follow this Code? Only

the grace of God and the sacrifices of business leaders will make this possible. We hope that, just as our Bishops have used their spiritual leadership to get businessmen to adopt the Code of Ethics, so will they urge them to live up to it.

Since business is so closely tied up with politics, could it be said that the interest of our Bishops in the businessmen's Code of Ethics is a step towards a greater say in politics? This is to be doubted very much. The Philippine way of life is not such that business controls politics; on the contrary, it is politics and politicians that control business.

Hence it is not surprising that our Bishops have taken a stand vis-a-vis politics which seems to be quite different from the stand they have taken towards business. In the Catholic Bishops' Conference held in Baguio last January the Bishops skirted the issue of taking a collegial stand on the Church's responsibility in the coming elections for the Interim Batasang Pambansa. It is fresh in everyone's mind that political questions tend to polarize the Philippines Hierarchy. It was thought more prudent to let each bishop decide what guidance he might want to give to his flock on political questions.

Nevertheless, we hope that the day is not too far off when Bishops and politicians could work together to hammer out a Code of Ethics for Politicians after the spirit of the Code of Ethics for Philippine Business.

## In This Issue

While awaiting the Pope's decisions on the matters discussed at the Synod of Bishops (September 30 to October 29 1977), it would be wise for us to get acquainted with the discussions. To this end we give our readers the **Pope's Discourse at the Conclusion of the Synod**, the **Synod's Message to the People of God**, the **Speeches of the Philippine Delegation**, and **Archbishop Mabutas' Report on the Synod**. For a layman's appraisal of the Philippine delegation's

**contribution to the Synod**, our readers will have access to Felix Bautista's article. To put the discussion in a larger context, readers may study the comments of **Cardinal Picachy of Calcutta** and **Archbishop Bernardin of Cincinnati**.

Father Jordan Aumann, O.P., a specialist on Christian Spirituality who lectured in the Philippines this school-year, shares with our readers his thoughts on **Christian Spirituality After Vatican Council II**.

**The Right to Life and Ethical Guidelines** was an address given by Father Magin Borrajo, O.P., to the Medical Society of Olongapo City during Medicine Week, September 19, 1977. Priests and laymen will find it helpful in these days when the question of abortion is so often discussed.

Another topic of current interest is divorce. On this matter Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P., again offers his wisdom and experience to our readers in his article on **Marriage Tribunals in the Philippines**.

Still other areas where much interest is shown today are those of Ecumenism and renewed sacramental rites. Taking these into consideration, Father Hermann J. Graf, S.V.D., discussess some aspects of **Catholic Baptism**.

DISCOURSE OF PAUL VI AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
SYNOD OF BISHOPS, OCTOBER 29, 1977

## TO REVIVE AND TO RENEW CATECHESIS OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE FAITHFUL

Venerable Brothers and beloved Sons,

At the end of his fifth Assembly of the Synod of Bishops you have wished to express your greeting to us, through Cardinal Ribeiro, Patriarch of Lisbon, and to manifest the sentiments that animate you in the hour of leave-taking.

On our side we thank you heartily and express to you in return our brotherly greeting. After a month of intense consultations on a very important subject for the future life of the Church such as catechesis, you are now preparing to return to your Sees and resume your occupations, with the intention of promoting a renewed catechetical action in your countries.

During this period each of you has sought to communicate his own experience to his Brothers and to offer the results of his own competence — results reached in the concrete reality of life — with the intention of promoting catechesis in the Church in such a way as “to make men’s faith become living, conscious and active” (cf. *Christus Dominus*, 14). You have done this not with theoretical and historical investigations — which are useful in other fields — but rather with a pre-eminently pastoral concern guided by your experience as Pastors of souls who daily share the anxieties and difficulties, among which the men of today are struggling. Precisely because of this pastoral approach, this synodal assembly has a joyous and happy outcome.



Aware of the importance that must be attributed to this form of proclamation of the Word of God to the men of today, we had summoned you to Rome, to the tomb of St. Peter, for the two specific purposes of every Assembly, such as they are indicated in the *Motu proprio*. “*Apostolica Sollicitudo*”: “the mutual exchange of seasonable information and the indication of suggestions regarding the problems for which the Synod is convened on each occasion” (A.A.S., LVII, 1965, p. 777).

Now the exchange of experiences on the part of individuals has been abundant for the benefit of all: and many proposals have been made in order that catechetical activity may become more and more effective in the whole Church, at every level.

### Invitation to action

The conclusions reached at the end of the work will have to be communicated by you to your Brothers in the episcopate, when you have returned to your dioceses and your duties. For you will hand on — we are quite sure — the fire with which you are aflame to those united with you in the pastoral office. In this way the Synod will have the beneficial function of stimulating a renewed commitment for catechesis, with new programmes of action, with a more intense formation of catechists, with a more careful search for suitable aids, always observing the wisdom of canon law in this area as well as those norms laid down in the General Catechetical Directory, published by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy and approved and confirmed by us.

A good many among you, Venerable Brothers and beloved Sons, have opportunely endeavoured to clarify the causes of the catechetical crisis during the last few years. We consider it unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on these difficulties, but we intend rather to call upon you to look to the future and, through you, to make an appeal to all those who feel their responsibility as Christians to commit themselves in order that a renewed catechetical action may spread throughout the Church as a result of this Synod.

In successive concentric waves, this impulse will be propagated from the Synod to the episcopal assemblies of both East and West, and from these to parishes, families, schools, and communities that meet in Christ's name, under the guidance of the legitimate Pastors. Thus Bishops living in different parts of the world, united with the Vicar of Christ, will initiate, direct and sustain this on-going renewal of catechesis. They will be joined closely with those priests, religious men and women, and laity who perceive the importance and beauty of this apostolate. Indeed, this is the meaning and impact of your Message to the People of God, issued today from the city of Rome to the entire Church as this meeting of the Synod of Bishops comes to an end.

Considering the work carried out, we express our joy that the members of the Synod have found themselves in agreement on the principal aspects of catechesis, and that at the conclusion of their work, they have submitted to us very useful suggestions contained

in thirty-four propositions. On our side, we will examine them carefully, together with all the material that has been presented to us. Subsequently — acceding to the desire expressed by you — we will be happy to make known to the universal Church the points we consider most opportune.

### **Integrity of the doctrine**

In the first place, we rejoice over the emphasis placed on the Bishops' responsibility to be vigilant and to see to it that full fidelity to the Word of God, as it has been manifested to us by divine Revelation and transmitted in the course of the centuries by the Magisterium of the Church, be always preserved in catechesis. Certainly, this same duty of vigilance also concerns other forms of presentation of the Word of God, from that of its announcement in general, or evangelization, to its proclamation in the liturgy or preaching, and to its thorough study in theology. But vigilance over catechesis is certainly one of the aspects of this duty on the part of those who have been constituted Pastors and Teachers by Christ in his Church. We do not intend to repeat now how dear to us is the activity of defending and promoting wholesome doctrine. In fact, as regards this concern of ours, the message we addressed to all the Bishops, at the end of the first five years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, retains all its value (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Quinque iam anni*: A.A.S. LXIII, pp. 97-106). Faithfulness to the deposit of Revelation clearly demands also that no essential truth of faith should be passed over in silence. "The people entrusted to our care has the sacred and inalienable right to receive the Word of God, the entire Word of God" (*ibid.*, pp. 99-100)

### **Necessity of a systematic catechesis**

In the second place, it was a great comfort for us to see how everyone noted the extreme necessity of a systematic catechesis, precisely because this orderly study of the Christian mystery is what distinguishes catechesis itself from all other forms of presentation of the Word of God. You yourselves have stressed this, in the conviction that no one can arrive at the whole truth on the basis solely of some simple experience that is without an adequate explanation of the message of Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (Jn. 14, 6), Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things (cf. Apoc. 22, 13). The complete presentation of the Christian message obviously comprises also the explanation of its moral principles both with regard to individuals and with regard to the whole of society. To educate to the faith

also the children and young people of our Christian communities will mean, therefore, educating them to "follow Christ", as you well indicated in the twelfth proposition you transmitted to us. This is, moreover, the meaning of the doctrine of the Apostle St. John, when he admonishes: "He who says 'I know him (God)', but disobeys his commandments is a liar" (I Jn. 2, 4).

### **Usefulness of formulas**

In the third place we fully agree with you when you authoritatively recall the necessity of some fundamental formulas which will make it possible to express more easily, in a suitable and accurate way, the truths of the faith and of Christian moral doctrine.

These formulas, if learnt by heart, greatly aid the stable possession of these truths, as you too pointed out in the nineteenth proposition which was presented to us and in the Message itself to the People of God, sent today to the whole Church. Among these formulas, you have rightly included the most important biblical texts, especially in the New Testament, and the liturgical texts that serve to express common prayer and make the profession of the faith easier.

### **Appeal for the freedom of the Church**

Finally, we recognize more than ever the influence and the necessity of the appeal for the freedom of the Church, in order that the latter may carry out her task of instructing her members in the Christian faith. Unfortunately, there are not a few nations in which the right of individuals to religious freedom, the right of families to the education of their children, the right of religious communities to the education of their own members, are trampled upon or at least unjustly limited. At this particularly solemn hour, we once more beseech the rulers of peoples to respect — the right of individuals and of religious communities to social and political freedom in religious matters. In fact, "the protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 6).

### **The Pope's thanks**

After having conveyed to you some thoughts of ours on the most striking aspects of the subject dealt with at this brotherly assembly, we consider it opportune, before concluding to thank all

those who contributed to the preparation and orderly development of this fifth Synodal Assembly.

Our thanks go in the first place to the Presidents Delegate, the Raporteur and the Secretary General, to the Special Secretary and his assistants, and to all those who, with competence and generosity, have given in every form their precious service to the Roman Pontiff and to this select representation of the world Episcopate.

Venerable Brothers and beloved Sons, taking leave of you, we beg you to take the greeting and the blessing of the Common Father to your confreres in the Episcopate, to the priests your collaborators, to the religious men and women, as well as to all the laity who work in the catechetical field. May the Holy Spirit comfort us, gladden us and vivify us all and prepare us for a renewed and concordant commitment "that the Word of the Lord may speed on and triumph" (2 Thess 3. 1). And for this purpose, we willingly impart our Apostolic Blessing to all of you present here.

## CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

OCTOBER 28, 1977

# MESSAGE OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

## INTRODUCTION

The assembly of the Synod of Bishops, called together in Rome by Pope Paul VI to discuss **Catechesis in our time, with special reference to the catechesis of children and young people**, is drawing to a close. We wish to present a report on the major conclusions of our work to the People of God for whom we bear pastoral responsibility in different parts of the world as well as to all who share concern for the activity and responsibility of the Church in modern society.

We began with a keen awareness of today's conditions. We live a world that is disturbed and filled with tensions, yet open to the sanctifying power of God's grace. In 1974 the last synodal assembly discussed the theme **Evangelization in the Modern World**. Under the guidance of the Holy Father, we felt that the most useful thing we could do would be to carry this discussion further. We thus decided to discuss that activity of the Church which we call catechesis: the activity by which God's word is constantly spread in a living and effective way leading to a deeper knowledge of the person and the saving message of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Through an ordered and progressive education in the faith, it leads to a continual process of maturing in the same faith.

It was necessary that we examine, in the light of God's word, those signs of the times which call for the renewal of catechesis and which highlight its importance in a pastoral context. This is even more important because the vitality and strength of the entire catechetical activity of the Church is clearly felt almost everywhere. This has produced excellent results for the renewal of the entire community of the Church.

We also noted the desire and the hunger for spiritual nourishment and formation in the faith found specially among young people. Anxious to fulfill their obligations and their role in building a just society, they seek to enter more deeply into the Mystery of God.

We found a challenge to faith in various forms of human culture which, although they truly desire the greater perfection of human kind, are not always in harmony with the Gospel.

We were also aware of the difficulties from the fact that many Christians neglect their responsibility to deepen their own faith. Revelation is not always presented as it ought to be, in a way which makes clear all the rights and obligations that it involves.

We did not ignore the difficulties to which catechesis is subjected in various parts of the world. Often those who are hostile to the mission of Jesus Christ to preach the faith to all peoples place new obstacles in its path.

We have considered the conditions in which today's children and young people find themselves. It is they who in the future will bear the burden of building a new world. We have listened to their hopes and given them special attention.

We were conscious of the relationship between our theme and the problem of education in today's world. We are convinced that God's pedagogy, manifest throughout the history of salvation, will today, too, provide a solution to this problem for the good of all mankind.

A lengthy and serious preparation, involving consultation of all the local Churches, preceded the Synod. We have presented the results of our work to the Holy Father in the form of special "recommendations." We have asked him to address a document to the universal Church, in his own time, as he did after the Synod of 1974 in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. We also agreed to open our hearts to you, too, so that you may share in our reflections on some of the most urgent problems.

## Part I

### *The World, Young People Catechesis* (A realistic view of the situation)

## ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY CHANGE

2. As an event of our times, the Synod could hardly ignore the real situation of today's world. The bishops witness and share in the hopes, tensions, and frustrations which are present in the depths of people's hearts today (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1). In all nations, whatever their social systems or cultural traditions, men

and women are searching, struggling, and toiling to build a new world for the good of all. Old value systems are often no longer fully accepted and have even crumbled. Oppression and disregard for the human person are threatening the security of the human endeavour. Many have recognized as illusory the hopes which they placed in ideologies and technical progress.

Yet, amid the tumult of this conflict of ideas and systems, a renewed quest for God is emerging. A new searching for God is discernible in the restlessness of the human heart. At the same time, there is a new sensitivity towards human values rooted in the dignity of the person.

### **THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH**

3. The new generation has a greater sense of self-awareness because of their numbers, qualities, and the hope for the future that they clearly represent; they are of great importance for humanity. The currents of our times are experienced in a unique manner by the new generation. The cultural rupture resulting from social change has a most powerful impact on them. Very often it is young people who pay the price of the errors and failures of adults. Frequently, too, they are victimized by false leaders who would profit from youth's generosity and openness.

The yearnings of the young for creativity, justice, freedom and truth must be the starting point of all educational activity. Catechesis must build on their desire to share responsibly in the decisions of the Church and civil society as well as on the attraction which love of God and neighbour have for them. Through catechesis the Church influences the world and especially the new generation so that Christ's life might transform the lives of young people and lead them to fulfillment.

### **THE STRENGTH OF CATECHESIS AND EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES**

4. The Synodal Fathers examined the many noteworthy signs of vitality present everywhere in the catechetical activity of the Church but most especially among young people. Despite some areas which cause concern, the number of present initiatives in this field, visible almost everywhere, is striking. Over the past ten years, in all parts of the world, catechesis has become a primary source of vitality leading to fruitful renewal of the entire community of the Church.

The Fathers also discussed the difficulties that catechesis must face. Much is demanded of catechists, often in very difficult circumstances. We have to confront these new situations with a sense of realism.

— In various countries many religious customs have been pushed aside as a result of social evolution. Many children and young people never come into contact with the Church. Very often the catechist meets with indifference and rejection. New ways of thinking and acting very often fall short of being Christian. Many baptized people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to hear the Gospel message. Although these circumstances create an obstacle, at the same time they provide a challenge for catechesis. Catechesis must address itself to the children, young people and adults of present world as it is. This is the world in which the Church has the mission to proclaim the message of salvation.

— In many nations the mission of catechesis cannot be exercised freely. These are nations where fundamental human rights, including religious freedom, are intolerably restricted or even totally suppressed: often the declarations made in these countries about respect for religious freedom are mere formalities. The Church does not enjoy the right to live out the full life of the Gospel. There is no real right to gather for catechesis, to use suitable locations, texts, or reaching materials. Neither is there the right to train catechists. This is a painful situation which has to be shared by the Universal Church. No power on earth has the right to prevent people from searching for truth, from receiving it freely, from knowing it fully and from openly and freely professing it. The Church in reaffirming the right to catechize is reaffirming the fundamental rights of all human beings.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF THE CATECHETICAL ACTIVITY

5. This same sense of realism leads us to consider the complexity of catechetical activity.

— The diversity of cultures creates for catechesis an equally great diversity. As indicated by the Second Vatican Council and as repeated by Paul VI in the Apostolic Exhortation **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, the Christian message must find its roots in human cultures and also transform these cultures. In this sense we can say that catechesis is an instrument of "inculturation". This means that catechesis develops and at the same time enlightens from within the way of life of those to whom it is addressed.

Through catechesis the Christian faith must become incarnate in all cultures. A true "incarnation" of faith through catechesis supposes not only a process of "giving" but also of "receiving".

— New technical skills produce different scales of values and present them in a blurred manner. They profoundly influence and change human relations.

These techniques play a part in the interpretation of culture, and in the spread of new life-styles and patterns of thought. This is why there is a change in forms of expression, language and human behaviour. It is precisely among young people that this cultural generation gap is observed. Catechesis will be effective in facing these changes only in so far as it transmits its message in the language of our time.

### **NEEDS AND LIMITATIONS OF TODAY'S CATECHESIS**

6. A catechesis corresponding to the needs of our times requires that the renewal already begun be continued: but it must be carefully developed. There is danger both in a routine manner of proceeding, which becomes mere habit and rejects all change, and in ill-considered initiatives which plunge forward rashly. Problems which are caused or occur in catechesis often stem from this lack of a sense of realism. Since it is catechesis in our time which is at issue, this failing is also a form of infidelity to the mission to preach the Gospel to mankind. Therefore the Synod calls upon Christian communities to renew their catechesis, which is essentially the proclamation of the Gospel, the Good News. One must keep this realism always in mind. It fosters the fidelity and authentic richness of catechesis in all its aspects.

### **Part II**

#### *Catechesis: Manifestation of salvation in Christ*

### **MYSTERY OF CHRIST: CENTRE OF CATECHESIS**

7. The Church insists that it is the bearer of the message of salvation destined for all mankind. It is the Church's task to proclaim and accomplish Christ's salvation in the whole world. This is the work of evangelization of which catechesis is an aspect. It is centred in the Mystery of Christ. Christ, true God and true

In any case, one should distinguish the criteria which make a particular form of communication true catechesis. Not every type of instruction is of itself an ecclesial catechesis, even if it has religious content. Yet any words that touch persons in their concrete situations and lead them to Christ can become catechumenal words. Such words of their very nature transmit the essential elements or vital substance of the Gospel message, which can neither be changed nor passed over in silence (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 25).

The integral, vital substance handed down through the Creed provides the fundamental nucleus of the mystery of the One and Triune God as it was revealed to us through the mystery of God's Son, the Incarnate Saviour living always in his Church.

Fidelity in handing on the integral Gospel message and the authenticity of the catechetical mode of communication through which faith is transmitted are both to be discerned through reverent attentiveness to the magisterial and pastoral ministry of the Church.

### CATECHESIS AS "MEMORY"

9. This is another primary aspect of the action of the Church: to recall, commemorate, and celebrate the sacrifice in memory of the Lord Jesus—to carry out the "anamnesis".

Indeed, the word and action of the ecclesial community have effect only in as much as they are, today, a word and action which show forth the Lord Jesus and unite us to him. Thus catechesis is connected to the entire sacramental and liturgical life.

Catechesis is the manifestation in our day of the "Mystery which was hidden in God before all times". This is why the first language of catechesis must be Sacred Scripture and the Creeds. "Catechesis is for this reason the authentic introduction to the "Lectio Divina," that is, the reading of Sacred Scripture, but "according to the Spirit" which dwells in the Church, both supporting apostolic ministries and acting in the faithful. The Scriptures make it possible for Christians to speak a common language. Normally, certain things should be memorized as part of formation: such as biblical texts especially from the New Testament, certain liturgical formulae which are the privileged expression of these texts, and other common prayers.

Believers should also make their own those expressions of faith, the living fruit of the reflection of Christian over the centuries, which have been gathered in the Creeds and the principal documents of the Church.

Thus to be a Christian means to enter into a living tradition: a tradition which, through the history of humankind reveals how in Jesus Christ the word of God took on human nature. Catechesis is therefore the "transmission of the documents of the faith". The themes which it chooses and the way in which they are presented correspond to a genuine fidelity to God and humanity in Jesus Christ.

### CATECHESIS AS "WITNESS"

10. The word, which is rooted in living tradition, becomes a living word for our times. Terms like witness, commitment, "inculturation", ecclesial action, spiritual life, personal and liturgical prayer, holiness — all manifest this same reality: witness.

The community of believers is the community of the people of today's world who actualize the history of salvation. This salvation, which the community bears within itself, offers humanity today freedom from sin, violence, injustice, and selfishness. In this way the words of Jesus are accomplished: "The truth will set you free" (Jn. 32).

Catechesis cannot therefore separate itself from a serious commitment "Not everyone who says Lord, Lord..." This commitment must take a variety of forms both individual and collegial. To use the traditional formula, this is the "following of Christ". The teaching of moral doctrine, the "Law of Christ," thus finds its place in catechesis. We must affirm without ambiguity that there are laws and moral principles which catechesis must teach. In addition, we must affirm that the moral doctrine of the Gospel has a specific nature which goes far beyond the demands of mere natural ethics. The law of Christ, or the law of love, is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us (cf. Rom. 5, 5; Jn. 31, 34).

On the other hand, catechesis, in so far as it is witness, educates Christians to take their full place in the community of the disciples of Jesus Christ, which is the Church. Included in this are the state of grace and sin of this believing pilgrim people in all its dimensions, as well as a sense of fraternal solidarity which Christians

must have with all people, both believers and non-believers, since we all share the same human destiny. Thus the ecclesial community establishes itself as the universal sacrament of salvation.

This moral doctrine is not merely individualistic. It presents the social dimension of the Gospel message.

One of the principal tasks of catechesis today is to encourage and sustain new forms of commitment, especially in the field of justice.

In this way, new evangelical life-styles will emerge arising out of the experience of Christians. With the grace of Christ, these will bring about new fruits of holiness.

### THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE PEDAGOGY OF FAITH

11. In all catechesis one must always unite indissolubly and in an integrated manner:

- Knowledge of the Word of God;
- Celebration of faith in the sacraments;
- The profession of faith in daily life.

Pedagogy of faith therefore has this specific characteristic: an encounter with the person of Christ, a conversion of the heart, the experience of the Spirit in the ecclesial community.

### Part III

#### *Catechesis is the task of all in the Church*

12. Catechesis is a task of vital importance for all the Church. All Christians according to the circumstances of their own lives and their special gifts or charisms, are really involved in it. Indeed all Christians, by virtue of baptism and confirmation, are called to transmit the Gospel and to be concerned about the faith of their brothers in Christ, especially children and young people. Sometimes this may result in conflicts and divisions which arise for a variety of reasons. The Synod, therefore, invites all to overcome these conflicts and work toward a common reflection and a common responsibility. For this reason the following aspects are explained in greater detail.

**A. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

13. The normal place or setting of catechesis is the Christian community. Catechesis is not simply an individual task; it is carried out in the Christian community.

The forms of community are evolving in our time. Along with the community of the **family**, the first community in which the person is educated, or the **parish**, the normal setting of the Christian assembly, or the **school**, the teaching community, many other communities are emerging today, among which are small ecclesial communities, associations, youth groups, and so on.

These new communities represent an opportunity for the Church. They can be leaven in the mass, a leaven in a world which is in a state of change. They help to show more clearly both the diversity and the unity of the Church. They must show charity and communion among themselves. Catechesis can find a new setting in these communities, where their members can begin to proclaim the mystery of Christ to each other. At the same time catechesis will present the Mystery of the Church, the People of God, that is, the Mystical Body of Christ, in which the various groupings and communities of mankind are intimately united with God and one another.

**B. THE BISHOPS AND OTHERS DEDICATED TO CATECHESIS**

14. The bishop has the primary role in the catechetical activity of the local Church. It is his task to coordinate the activity of all who dedicate themselves to catechesis in his own local Church. But he himself must also catechize. Along with him, all in their own way must collaborate in the ministry of catechesis. No one can accomplish the task by himself, since it demands the energies of many. Each one, according to his or her function and charism, contributes to the same mission: the bishop with his priests, deacons, parents, catechists and animators of Christian communities. In this context, consecrated persons can and must make an invaluable contribution to the Church in various ways. In many countries, catechists share with the priests in the function of directing the Christian community. In union with the bishops they assume responsibility for transmitting the faith.

The Synod reaffirms to all the importance of their mission, and voices the hope that all will receive the help and understanding they need. The Synod asks that this ministry of office should not be assumed without prior formation. This formation must be

true to the double goal or dimension of catechesis: fidelity to God and fidelity to man. This demands a formation in the sacred sciences, as well as a knowledge of the human person, adapted according to the needs of nations and environments, and including knowledge of the human sciences.

### C. CATECHETICAL ACTION IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

15. Today's world is characterized by diversity. It is composed of people who have different visions of the word, different ethical principles, and different social and political systems. From the religious point of view it is equally pluralistic.

Catechesis must prepare Christians to face this diversity and this pluralism. In this regard Christians must be educated to a sense of their own identity: they are baptized, believers, members of the Church. It will form them in a sensitive openness to dialogue which is both respectful of others and fully faithful to the truth.

The ecumenical formation of Christians in the Roman Catholic Church will enable them to understand better those Christians who belongs to other Churches or ecclesial communities, while also preparing them for dialogue and fraternal relations with them. The introduction of "common catechesis", where it is judged necessary by the bishops, should always be supplemented by a full and specific Catholic catechesis, in order to avoid the danger of religious indifferentism.

Toward the other religions which Christians today encounter more frequently, catechesis must develop an attitude of reverence and understanding; it should develop an attitude of listening and discerning the "seed of the word" which they contain.

In order that young people may benefit from the knowledge of non-Christian religions and, even more particularly in the case of various materialistic schools of thought, it is necessary for them to receive, under the guidance of the bishops, very serious preparation with respect to their own Catholic doctrine, and to be suitably formed in prayer and the living of the Christian life. Thus prepared they will show those who do not share faith in Christ with them not only due reverence but a true witness of their own faith.

## **CHRISTIAN CATECHESIS AND THE MATERIALISTIC TENDENCIES OF TODAY**

16. In the face of today's materialistic, secularistic, or atheistic tendencies as well as certain totalitarian humanisms which suffocate the true human dimension of the person, catechesis must be founded on a Christian vision of humankind and the world. An apologetic, a critical encounter with contemporary thought, will make it possible to show the rational basis of this vision.

## **THE MISSIONARY DIMENSION OF CATECHESIS**

17. All catechesis is missionary, not just because it leads to consideration of other communities living in different environments, but also because, by opening minds to the good of the Universal Church, it fosters missionary vocations. This is true in the sense that it wants to develop an attitude of respect towards others and beginning from the deep daily renewal of one's own ecclesial community, stimulates true Christian witness before all mankind.

## **CONCLUSION**

Having reported on our work in these days near the Chair of Peter, in union and communion with the Successor of Peter, Pope Paul VI, we wish especially to express our gratitude to God, our greatest benefactor, from whom all good things come (cf. James 1, 17). It is to God that we dedicate our life: God who has always been present to us through the Spirit of his Son, and who has bestowed on us his wondrous works to see, to contemplate, to hold in our hands (I Jn. 1, 1). It is God whom we from the depths of our hearts, desire you always to love above all things.

We are grateful to all of you who join us in pouring out your energies in the ministry of catechesis. We are mindful of our priests, our apostolic co-workers in the ministry, so intimately joined to us in the sacrament of Orders. We remember those who lead a life consecrated to God, whether in religious communities or in the world. Once again we affirm our hope in the great spiritual richness which is witnessed by a life lived in the spirit of the beatitudes (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 42). We think of those who have the special name of catechist: so many men, women, young people, indeed children, who give up their time often for no worldly reward in order to build up the kingdom of God. Filled with true charity they form Christ Jesus in the hearts of people and lead them to

perfection. We remember those parents who educate their children from infancy in the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the fear and love of God. They preserve in the hearts of their children that faith, received in baptism and strengthened in confirmation, in such a way that they are continually building the faith constantly striving toward eternal life. We are also mindful of so many of our fraternal communities, committed to prayer, to the poor, who offer a truly precious living witness to a selfish, individualistic, oppressed world.

We bishops, gathered at this Synod, have been drawn from different parts of the world to the Vatican Hill near St. Peter's tomb. In union with his successor, Pope Paul VI, we have listened to the Churches of the entire world. We have been made aware of the importance of catechesis in our pastoral activity and of the priority it deserves. And so we are mindful of all of you, as we solemnly proclaim our joy at taking up this work of catechesis together with evangelization. We shall do so with all our strength trusting in the grace of the Holy Spirit. The greater our faith as it grows to maturity, the more readily can he draw out the fruits of sanctity. There are many problems in the world, but the future belongs to believers, whose hope will not deceive them (Rom. 5, 5).

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, faithful hearer of the Lord's word bring our efforts to a happy conclusion, and may the saving faith of Christ be leaven, salt, light and true life for the whole world. It was she who, as a faithful disciple of her Son, "remembered all these things, meditating on them in her heart" (LK. 2, 19).

# **SPEECHES OF THE PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON CATECHETICS**

**(September 30 to October 29, 1977\*)**

— o —

## **CARDINAL SIN'S DISCOURSE**

**October 4, 1977**

Let me begin by saying that I am very happy with the way the Synod is going. I am particularly gratified by the procedural approach adopted, and I am deeply impressed with the degree of preparation that the participants have put into their work. I am convinced that many of my confreres share his opinion.

With your permission, however, I wish to make some suggestions hopefully, will be useful in the formulation of the documents.

First: While the eleven reports submitted by the different groups are uniformly excellent insofar as they eloquently emphasize a point in catechesis, I would humbly suggest that in drawing up our conclusions, we do not lose sight of the fact that, in all spheres of human activity, the Church of Christ needs pietists like Mary, activists like Martha, and even passivists like Lazarus whom the Lord had to stir to life.

Second: There is a tendency among catechists, more particularly those of the Third World, to favor the less privileged class. This, of course, is praiseworthy. But if, in doing so, they foster hatred and encourage class struggle against the elite, when they advocate violence and revolution in faithful adherence to the Marxist line, then it becomes deplorable. Perhaps, even more than the poor, the elite would drift even farther away from Christ and His Church. Let us not forget that while Christ was deeply concerned about the poor," He also sat down with the tax collectors.

---

\* The Philippine delegates were: His Eminence Card. Jaime L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila; Most Rev. Antonio Mabutas y Lloren, Archbishop of Davao; Most Rev. Alberto Piamonte y Jover, Auxiliary Bishop of Jaro. Miss Teresita E. Nitorreda participated as an expert. — The official participants totaled 204, including 21 from Asia.

Third: At a meeting in Czechoslovakia some years ago in which Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and Communists took part, the priests and ministers spoke movingly about "commitment to and involvement with the world." The communists, on the other hand, eloquently preached on the need for transcendence. If they did not answer questions on death, suffering and anxiety, the Communist said, it was because they suspected that the answers lay outside the economic order. Have our roles been reversed? We should ponder on this question seriously.

Fourth: When we formulate our document, let us not succumb to the temptation of concluding that all past activity in catechesis has been largely useless. Catechesis has accomplished much, but times have changed, and its approaches and techniques must likewise change.

Fifth: Since, in the eyes of the world, the profession of catechist is not as exalted as it should be, let us concentrate on finding ways to change this image so that those who have the charism of teaching will not be prompted to shift to another apostolate.

Sixth: Let us remember that there are two kinds of atheism — the atheism of the right, which professes love of God and ignores love of neighbor; and the atheism of the left, which professes love of neighbor and ignores God. Let us remember also the incognito Christ operates in history and many people are serving and loving Him effectively, if unknowingly. Our main problem concerns those who feel and teach that the lifted Host and the raised Chalice are impediments to the serving of bread and wine to the hungry and the thirsty.

In conclusion, and in the name of the Church in Asia, I wish to extend my profound thanks to the German bishops for making it possible for Radio Veritas to spread the Good News in Asia. Without them, it would not be able to reach 12 Asian countries — including Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, Japan and India, to mention only a few — and acquire the high popularity rating and listenership that it now enjoys, I also express my deep gratitude to Bishop Deskur and his staff in the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications. It is to all of them that we will give a special report at the Colegio Filipino in the evening of October 20.

Others will reap where they have sown, but their achievements will always be enshrined in the heart of an appreciative and grateful Asia.

# CATECHESIS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**(Speech of Archbishop Mabutas  
at the Synod Hall, Oct. 5, 1977)**

We note that the "Instrumentum Laboris" invites us to consider the more important and urgent options by which catechesis could be more effectively presented in the present times. Several major options are mentioned; of these, the catechesis of the small christian community constitutes nowadays one of the most challenging evangelizing thrusts of our pastoral ministry, and deserves a closer look and stronger emphasis by this Synod.

I would want to speak briefly on the small christian community and elaborate more precisely on the need of small christian communities for an effective catechesis (IL, Pars III, par, I, aa. 36-39).

The Holy Father in the Evangelii Nuntiandi speaks of the ecclesial communities, if they are genuinely ecclesial, as "sharing the Church's life, nourished by her teaching, and united by her Pastors" EN, 58). The instrumentum Laboris speaks of community as family and parish. In between, as a bridge between the two, is what we call the small christian community. Small, referring to the quantitative aspect of group of families in a definite locality or natural groupings. It is small enough to permit personal relationships among its members and large enough to sustain itself in its basic needs. It is christian in its membership and its common vision to live the Christian faith in the peculiar situation of their locality. Community refers specifically to the environment being created by the christians therein to promote christian life and values. The creation of this environment is an ongoing process which all christians are called to realize with their own chosen leaders needed for the teaching, serving, and worshipping ministries.

The building of small christian communities is of vital importance for catechesis. Catechesis is the deepening and complement of evangelization which is an explicit proclamation of the Good News of Salvation to all men and a call to a new way of life, the christian life in the Church. The many areas of concern

mentioned in the "Instrumentum Laboris": the children, the youth, the adults, the family, the institutions and other groups, etc., all these, if coordinated toward the common vision of community building and community activity, will promote a more christian environment through witnessing, serving, and worshipping for a deeper penetration of faith in our ecclesial community. Briefly, we can say that catechesis deals with the maturing of christian life; christian life is lived in a community; then, catechesis must deal with community where faith is announced and witnessed.

The Church has always been faithful in scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Catechetical thrusts and programs are conceived, born and are given flesh to respond to the needs of men in a given time, place, and situation. Since we cannot talk of catechesis without talking of the actual life of the people, we need the small christian community in order to know really the christian life of our people and to help them live "the Church's' life more intensely" and to satisfy the "desire and quest for a more human dimension such as larger ecclesial communities can only offer with difficulty, especially in big cities" (EN, 58).

In more concrete terms, the need for smaller christian communities in the Church sprung up because of the following main reasons:

- a) Pastoral reason: our parishes are very big and our priests are few. The normal life of a christian community cannot be lived.
- b) Catechetical reason: man's needs for meaning and for belonging is answered by his religion. Religion offers an explanation to the meaning of his destiny, life, suffering, death, and of his relations to others. Religion offers him also the assurance that he faces life and its problems and hopes, not by himself alone but also in communion with others... But he cannot experience these in a huge impersonal "community". He will be lost. In other words, he needs a small christian community where his faith is continuously nourished, where christian values are transmitted, accepted, talked about and shared freely and where such christian values are practiced and lived by all.
- c) Socio-religious reason: for the christian message to be really incarnated or lived, we need to know the social, economic,

political and cultural situation of the people. This can only be done effectively in small communities where inculturation is made possible and where people feel responsible for one another in their human and spiritual growth.

- d) Pedagogical reason: since catechesis has the function of helping the people in the progress of the life of faith throughout the entire course of man's existence, only the environment of a small christian community where people know each other, pray together, celebrate together their salvation in Christ, will permit this on-going catechesis from the cradle to the tomb. Also, only in the small christian community can the charisms of the members be developed for the growth of christian life which is the aim of catechesis and permit a program of catechesis for children, youth, and adults which could be coordinated.

For all these reasons and others, the best means and "locus" for catechesis is the small christian community. It is where the Lord himself and the Apostles started the building of His Church. They choose some leaders to evangelize the human community, to catechize those who were converted, and to celebrate in the community the sacraments of salvation in a spirit of shared responsibility. Catechesis must be "lived" in a small community, otherwise it runs the risk to remain a mere intellectual doctrine that we know, that we profess or teach, but which does not affect our lives.

So, while we share the responsibility of catechesis with the whole christian community, this Synod should consider it one of its specific tasks to animate local churches through methods and approaches in catechetics geared to a vision of building small christian communities that are living witness of faith.

# **DYNAMIC LITURGICAL APPROACH IN CATECHESIS OF THE YOUTH**

**(SPEECH OF ARCHBISHOP MABUTAS,  
OF DAVAO, — OCT. 17, 1977)**

1. From the reports and relations of the different circles, we could discern a special concern for the youth. We are looking for the tools and approaches in catechetics where the youth could interrelate their faith with their own present situation.

2. Over the past years, we may say that catechesis of the youth has known an evolution in which three main elements have been stressed:

- a. the catechism, with its emphasis on the doctrinal content.
- b. Salvation History, with its emphasis on the proclamation of the Good News and its biblical sources.
- c. experience, with the emphasis on the sharing of Faith and the formational role of the community.

3. It is within this ambient that we are looking for more effective and dynamic tools and approaches to be able to reach the youth. The real challenge of today is not in the doctrine as handed down, but in the way that we make the doctrine part of our living, and understood in modern terms. The aspect of "celebration" approach seems to be lacking.

4. A dynamic liturgical approach would be one of the most effective tools of youth catechesis today. This celebration approach will integrate religious formation and celebration into a general educational context where the youth are not segregated from the adults and the children and where they can be actively and creatively involved in their catechesis.

5. A dynamic liturgical approach will satisfy the basic requirements for an education in the maturity of faith, namely:

- a. a progressive approach centered on the person in his milieu.
- b. a content centered on Jesus Christ and the Gospel Message.
- c. a community affording the conditions that are essential to the growth in and of faith.
- d. will be always in reference to the Church.
- e. will have the missionary dimension, preparing the youth for an adult integration into the world of today and tomorrow.

6. Some have mentioned that Liturgy and Catechesis are linked but that Liturgy is not at the service of Catechesis. While I agree with this statement, I say that if the Liturgy is dry and barren, Catechesis will just be a pious sermon without any visible impact. What we hear in Catechetics, we must see and feel at the Liturgy. This is very important for the youth specially.

7. By dynamic liturgical approach we don't mean just an exercise of the intellect, but rather an exercise in living. Hence, the need for "creativity" in Liturgy. Yet there is a widespread apprehension that this word "creativity" runs counter to orthodoxy and official norms given by Rome. We mean here by "creativity" to implement correctly the official norms given by Rome which insist on catechetical instruction as part of the liturgical celebration of all the Sacraments. "Creativity" also refers to the proper implementation of rubrics which call for a personalized word of the Celebrant at several places during the Liturgical Celebration, especially in the Liturgy of the Word, and to the greater participation of the faithful in preparing instruments, audio visual aids and other means by which the word of God could be easier assimilated by them.

8. A personalized celebration of the Liturgy, will by its very nature be a living instruction in Catechetics. It will take into consideration the aspirations, joys, sorrows, etc. of the people and it will be prepared with them by the Celebrant. Hence, participation and creativity will be assured.

9. So far the liturgical renewal has been restricted to a mere updating of the rubrics. Efforts to make the Liturgy more relevant and catechetically appealing to the youth are somewhat frowned upon and certainly not encouraged. Yet we know that a barren liturgical celebration drives either the people away (specially the youth!) or to all sorts of paraliturgical celebration if not deviations.

10. The Church has the greatest experience possible to share with its youth — the Christ-experience. The Church is sent to proclaim to youth in terms that it can understand, the Good News: "the Kingdom of God has come". A more dynamic, more creative, more personalized liturgy, encouraged and supervised by our Diocesan Liturgical Centers, and of course, with the liturgical norms set by the Church, will greatly help to give the youth a deep-genuine Christ-experience for a more Christ centered catechesis.

October 17, 1977

Archbishop Antonio Mabutas, D.D.  
Archbishop of Davao  
Philippines

**SUMMARY OF CARDINAL SIN'S DISCOURSE**  
**(October 17, 1977)**

While catechesis should direct itself principally to the poor, it should not overlook the other classes, which would otherwise drift away from the Church. One should not forget the good points of the catechetical action of the past, even if changed circumstances call for new methods and techniques in catechesis. The mission of the catechist must be presented in such a light that those who have a vocation to teaching should not be directed to another form of apostolate. Atheism influences the modern mentality in a twofold manner: those of the right who profess to love God without loving their neighbour; and those of the left, who profess to love their neighbour without loving God.

**SUMMARY OF BISHOP PIAMONTE'S SPEECH**  
**(October 17, 1977)**

Certain elements must be considered as normative for any catechesis in the Church. The Church must clearly set out what are the contents of catechesis that is to be given: before First Communion and Confirmation, to young people, to engaged couples, to adults. The basic outline can be developed by the Episcopal Conferences. The world expects a reply to many questions. The variety of catechisms that are not in conformity with Vatican II troubles many people. So does the variety of the contents and methods of catechesis. It is important to provide the general outline for renewal, and to leave the various cultures and nations liberty to adapt.

# REPORT ON THE FIFTH ROMAN SYNOD OF BISHOPS

by

**Archbishop Antonio Mabutas**  
Philippine Delegation

The Fifth Roman Synod of Bishops is already history. It was called by the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI to study and advice on Catechesis in our times, with special reference to children and young people. It started Sept. 30. 1977 and ended Oct. 29, 1977.

There were 204 participants in this Synod: 13 representatives of the Eastern Churches, 143 Delegates of the Episcopal Conferences, 18 Heads of the Congregations of the Roman Curia, 10 Delegates of the Union of Superiors General, 19 Synod Fathers nominated by the Holy Father, and the permanent Secretary of the General Synod.

The number of representation by continents are as follows: 34 from Africa, 44 from American, 21 from Asia, 5 from Australia and Oceania, and 39 from Europe. The Delegates from the Philippine Bishops' Conference are: His Eminence, Jaime Card. Sin, Archbishop Antonio Mabutas, and Bishop Alberto Piamonte.

## Work Program

After the Concelebration Mass presided by the Holy Father, with all the Synod Father participating, at the Sistine Chapel, the work of the Synod began in earnest at the General Audience Hall. It was devoted to the exchange of experiences from the different episcopal conferences as well as the presentation of problems and programs of action; there were about 300 such interventions by the Synod Fathers at the general sessions held mornings and afternoons of the first week of the Synod.

The discussions at the general sessions gave the tone and the trends of the real deliberations which took place at the small groups called Circuli Minores on the second week of the Synod. These Circuli Minores are grouped according to language: three groups in English, two in Spanish, two in French, one in German, one in Italian, and one in Latin.

Work in the third week was concentrated in drawing together the propositions and conclusions of the various language groups and synthesizing them into a coherent direction.

The fourth week was spent in the formulation of the principal conclusions that emerged from the Circuli Minores by the General Relator, the Special Synod Secretary and their collaborators, the voting on them and studying the amendments submitted, reports from some of the Congregations of the Roman Curia, the election of the Council of the Secretary General of the Synod, and the drawing up of a message of the Synod to the people of God, which presents the most important situations, problems and direction lines on catechesis in our modern times.

It was also decided that all the material, and, in particular, the organic synthesis which represents the thought of the Synod which has gone through a process of detailed scrutiny, will be handed over to the Holy Father, who was requested to issue, in his own good time, a unified document on Catechesis.

### **The General Sessions Trends and Situations**

The general sessions of the past Synod gave a comprehensive picture of the present situation of catechesis in the universal Church and the trends and approaches in solving common and situational problems. The Synod is composed of pastors who live with their flock in the concrete situation of everyday life. The mutual exchange of experiences in their local Churches gave a new stamp to their unity of faith and added new dimensions and new initiatives to the various situations in which they work.

An analysis of the various local situations in which the Church work, as presented by the Synod Fathers, has shown the desire for a proclamation that is transcendent and historical, which would purify and bring to completion the various cultures and which would, above all, free mankind from subjection to the most common and the most oppressive ideologies.

In the Synod Hall there was no attempt to conceal the fact that catechesis in our times was encountering notable difficulties; the Bishops indicated three of these in particular:

1. The preaching of the Gospel and catechesis is meeting a many-sided reality which the bishops call "secularism". Faith in man is preached instead of faith in God. Many believe that the

faith in catechesis. Archbishop Mabutas spoke of small christian communities and the need for a more dynamic and creative liturgy as a catechetical approach; Bishop Piamonte spoke of the need of fundamental catechism.

Almost all the Synod Fathers are on in their concern for youth. The present day situation shows us that young people are happy to become involved in all aspects of civilization. The desire for authenticity, for radical commitment, for the ability to judge more critically, for participation in common decisions — all these cannot but be at least an implicit call to Christianity and a serious questioning and challenge to the Church.

### **Circuli Minores — Its Tensions**

The Circuli Minores provided the logical forum for debate and discussion on concrete proposals and solutions to problems. The Bishops have complete freedom to speak out their minds in the language of their own preference and within the periphery of their own cultural backgrounds. Initiative and dynamism are thus encouraged, but at the same time tensions arise due to differences in cultural approaches and priorities.

We might recall some here: The insistence with which one constantly returned during the work of the Synod to the urgent need to transmit revelation in a manner that is understandable and adapted to differing conditions. At the same time there is the need to present the Christian Word without mutilation, without watering it down, without hiding any of its elements — this applies to its frighteningly demanding imperative, to its fascination, and to the mildness and the hope that God's forgiveness offers.

Further, there is the emphasis with which, during the Synod there was recalled the just tendency to set up communities that fit the measure of the person. But this was accompanied by the realization that the Church cannot present herself as a human project, but rather as a Mystery of God, which within history, reaches, transforms and unites, under the serving and normative guide of the successors of the Apostles, in unity with the successor of Peter.

Again, there is the constant mention of the notion that all believers must in some way become catechists, according to their own function; at the same time we emphasize the role of catechists who by their own charisma, preparation and the mission of the Church, have the special charge of transmission of the Divine Message through catechesis.

Moments of tension characterized the Circuli Minores, but the tension was that of men of the Church who have profoundly opened themselves to the Word of God and who are conscious of their mission as delegates of their Conferences towards the renewal of catechesis, and hence, are more concerned towards the greater commitment to the growth of faith through catechesis. So, despite such diversity of opinion, a consensus was reached not only among the members of the small groups or Circuli Minoris, but among all the Fathers of the Synod in drawing the final recommendations and conclusion to be handed over to the Holy Father for a new Encyclical on Catechesis.

### **Synthesis of Recommendations**

Aside from the Relator General and his group, various commissions were created to make a synthesis of the recommendations from the Circuli Minores, to wit: the Special Adiutores (helpers) to the Synod Secretariate, among whom is Miss Tessie Nitorreda of the Philippines, a Commission of six Synod Fathers to draft the Synthesis, a Commission of Six Fathers, among whom is Archbishop Antonio Mabutas of the Philippines to shift over all the amendments to the Synthesis, and another Commission of five Synod Fathers to draft the accepted amendments.

In the meantime the synthesis have to go back and forth to the Circuli Minores, then to the Commissions, then to the General Session for further discussions in an attempt to arrive at a consensus.

The final draft of the Synthesis of Recommendations as approved by the Synod will be submitted to the Holy Father, which will form the substance of an Encyclical on Catechesis which will be forthcoming.

It would be difficult here to give the substance of all the approved recommendations: they cover a wide range of topics related with Catechesis. Hopefully, a scientific analysis covering every aspect of the Synod will soon be available.

I might mention here some main lines of emphasis in this Synthesis of Propositions:

1. The scope of Catechesis: It must unite the knowledge of the Word of God, the celebration of the faith in the sacraments, and the profession of faith in a Christian life. The Criteria are personal

faith and christian commitment, which must be reflected in the style of christian life, forms of commitment, relations to the secularized world, education to prayers, etc.

2. Personal response in catechesis — christian commitment: It means following in the footsteps of Christ, and it must spring from a profound knowledge of the Word of God and express itself as the response of this love. Catechesis must present christian commitment in an integral way. Its specific Catholic character according to revelation and the Magisterium must clearly emerge. The personal and social dimensions must be linked and any form of ideological instrumentalization must be avoided.

3. The Contents of Catechesis — the mystery and the person of Christ, the Son of the Father and the one who reveals the Father to us.

The contents of Catechism must include: the Mystery of the Church, the Sacrament of Christ and the communion of the faithful; also, the human advancement that is inspired by the Gospel and is founded on the Incarnation of the Word, the moral norms for personal behaviour and social relations, the evangelical beatitudes and their realization in the lives of the Saints and above all in the life of the Blessed Virgin.

Hence comes the need for a Catechesis that express the fundamental doctrines of our faith, for a Catechesis which is directed to the formation of a particular life style, which stressed the personal vocation of each christian, and the need to give due attention to cultural pluralism and to popular piety.

In all catechesis, in an integrated manner, one must always unite indissolubly: — Knowledge of the Word of God; Celebration of the Word of God; Celebration of faith in the Sacraments; The Profession of faith in daily life:

4. Methods of Catechesis. One of the fruits of catechetical renewals is the variety of methods with which the word of God is transmitted taking into consideration the diverse cultures and social situations in the locality. Some methods insist on doctrinal approach; some are more experiential, some emphasize anthropological aspects, others are more centered on dogma, others stress spiritual formation. It is here that creativity which leads to new styles of catechesis takes place: a catechesis more faithful to the demands of the Gospel, whose theological criterion is found in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.

5. Recipients of Catechesis.

Catechesis is an ongoing, life-long formation. It is a need for every christian, who has not only the right, but the obligation to receive catechesis. Special emphasis should be given to the young because they are in the psychological age of formation and because of their strong bond within the family and of the influence brought to bear on them by the school and the communications media. Catechesis must also be adapted to the various ages, the generation gap, the particular situations of the handicapped and emigrants, etc.

#### 6. The places of catechesis:

The validity of the traditional places of catechesis was restated:

a) The family — its fundamental importance as the basic unit of society, and which provides the environment for the formation of the children. The Synod noted the need for more active participation of parents in the education of their children, and also the need of formation of parents.

b) The school — Certain limitations and dangers were noted caused by political transformations which have led to nationalization or control of the schools; in other countries, a great number of children do not go to school at all. It seems to be of great importance to present the progress of culture in the light of the Gospel so that the young may discover the answer of faith to the questions that are raised by other disciplines of the school.

c) The parish — it is the center of catechetical activity. Greater attention should be given to the celebration of the sacraments, the Sunday Mass and the Homily as a means for imparting catechesis.

Aside from these traditional places of catechesis, new places of catechesis have emerged; to mention some: church associations, family movements, cursillos, study congresses and seminars, charismatic groups, catechumenal groups, and, showing a great promise of effectivity, are the small christian communities. They can be a leaven in a world which is in a state of change; they give the hope that a catechized community could also be a catechizing community.

#### 7. The Bishop and his collaborators.

The Bishops has the primary task in the catechetical activity of the Church; he coordinates the activity of all those who dedicate themselves to catechesis in the Diocese. In this grandiose task however, he needs to collaborate with all, who according to their function and charism, contribute to the same mission: priests, cate-

chists, teachers, animators of christian communities, consecrated persons. The formation of catechists is stressed here in a special way; however, all those working in catechesis must also have an ongoing formation not only for effective transmission of the Message but more for effective witnessing.

### **Council of the General Secretariats of the Synod**

Towards the end of the Synod, the election of the members of the Council for the General Secretariate took place. The following are elected members:

For Africa: Cardinal Maurice Otunga, Archbishop of Nairobi; Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandum, Archbishop of Dakar; Most Rev. Denis Hurley, Archbishop of Durban.

For the Americas: Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider, Archbishop of Fortaleza; Most Rev. Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Cincinnati; Most Rev. Gerald Carter, Bishop of London, Canada.

For Asia, Australia, Asia: Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro, Archbishop of Karachi; Cardinal Jaime Sin, Archbishop of Manila; Most Rev. Patrick D'Souza, Bishop of Varanasi, India.

For Europe: Cardinal Joseph Hoeffner, Archbishop of Cologne; Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krokow, Poland; Most Rev. Roger Etchegaray, Archbishop of Marseilles, France.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Synod Fathers assembled against a background of what can without exaggeration be called a catechetical crisis. It is obvious that after the Synod this crisis will not be instantly solved. Does this mean that the Synod failed? Not at all. It means that the real work of the Synod, or rather, the work the Synod had helped to identify for the Church as a whole, will have just began. The opening words of the Holy Father at the closing of the Synod comes in very pertinent here:

"After discussing intensely throughout the whole month, this issue of catechesis which is of great importance for the future of the Church, now it is time to return to your homes and your duties. You do so with this goal: to work diligently for renewed Catechetical activity in your regions".

## RP SYNOD CONTRIBUTION ANALYZED

By

**Felix B. Bautista\***

ROME, Oct. 25 — The final documents of the Synod on catechesis now rapidly drawing to a close here are not expected to be released until sometime next year, but it is the hope of the Filipino community here that the contribution of the Philippine Synodal Fathers will be given a respectful hearing.

The Philippine representation in the Synod is made up of Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila, Davao Archbishop Antonio Mabutas and Iloilo Auxiliary Bishop Alberto Piamonte. They were elected by the Catholic Conference of the Philippines during its Cebu meeting last January, and all three took a firm stand on how catechesis can be made more effective and meaningful to the People of God in the Philippines and in Asia.

Cardinal Sin asked that in the devising of new techniques in the teaching of catechism, attention should be paid to the cultural peculiarities of the people being taught. He pointed out that in the past, Western techniques were foisted on Asians who were not ready—or were not willing—to accept them because they were alien to their way of life. As a result, he said, catechesis was not as effective as it should have been.

This process of adapting to an indigenous culture is called inculturation.

Archbishop Mabutas, on the other hand, took the position that catechesis can be more meaningful if it is done within the framework of basic Christian Communities.

For his part, Bishop Piamonte stressed the need for a catechism that will spell out very clearly the essentials of the Christian faith.

On the surface, these three positions seem unrelated. But on closer analysis and study, there is a distinct connection; a connection, moreover, that is necessary if the Filipinos are to live their faith and mature in it.

---

\* Reprinted from: Cor Manila, November 15, 1977, p. 5.

Fr. Lino Banayad, S.J., head of the Philippine Institute of Catechetics and one of two experts asked by Cardinal Sin to assist him in the synodal deliberations, establishes the connection in this way:

To see how the positions taken by the three Philippine delegates converge, there is a need to look more closely into the nature of catechesis. Catechesis, after all, is the proclamation of God's message as accepted and lived in the Church. This message calls man to a life of fellowship with God and with other men. "You are my people and I am your God. I am the vine and you are the branches..."

The message, therefore, in Fr. Banayad's view, is a call to an ecclesial community. And this community has the mission from Christ to be "the light and the salt of the earth". It is the experience in this community life which leads men to salvation.

This is the reason, Fr. Banayad says, why there is so much insistence on the establishment of basic Christian communities by the Asian, African and South American bishops. This experience, he believes, is backed by their experience of family closeness, tribal unity and regional loyalty.

This is the reason also why Archbishop Mabutas spoke so eloquently for the cause of basic Christian communities. For he believes that the proclamation of the Word in the building of a community of love, faith and service is an essential catechetical process.

But if this basic Christian community is evangelized through the use of alien techniques and with complete disregard of the culture and traditions of the people that compose it then it becomes a ghetto separate from the other communities that surround it. And where is the fellowship here? Where is the universal brotherhood?

In the paper which he read before the Synod, His Eminence emphasized that after Vatican II, the existence and validity of cultural pluralism were recognized. Gone are the days, he said, when Western culture was accepted as the only norm for other cultures "whose degree of perfection was judged by their conformity or non-conformity with the Christian West."

The Roman (therefore Western) Catholic Church, Cardinal Sin stressed, should not be content with giving what she has; just as

important, she should be ready to receive what she does not yet have. She has to bring into the rich patrimony of the faith she possesses everything that is true and good in other cultures and religions.

Asian catechists he went on, should not continue being subservient to Western norms that have become obsolete and undesirable. If they do, he warned, the Church would be unable to keep up with other Asian religions.

The life of faith in the community to which God is calling men must be lived by contemporary men, not by the men of centuries past. Therefore, the Church in her preachings has to use the discoveries of different cultures to strengthen this life of faith.

Because of the diversity of cultures and the richness of the Christian message, the necessity for inculturation becomes acute and compelling. So what is expected of the West and of Rome in particular? Three things:

1. There should be a conscientious listening to the voices of the East as they convey God's message and lead their people to the faith according to the mentality, the ways and the needs in their culture. While the East is open to the guidance of the West, the West should not summarily judge or condemn — and this has been known to happen in the past — the Christian strivings of the East because they do not give with the ways of the West.

2. The East should be given the leeway and the freedom to formulate and concretize its Christian living in accordance with its culture, guided by love for and fidelity to God's Word, fully revealed in Christ and lived in the Church.

3. The West should allow the East to see its culture in the light of God's revelation so that this Eastern culture may be healed and graced by the Spirit of God. Only in this way can Asians give expression to "this newness of life in the social and cultural framework of their own homeland according to their own national traditions".

But there are many dangers that stand in the way of inculturation. For instance, we may become so obsessed with imposing our cultural peculiarities and felt needs that God's Word no longer is the point of reference.

As the General Catechetical Directory says so explicitly, "Avoiding confusions and simplistic identifications, the message should always show clearly the deep and intimate harmony that exists

between God's salvific plan fulfilled in Christ, the Lord, and human aspirations, between the history of salvation and human history, between the Church, the People of God and human communities supernatural gifts and charisms and human values".

What is needed, therefore, is a catechism which formulates the experience and mind of the living Church, one which clearly and simply states the outstanding and essential elements of the Christian message.

This is what Bishop Piamonte advocates: a catechism which the average Christian can understand and easily commit to memory.

It is clear, therefore, that the three topics touched by our Synodal delegates all fit together. They all converge to make the catechetical apostolate effective in the deepening of our people's Christian faith.

**20 OCTOBER**

**PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**Cardinal Lawrence Trevor Picachy**  
**Archbishop of Calcutta**

**Most Rev. Joseph L. Bernardin**  
**Archbishop of Cincinnati (USA)**

At a meeting of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (F.A.B.C) held in Rome last week, the delegates from Asia expressed their satisfaction with the progress of the Synod. What is noticeable this time is the absence of tensions and the smoothness with which the Synod has progressed. The Holy Father requested me, Archbishop Adimou of Cotonou of Benin in Africa, and Bishop Maverna of Italy to serve on the "Commission for Controversies". We are happy to inform you that we have been unemployed and pray that it may remain that way till the end.

The participants have come to the Synod after serious preparation and prolonged prayer. The people of the various regions have been incorporated with the work of preparation. In India we have spent over a year, and people at all levels were involved. Priests, religious, theologians, experts, seminarians, parishioners in the city and in rural areas, and the children as well, have all played their part.

The delegates of this Synod have shown remarkable restraint in not imposing their point of view on others. The desire to listen is very marked and the lead of the Holy Spirit has been followed at every stage. We are grateful to the thousands who have prayed before and still are praying right through the Synod.

A scientific analysis, covering every aspect of the Synod, will soon be available. I merely wish to offer a few observations of a pastoral nature from an Asian point of view.



1. Whenever the Asian Bishops meet in conference they have a "memorial service" to pray for their Brother Bishops who are forbidden on political grounds from attending the meeting. The number of absentees is on the increase. We ask one another:

"Whose turn will be next". We are convinced that these heroic members of the Church of Silence make an invaluable contribution. We pray for them and we recall the words of Jesus: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake".

At the Synod we have been privileged to listen with reverence to representatives from countries where human and religious rights are systematically denied. We remain closely united with them in prayer and love.



2. The Asian point of view may be gauged by a decision taken at our meeting last week. Proposals were asked for the choice of the topic for the General Body Meeting of the F.A.B.C., to be held in 1978. It looked logical that we should take "catechesis as a follow-up of the Synod". "Ministries in the Church" were studied deeply at a special meeting at Hong Kong earlier this year. Some held that a further study was needed. Asia has great reverence for families and for ancestors. Perhaps "Catechesis and the Family" would prove useful. But finally the vote fell on "Prayer Life in the Church of Asia Today". The Church in Asia is set among the ancient religions of the world. They have lofty ideals and have much to teach us. But the Church with her belief in Jesus our Saviour has treasures to unfold to them. We feel sure that this effort will help to deepen the study of catechesis.

True to our Asian tradition, we have decided to prepare the meeting with a year of prayer. All the countries of Asia will participate in a campaign of prayer. We hope to make this an ecumenical effort. May we invite our brothers and sisters in other countries to join us in this prayer.



3. During this Synod some have come across the inability of many participants to realize the meaning of poverty in the context of actuality and not in the realm of morality. This is not from lack of sympathy but from a lack of awareness of the real problem. Many things closer home grip their full attention. Several reliable scientific surveys have repeatedly informed us that half the world's population goes without one square meal a day. This may appear as an exaggeration but unfortunately it is a stark reality. Jean Vanier of l'Arche, Brother Roger Schutz of Taizé, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus and many others succeeded to a certain extent in awakening the conscience of the world. But we have a long way to go. The fact is that "Poverty is not news".

In March 1971, the refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) began to spill over to the neighbouring State of West Bengal in India. We were very disappointed at the poor response we received from other First World countries. "Refugees don't make news". But suddenly Cholera struck in one of the camps. This was News! Within a week massive relief operations poured in from many countries. They were carried on unabatedly until the last of the 11 million refugees had returned safely to Bangladesh by January 1972.

Journalists who have attended the Synod can make an invaluable contribution by placing before their readers the problem of poverty in its concrete situation. Any solution must respect the dignity of the poor. We cannot go far wrong in approaching them with reverence if we keep in mind the advice of Mother Teresa: "Approach the poor as your brothers and sisters. See the face of Jesus reflected in their tired eyes. Make the poor feel that they are really wanted and loved. The poor can do more for you than you can do for them".

In many countries of Asia simplicity of life is equated with true asceticism. The Church in Asia must certainly examine its life-style if it hopes to make any real impact in our countries.



4. The Catholics of Asia realize the power of mass media. But they are faced with the problem of Government controls and still more with the great expense involved in this apostolate. However, valiant efforts have been made in the field of the Press and Radio. "Radio Veritas" in Manila is an example of courageous local effort supported by the generosity of dioceses in other countries.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (F.A.B.C.) thanks the Holy Father for calling them to share in the study of the important question of catechesis. The Conferences thank the Presidents, Secretaries and all the helpers of the Synod for organizing the work so efficiently.

And to you, Ladies and Gentleman of the Media, our gratitude for your faithful and vivid reporting of the Synod.

**The following is the text of Most Rev. Joseph L. Bernardin:**

Although the Synod has more than a week to run, I believe the general outlines of its likely consensus are beginning to emerge. These will be apparent to you from the briefings and bulletins you

receive, so that I feel no need in these remarks either to anticipate in detail the Synod's outcome or to repeat information which you already have.

Instead I would like to reflect on a very practical question. What happens after the Synod? The sense of accomplishment, even of euphoria, which we experience when a meeting goes well, as this one has, should not blind us to the fact that everything that has been said will amount to very little unless things happen as a result.

We came to the Synod against the background of what can without exaggeration be called a catechetical crisis for the Church in many parts of the world. Notice that I use the word "crisis", not "disaster" to "collapse". A crisis suggests a turning point, when things can become either better or worse. There are tensions and problems; there are also challenged and opportunities.

The nature of the catechetical crisis has been discussed at length during the Synod. I shall not repeat what has been said. Approaches and solutions are now evolving through the synodal process. Their outlines are becoming clear. But it is obvious that, when the Synod ends next week, the crisis will remain, and our suggested solutions will be so more than words on paper. Does this mean that the Synod will have failed? Not at all. It means that the real work of the Synod — or rather, the work the Synod has helped to identify for the Church as a whole — will have just begun.

Allow me to be personal for a moment. I doubt that large numbers of Catholics in my Archdiocese of Cincinnati are keenly aware of the Synod or deeply concerned about its outcome. Some are, but not most. I suspect this is true for most of the other bishops here. Frankly, while I might wish it were otherwise, I do not find this either surprising or especially disturbing in itself. It is difficult for people to become strongly interested in a distant meeting conducted in unfamiliar terminology, even if it is highly worthwhile for those who take part in it. In any case, what concerns me is not whether the Catholics of Cincinnati are intensely interested in the Synod as such, but whether they are intensely interested in bringing about the renewal of catechesis which the Synod has been laboring to promote. And I for one shall measure the results of the Synod not so much by what it says, but to a

great degree by what happens — or fails to happen — in Cincinnati and everywhere else in the Church in the months and years to come. I believe any other bishop at this gathering would say much the same.



Now, how might things begin to happen after the Synod? One thing is clear. Nothing will happen by itself. If the present crisis in catechesis is to lead to a catechetical renewal, a great deal of hard work will have to be "done" by many different people, even though ultimately the success of that work is up to God.

In the United States, I am happy to say we have already — well before the Synod — begun to take some of the necessary steps. One example. Next month, when our bishops gather in Washington for their semi-annual general meeting a principal item on their agenda will be the proposed National Catechetical Directory for the Catholic Church in the United States. A number of other national hierarchies have already adopted such directories in response to the General Directory. These documents, you will understand, are not catechisms or religion texts or pious exhortations. Our Directory, which has been under development for nearly five years, is a comprehensive, practical statement of policy and guidelines, governing the content and methods of catechesis in all forms and at all levels.

The value of such a project will be clear to anyone familiar with the catechetical scene in recent years. There has been a great deal of confusion, controversy, and tension over catechesis since Vatican II. I believe this has done as much as anything to undermine effective catechesis. With "liberals" fighting "conservatives" "content" people arguing with "methodology" people, advocates of an inductive approach disputing supporters of a deductive approach, parents questioning teachers, and teachers complaining that parents do not understand — it is no wonder that catechesis itself has suffered. So without either turning back the clock in a reactionary manner or leaping blindly into an unknown future, the intent of the Directory is to codify the best of responsible, tested catechetical thought and practice, in the light of the Church's teaching and traditional wisdom, and so serve as a normative guidepost as well as an incentive for catechetical endeavors.

But just as the Synod by itself cannot accomplish what is needed for the renewal of catechesis, so a Directory can provide only part of what is required. More important still is what happens

in our individual dioceses and parishes, in schools and catechetical programs, in families and small communities. The emphasis of the Synod upon family and adult catechesis as crucial to the catechesis of children and young people, upon the importance of continuing education for the clergy, upon the need for sound doctrine and good methodology, upon the role of communities of faith as catechetical settings—these and all the other valuable insights simply will not be translated into practice without the concerted, collaborative efforts of many different people: priests, deacons, religious and laity, parents, teachers and administrators, workers in youth ministry, campus ministry, and adult education. Without their response there will be no renewal of catechesis.



A final word. It is not simply a question of us—the bishops—telling them—everybody else in the Church—what they should do to bring about catechetical renewal. A bishop has a serious duty to foster the ministry of the word in his diocese. Ultimately, he must take responsibility for what does or does not happen in catechesis. It is his task to give leadership and support and encouragement to catechetical renewal: by prudent planning and administration, by clear, unambiguous and effective teaching, by prayer and dialogue with others including theologians and other scholars, by his own readiness to listen, to learn, to experience continuing catechesis himself, and to participate actively in the ministry of the Word. So in the final analysis the Synod is a challenge to us, the bishops, to strive for the renewal of catechesis which the present crisis requires and makes possible. The results of the Synod will be as practical and positive as we bishops help make them.

## PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **LEONARDO LEGASPI, O.P.**, Rectori Pontificiae Universitatis Sancti Thomae Manilae, electo Episcopo titulo Elephantiensi in Mauretania atque Auxiliari sacri Praesulis Manilensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Nihil quidem impensius curantibus quam ut satis omni dominici gregis portioni ubique terrarum degenti provideamus, perspicuum Nobis apparuit morem esse gerendum voluntati Venerabilis fratris Nostri Jacobi S.R.E. Cardinalis Sin, Archiepiscopi Manilensis, qui ob potiora pastoralia negotia magis in dies augescientia postulavit ut alius sibi Auxiliaris daretur Episcopus. Quapropter, cum nihil omnino obstiterit, quo minus relatum ea de re Nobis sententiam Venerabilis fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis, Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti, comprobata ratam haberemus, summa Nos potestate Nostra Apostolica te, dilecte fili, quem novimus animi ingenique egregiis commendari dotibus, Episcopum titulo **ELEPHANTARIENSEM** in Mauretania nominamus sacroque assignamus Praesuli, quem diximus, iuribus tibi factis huius officii propriis iuxta Litteras Nostras — Ecclesiae Sanctae — die VI mensis Augusti datas anno MCMLXVI. Facultatem tibi facimus ut episcopalem ordinationem a quolibet catholico Episco, liturgicis de re servatis regulis, ubivis accipias, post tamen quam coram eodem aliove Episcopo cum hac Petri Sede fidei vinculis coniuncto tuam feceris professionem fidei tuamque erga Nos et Successores Nostros fidelitatem iuraveris. Quibus rite actis, tuum erit curare ut adhibita formulae, eademque translaticia forma signatae sigilloque impressae, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittantur. Te demum, dilecte fili, cui ampliorem ad dignitatem evecto gratulamur, enixe hortamur ut, graviore considerato officio tibi credito, sedulam operam tuam in pastoralibus negotiis cum ipso Pastore consocias, cui ut quam maxime prosis traderis. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die decimo mensis Septembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto decimo.

**JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
Secretarius Status

**MARCELLUS ROSSETTI,**  
Proton. Apost.

# CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AFTER VATICAN COUNCIL II

by

**Jordan Aumann, O.P., S.T.D.**

*Director, Institute of Spirituality  
University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome  
Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy*

Since the close of Vatican Council II, the Church throughout the world has been engaged in the necessary but painful task of self-evaluation and adaptation. This is a need imposed upon the Church by reason of the fact that mankind has entered upon a new age — an age that brings with it the problems and crises peculiar to itself, just as surely as the ages of adolescence or maturity bring with them their own particular challenges to the human person. Moreover, the nature of the Church as the People of God in pilgrimage or as a dynamic organism subject to the laws of its interior development and evolution requires that the Church periodically face the challenges of its growth and expansion. Thus, Cardinal Newman stated:

If Christianity be a universal religion, suited not simply to one locality or period but to all times and places, it cannot but vary in its relation and dealings towards the world around it; that is, it will develop. Principles require a various application according as persons and circumstances vary, and must be thrown into new shapes according to the form of society which they are to influence.<sup>1</sup>

The same thing is true of spirituality or the Christian life; it must be dynamic, not static; therefore, it is constantly developing and adapting itself to new needs and changing culture patterns. At the risk of becoming irrelevant and non-authentic, Christian spirituality demands constant renewal and *aggiornamento*. The special or particularized spirituality of fourteenth-century England or seventeenth-century France may be as alien to twentieth-century Christians as is the Christian life-style of a contemplative nun to a diocesan priest or Christian husband and wife.

---

<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, chapter 2, section 1, n. 3.

Vatican Council II has recognized that many persons outside the visible body of the Catholic Church are capable of living a deep spiritual life and of having an authentic religious experience. The Church "looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. II Cor. 5:18-19)."<sup>4</sup>

Again, in the pastoral constitution, **The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)**, the Fathers of Vatican II teach explicitly that there is only one spirituality for all mankind and it consists in a participation in the mystery of Jesus Christ:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light... Christ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear... He who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) is himself the perfect man... For by his incarnate the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man... The Christian man, conformed to the likeness of that Son who is the firstborn of many brothers, receives the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23) by which he becomes capable of discharging the new law of love. Through this Spirit, who is "the pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14), the whole man is renewed from within, even to the achievement of "the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23)... All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.<sup>5</sup>

It follows, then, that Christian spirituality is the sharing in the mystery of Jesus Christ, through faith, grace and charity, as an adult Christian and according to one's personal gifts and talents and within the framework of one's vocation or state in life. The unchanging norm for all authentic Christian life is participation in Christ, who came that we might have life and have it to the full.

<sup>4</sup> *Nostra Aetate*, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

## SCHOOLS OF SPIRITUALITY

However, the mystery of Christ must become "incarnated" in a particular time and place and in individual persons, with the result that we find in the course of history a variety of particularized spiritualities or "schools" of spirituality, each manifesting in its own manner or mode the mystery of Christ. Some contemporary theologians, to safeguard the unity of the Christian life, prefer to emphasize three essential elements of **fundamental** Christian spirituality; as a consequence, they tend to reject any pluralism and refuse to admit the classification of Christian spirituality into "schools."<sup>6</sup> But it seems inevitable that schools of spirituality should emerge, and there are two reasons for this diversity: on the part of God, who gives the life of the Spirit, and on the part of the persons who receive this gift.

The basic theological reason for the multiplicity of spiritualities within the general framework of Christian spirituality is given by St. Paul: "Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us" (Rom. 12:4-6). "Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted" (Eph. 4:7). And St. Thomas Aquinas states that "the first cause of this diversity is to be sought on the part of God, who dispenses his gifts of grace variously in order that the beauty and perfection of the Church may result from these various degrees."<sup>7</sup> In other words, the mystery of Christ is so rich and varied that it cannot be perfectly duplicated in any one person or in any school of spirituality. Even the greatest of the saints exemplified one or another aspect of the mystery of Christ, but never "the whole Christ."

As regards the human causes for the diversity of particularized spiritualities, we need only recall the theological axiom that grace does not destroy nature but perfects it.<sup>8</sup> Grace and the infused virtues respect the individual personality of the one who receives them; consequently, the immediate subjective basis for the different ways in which an individual experiences and witnesses to the mystery of Christ is found in the unique pattern of personality traits peculiar to that individual. The temperament of an individual,

<sup>6</sup> Cf. L. Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality*, New York, 1961, pp. 19-23; F. Vandenbroucke, "Spirituality and *Spiritualities*," *Spirituality in Church and World*, New York, 1965, pp. 45-60.

<sup>7</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 112, a. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2; q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.

his predispositions to good or evil, the type of character he has formed—all these elements will exert a great influence on his response to grace and the use he makes of the gifts God gives him. They will to a great extent determine his practices of devotion, the facility or difficulty in practicing certain virtues, his taste for prayer and apostolic service, and even his attraction to one or another dogmatic truth. They will likewise affect his choice of vocation or state of life, and that in turn will introduce him to the factors that constitute the duties of state in life.

Father Besnard has shown clearly that the spiritual life is something proper to each person and is at the same time a sharing in the mystery of Christ: "When one speaks of spirituality, one refers to a living synthesis of human and evangelical elements. Spirituality is really the structuring of an adult personality in faith according to one's proper genius, vocation, and charismatic gifts, on the one hand, and according to the laws of the universal Christian mystery on the other."<sup>9</sup>

The history of spirituality provides us with countless examples of saintly Christians who were the leaders of particular schools of spirituality. They attracted followers who wanted to follow Christ by committing themselves to the same pattern of Christian life as exemplified, for example, in St. Francis of Assisi or St. Dominic. In the course of time, the particularized spirituality was synthesized by a speculative theologian, as St. Bonaventure did for Franciscan spirituality and St. Thomas Aquinas did for Dominican spirituality. But schools of spirituality are not limited to the charisms of individual Christians; equally important are such factors as the national temperament (e.g., Spanish or English spirituality as distinct from French spirituality), the cultural conditions at a specific period in history (e.g., spirituality of the Rhineland mystics), and the needs of the Church at a given time (e.g., the post-Reformation spirituality of the Jesuits).

The schools of spirituality are therefore an indication of the diversity of the ways of the Spirit and a sign of the Church's respect for personal freedom under the same Spirit. The Christian life is not lived by all the faithful in slavish conformity to one pattern, but is constantly adapting itself to the diversity of needs, charisms, ministeries, and national and individual temperaments. Nevertheless, it is necessary to stress the fact that all the differences that distinguish one school of spirituality from another are merely **accidental or modal**. All schools of spirituality are branches of the one vine

<sup>9</sup> A. M. Besnard, O.P., "Tendencies of Contemporary Spirituality," *Spirituality in Church and World*, New York, 1965, p. 26.

who is Christ and they must therefore be nothing more or less than the application of the Gospel teaching to a given style of life within a given culture. Rightly have the Fathers of Vatican II urged the People of God to return to the Gospel as the source and guide for contemporary Christian life and spirituality.

### GOSPEL SPIRITUALITY

The whole of Sacred Scripture bears witness to the fact that the God who created us has intervened in our human history in order to fulfill in mankind the designs of his providence. God makes himself known to us to the extent that he acts in our lives, and therefore we must go to the Scriptures not only to learn the mysteries that God has revealed to us, but also to perceive how these mysteries apply to our lives here and now. The relationship effected by God's intervention in human history is one in which God approaches man, and man, by a free act of faith, offers himself to whatever God wants to achieve in and through him.

Thus, the Bible reveals to man his high destiny and it answers man's longing to rise from his fallen condition in order to touch and experience the divine. The Bible is therefore the rule and standard of all authentic spirituality, and it makes a total demand. It cannot be reduced to the purely human level, because its aim is to fashion us in the image of God; it cannot be replaced by the substitute for religious experience that some may seek in group therapy, drugs, or the transcendental meditations of Eastern religions. Everything must be evaluated in terms of Scripture, and the closer any spirituality is to Scripture, the more authentic it is. While it admits of a variety of responses on the part of man, it transcends all diversity as the unifying factor and ultimate standard of Christian life and experience.

The problem is to discover the basic and invariable principles of the Christian life as revealed in Scripture, antecedently in the Old Testament and definitively in the Gospel. Which truths are valid for Christians of every century and every nation? The fundamental message that comes to us through the gradual revelation of the Old Testament, through the patriarchs and the prophets, is that God loves us and asks our response through faith and obedience. The entire Old Testament progress in stages to the perfect communication of God to man in the person of Jesus Christ. Consequently, says Father Yves Congar, Christ is "the last revelation... When God became man, something that was already true in the previous stages of salvation history reached its highest degree:

man resembles God and, therefore, in a totally transcendent way, God resembles man."<sup>10</sup> The Fathers of Vatican II said the same thing in a different way: "The principal purpose to which the plan of the Old Covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming both of Christ, the universal Redeemer, and of the messianic kingdom."<sup>11</sup>

The continuity between the Old and New Testaments is evident from the fact that Christ frequently supported his teaching by quoting from the Old Testament and insisted that he had not come to abolish the Law and the prophets but to complete them (Mt. 5:17). Christ is the culmination of all that had been promised and foretold by the prophets; he is the source and model of our life in God; hence, the Christian life is a participation in the mystery of Christ. But to know Christ, it is necessary to turn to the Gospel, which records what he said and did for our instruction.

For some, it is of paramount importance first to rediscover Christ as man, so that Christian spirituality can be based on an authentic humanism, a Christian anthropology. Vatican II has also stated something to this effect:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of him who was to come, namely, Christ the Lord... He who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) is himself the perfect man.<sup>12</sup>

To rediscover Christ as man means to become aware of every man as called to sonship in the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to see the mystery of man and the mystery of Christ as intimately related. Jesus is both the prototype of every authentic man and the source of all true humanity because he is "the image of the unseen God and the firstborn of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth" (Col. 1:15).

However, too much emphasis on Christ as man, on the "historical Jesus," could detract from his divinity. Our relationship with Christ does not consist simply in the remembrance and imitation of the historical figure we meet in the pages of the Gospel. That could easily result in a religion of hero-worship, a liturgy of memorial services, and a spirituality of pious nostalgia for the past. The Christian life requires that we live the mystery of Christ here and now; the Christian life must be seen as the present facing the

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. P. Jossua, O.P., *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God's People*, Chicago, 1968, pp. 129-130.

<sup>11</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

future, and not the present trying to recapture the past. In this sense we can understand the need to "demythologize" the Christ of the Gospel in order to discover the universal Christ, the Christ of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and then present that Christ to the contemporary world. The mystery of Christ that constitutes Christian spirituality is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us now.

To participate in the mystery of Christ means to share in the divine life of Christ, and to such an extent that Christ is not only present to us now, but dwells within us. The Word condescended to "humanize" himself in order to "divinize" human nature by raising it to the level of the divine. As in Christ, the human and divine natures are united in a mysterious and hypostatic manner, so also in man, the natural and the supernatural are united in such a way that the natural is not destroyed but elevated and perfected, though the two always remain distinct and separable. And the life that Christ gives to us is the selfsame life that animated the God-man; it is the very life that the incarnate Word shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit; it is consequently the life of God in the august mystery of the Trinity. The Christian life is being by grace what Christ is by nature: the son of God.

This is precisely what constitutes the supernatural order, the manifestation of eternal life: entrance into the fellowship with God by sharing in the communication of his life and his intimate secrets.... God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that all those who believe in him may have eternal life. This life is the intimate life of the sacrosanct Trinity in the ineffable communications of the three Persons, because all three, and each of them in his own way, contribute to the work of our reification.... It is the Father who adopts us; the Son who makes us his brothers and coheirs; the Holy Spirit who consecrates and sanctifies us and makes us living temples of God, coming to dwell in us, together with the Father and the Son.<sup>13</sup>

The New Testament makes many references to the new life that is given to us through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. St. Peter states that "by his divine power, he has given us all the things that we need for life and for true devotion, bringing us to know God himself, who has called us by his own glory and goodness. In making these gifts he has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come: through them you will be able to share the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:14). St. Paul says:

<sup>13</sup> Cf. John G. Arintero, O.P., *The Mystical Evolution*, St. Louis, 1950, vol. I, pp. 349-351.

"The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:15-17). Finally, St. John teaches: "We are already the children of God, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is" (I Jn. 3:2).

But life is not static; it is meant to grow and develop. The Gospel reveals this under a variety of figures, but the one most frequently used by Christ is "the kingdom." "This kingdom," says Father Bonsirven, "can be understood in two ways. According to one of them, Christ had in mind a spiritual kingdom, already existing at the time and progressive, an **evolution**; according to the other, he was looking forward to it as something which had to come into existence suddenly as a result of an eschatological **revolution** which would shake the whole world."<sup>14</sup>

As a spiritual kingdom, an evolution, its within us (Lk. 17:21); it is capable of growth because, as Aquinas says, it is of the very nature of grace to increase; then, from individuals, it can extend throughout the world and constitute the extension of God's kingdom on earth, the Church. But essentially the kingdom is life in Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23). We enter the spiritual kingdom through faith, repentance, forgiveness of sin, and baptism; this constitutes our justification. But justification is only the first step in a new way of life that demands the works of virtue, growth in grace, and the striving for the perfection of charity. All this is evident from the Sermon on the Mount, the charter of Christian spirituality in which Christ emphasized the superiority of the interior over the exterior (Mt. 6:1-18) and proclaimed the vocation of all Christians to perfection (Mt. 5:38-44). The follower of Christ must live by the dynamic principle of spiritual evolution and growth.

However, Christ did not give a detailed code of morality to his followers; he was content to restate the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy regarding the double precept of love of God and love of neighbor (Mt. 22:37-3). But at the Last Supper he gave charity a new and challenging dimension and placed it at the very heart of the Christian life:"

<sup>14</sup> J. Bonsirven, S.J., *Theology of the New Testament*, Westminster, Maryland, 1963, p. 37.

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another . . . As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:9-12).

Love of neighbor occupies a crucial position in the Gospel teaching on Christian spirituality, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ insists that a vague and universal love for all men in general will not suffice; the Christian is obliged to practice love on the existential level of interpersonal relationships and, indeed, to make our love a response to those who need our love. Nor is this to be construed simply as doing good to others; the command of Christ is: Love one another as **I have loved you**.

It is therefore as much of an illusion to think we can love God without loving our neighbor as it is to think we can love our neighbor with Christian charity without loving God. There is only one love which is charity; it cannot be divided; for that reason there can be no true charity which consists exclusively in the love of God or in the love of neighbor (cf. I Jn. 4:20). Moreover, it is necessary to emphasize today, when so many speak of "finding Christ in my neighbor," that the ideal proposed by Christ is to love our neighbor as Christ loved us, which is very different from experiencing Christ in others. For the goal of Christian perfection is to attain the transformation in Christ to which St. Paul attests: "I live now, not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). In the terms of the virtue of charity we would say: "I love now, not with my own love but with the love of Christ who loves through me."

Such, in broad perspective, is the Gospel teaching on Christian spirituality. It is a teaching and an ideal that applies to all times and all peoples. It cannot be restricted to any time or culture, for it rises above them as a universal and perennial doctrine. Yet it adapts itself wonderfully to all the conditions and differences that distinguish one age or nation or culture from another. Thus is God glorified in the variety of manifestations of Christian holiness throughout the centuries and all saintly Christians are united in the one bond of love, making them truly the People of God, a holy people.

## CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Fundamental Christian spirituality consist in the following and imitation of Christ as he reveals himself by its teaching and example, recorded in the Gospel, but it is a spirituality that is lived in the world by persons of a specific time and culture. Hence, Gospel spirituality must necessarily become particularized at a given time or place, which means that it must be applied to particularized at a given time or place, which means that it must be applied to particular needs and conditions. The saintly pontiff, Pope John XXIII, was well aware of the necessity of giving a new orientation to the Christian life in the modern world and the primary task of the Fathers of Vatican II was to initiate this updating and adaptation. It is still too early to say with precision what the emerging spirituality of this age will be, for the Church is still in the process of renewal. Nevertheless, certain elements are already rather well defined, while others must still stand experimentation and the test of time. And throughout this period of adjustment and emergence, two extremes should be avoided: first, to cling tenaciously to outmoded and irrelevant practices, for this would be resisting the Holy Spirit; secondly, impatiently to run ahead of the Holy Spirit with a man-made spirituality, instead of being guided and led by the Spirit.

Some of the characteristics of contemporary spirituality are definitely a return to the Gospel sources, as was requested by Vatican II; other aspects are modern innovations or adaptations that respond to the needs of the contemporary Christian. And one of the surest signs that the emerging spirituality promises to be an authentic Gospel spirituality is evident from the first characteristic: it is centered in Jesus Christ. Thanks to the various prayer movements, the liturgical revival, and the innovations in retreats and spiritual exercises, many of the faithful have re-discovered Christ and have experienced the power of Jesus in their lives. They see him not merely as the source and model of Christian holiness—which he surely is—but also as the one in whose presence they should live, the one to whom they should give witness in their lives, and the one who presents himself to them in their neighbor. They understand that to be a Christian means to be profoundly identified with Jesus Christ, now passed into the glory of his paschal mystery. Through Christ, they hope to find identification with the Christian community and with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Together with the Christocentric aspect, we find in contemporary spirituality a biblical and doctrinal orientation. The biblical renaissance began long before Vatican II, but today we are reaping the fruitful harvest of those who were pioneers in biblical study and research. Thanks to their efforts, the revealed truths are more easily grasped in all their clarity, while the mystery of Christ has become

more meaningful to us because of their historical and exegetical study of his life and teaching. In the field of doctrine, we note a new emphasis on theological method. Christians today, for the most part, are not attracted to the purely academic or speculative theology (though this has its place in the Church); rather, they want a theology to live by, one that is both practical and pastoral. This accounts in great part for the renewed interest in practical moral teaching and in the theology of the spiritual life.

Another characteristic of the emerging spirituality is that it is "incarnational" rather than eschatological; it is a spirituality of involvement rather than withdrawal; it is more of a secular than a monastic spirituality. Throughout history the Church has alternated between the city and the desert, without becoming totally committed to one at the expense of the other. Today, however, Christians are again seeking a genuine Christian humanism and are manifesting concern for the world rather than distrust of the world. The contemporary Christian sees the world as basically good and he sees himself as part of that world; it is his area of witness and apostolate and he must be a part of it. This is especially noticeable in the rapid growth of secular institutes and in the charitable dedication of Mother Theresa of India. True, the eschatological element is always present in Christian spirituality but not so much today as a vigilant waiting for the end of the world and the return of the Lord, but emphasizing that the Church is *in* the world, though it must never be *of* the world. Christ stated that his followers are not of this world, and in the Church this is strikingly manifested by those men and women who dedicate their lives to the prayer, penance and solitude of the contemplative life.

Together with a Christian appreciation of the world, the contemporary spirituality is logically characterized as being social or communal rather than personal and individualistic. In former times the emphasis in spiritual writing was on the individual person, his need to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, to repent of his sins and to grow in personal holiness and virtue; today, however, Christians are told to commit themselves to apostolic and charitable works at the very beginning and to sanctify themselves by their good works. The social aspect of modern spirituality is a logical consequence of man's greater solidarity, his discovery of the effectiveness of working as a team, and perhaps his latent fear of the loneliness of solitude. The community emphasis has already produced powerful changes in the life of the Church: greater participation in the liturgy, a more intimate bond of fraternal love in religious communities, a sense of collegiality among priests and bishops. This has been accompanied by a greater demand for autonomy, but not individual autonomy; rather, the autonomy of the local community, be it parish or diocese or religious community.

Another characteristic of post-Vatican II spirituality is that it is eminently apostolic; it is, in a good sense, a spirituality of action. There has always been a tension between the active and the contemplative lives and in the past the emphasis was usually on the latter. Indeed, Pope Pius XII warned against "the heresy of action." Obviously, any extreme is to be avoided, but today we are realizing that rather than accept the dialectic between the active and contemplative aspects of life, it would be much more beneficial to relieve the tension by striking the proper balance between the two. Theologically there is no doubt that contemplative activity must take precedence over action, not only because it is an end in itself, but because the interior or contemplative aspect of the Christian life is the soul and the source of the apostolate. It is in this perspective that Vatican II has advised diocesan priests to sanctify themselves by the very works of their ministry and has reminded active religious that their apostolate pertains to the very essence of their religious life.<sup>15</sup> Today's Christian understands very well that the love of neighbor, commanded by Christ, impels him to be concerned about his neighbor and to serve his neighbor. The various campaigns for social justice and human rights are evidence of the awakened consciousness of the Christian laity, clergy and religious that they have an obligation to work for the brotherhood of mankind and the reign of peace and justice. Together with this apostolic characteristic, flowing from love of neighbor, there is also a deeper and more delicate respect for the individual person, and a greater effort to relate to others on the level of interpersonal communication.

Finally, the new spirituality balances the commitment to apostolate with the practice of personal mental prayer. There is a deep desire in modern Christians to experience the divine, to make the divine presence a reality in their lives. During and immediately after Vatican Council II there was a definite trend away from personal prayer in favor of communal prayer; in fact, some persons explicitly rejected personal mental prayer. Now, however, we are witnessing an increasing appreciation for the interior life of prayer, and the Pentecostal Movement is a striking example of this.

Reviewing the characteristics of the spirituality of the contemporary Christian, we cannot help but feel optimistic and secure about the future. If we can discern rightly the signs of the times and if we can respond with love to the needs of others, we can, with God's help, come closer to the perfect fulfillment of Christ's twofold precept of charity: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, and with all your mind and strength; and love your neighbor as I loved you.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 12; *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 8.

# THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

By

Magin Borrajo, O.P.

1. **Concept of rights.** It is very important before we speak of the Right to Life to understand the concept of right. Often people confuse what is legal with what is right. They think that rights are societal. Different societies have different rights. So I think it is very important to make clear from the very start that morality and legality are not synonymous. An action is legal or illegal insofar as it is, or is not, in accordance with civil law, i.e., with the particular laws that a country or government promulgates or introduces at any given moment. An action is moral or immoral in so far as it is, or is not, in accordance with right reason, or in conformity with human nature which is part of the eternal law of God.

It is a well established fact that many people do not seem keen on admitting this distinction. They believe, so it seems, that once an action has been declared legal, it may be carried out without any possible scruple of conscience. I don't think one needs to reflect much in order to realize that this is not so. Government or civil laws can be unreasonable, unjust, and therefore inhuman and immoral. For example in Nazi Germany there were laws authorizing the execution or extermination of millions of Jews. These actions were legal, but not moral. In the United States prior to January 22, 1973 it was illegal to procure an abortion except on medical advice for the purpose of saving the mother's life; after January 22, 1973 (with Jane Roe et al., *Appelantes v. Henry Wade*) the Supreme Court has legalized abortion, that is, it has rejected the humanity of the fetus and its right to life and has given unbridled license for its destruction for up to six months after conception. Therefore, those committing abortions for whatever reason within the first six months of pregnancy will not commit any crime or legal offense. But this is not to say that those who commit abortion are doing something which is human, reasonable, right and moral. Whoever commits abortion, even if it is legal, will commit a crime against humanity and against God.

The right to life is rooted in human dignity. This dignity is not bestowed on persons by the family or society or the state. Rather, it makes a claim on the persons and societies. This human dignity

---

\* Addressed given to the Medical Society during the Medicine Week, Sept. 19, 1977, Olongapo, Philippines.

is the foundation of all moral obligation and of all human rights. Humans are "individuals of rational nature", and what humans ought to do must not contradict what they are — human nature, human dignity, human rights. As long as there is actual or potential for meaningful "humanhood", individuals of rational nature are to be respected and cared for. Allowing one to suffer harm, when one can easily prevent it, is unworthy of humans, and is lack of respect. The minimum a human being ought to do for another human being is to recognize and respect his rights. The right to a meaningful human life is a personal and fundamental right.<sup>1</sup>

**2. Respect for Human Life.** Most societies value life after birth and refuse infanticide. But with regard to life in the womb different societies have different laws. In some societies the fetus is only "a bit of vegetating unborn matter" that counts for nothing, or "literally part of the mother's body" that she can dispose of as she wishes. In other societies the fetus is the subject of rights, like any other person. Whether the fetus claims its rights or not, to violate its rights is lack of respect. And since the right to life is a personal and fundamental right, abortion is a crime against life, or a "slaughter of the innocent unborn".

When it comes to individuals there is still a wider range of opinions with regard to life in the womb. Some people have taken an increasingly liberal attitude toward abortion. Others have consistently campaigned against abortion and condemned it as a terrible crime.

We mentioned at the beginning that legality and morality do not necessarily coincide. Much less to coincide with morality, the liberal clamors and opinions of individuals or social movements against the right to life of the unborn. Moral matters cannot be settled by statistics or polling people. The right to life is antecedent to birth, given by God, independent of our subjectivity or opinions, inviolable and inalienable.

**3. Respect for the Unborn.** In relation to the unborn and abortion there are many biological, philosophical and theological

<sup>1</sup>Yale Task Force on Population Ethics, "Moral Claims, Human Rights, and Population Policies", *Theological Studies*, March 1974, Vol. 35, pp. 83-113.

—Frankenna W., *Ethics*, Prentice Hall Inc., Second Edition, (1973) pp. 48-52.

—Rawls John, *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, (1973), pp. 440, 396, 178.

—S. Theol., II-II, q. 60, a. 5 ad 1 et 2; *Ibid.*, q. 75, a. 2 ad 2; I, q. 29, aa. 1, 3 et ad 4.

questions which are very relevant, like: When does **life** begin? When does **human life** begin? Is the fertilized ovum a human being? Is the fertilized ovum after implantation a **human person** with all the rights and privileges like any other person? When does the fertilized ovum become viable? Or when is the human soul infused into the body?

One does not have to go through the intricacies of all these interdisciplinary questions to understand that abortion is lack of respect for the unborn and that it is a crime. From the moment the fertilized ovum becomes viable, normally when implanted in the uterus, the "conceptum", or the result of human conception, carries the **genetic** code of the human species, and this "conceptum" is in the process of becoming potentially fully human and worthy of respect.

The Catholic doctrine on this point is and has always been clear and unanimously defended: "From the moment of conception life must be guarded with supreme care" (Gs., 51). Human life has intrinsic dignity and our mission is to respect it and preserve it, and not to assault it and destroy it. Parents are co-creators with God of the "new life", but ultimately life is received from God and belongs to Him, and not "even to the person himself", and much less does it belong to the parents, or to the State (Ibid. 51). To kill an innocent human being, even at his own request, is wrong. Is it possible to imagine a more innocent victim than the unborn?

Catholics must oppose abortion as immoral. They should also keep in mind that in countries where there are laws allowing or requiring abortion they are not obliged to obey. Civil laws which oppose God's law do not bind. In the words of St. Peter "it is necessary to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

Those who obtain abortion, those who persuade others to have an abortion, and those who perform the abortion procedure are guilty of breaking God's law. The Catholic Church in order to emphasize the seriousness of such a crime also excommunicates both those who undergo, and those who perform abortions.

The fetus does not only have the right to life, but also, like any other human being, has the right to bodily integrity, and to the means which are necessary and suitable for the proper development of life (PT., n. 11).

In this context I would like to say a word of caution on fetal research. Can a mother who opted for abortion give consent to experiment with the fetus? Fetal research **in utero**, i.e., with living fetuses, is allowed only when it is for the benefit of the fetus itself,

not for the benefit of others. Only therapeutic fetal research is allowed; other than that fetal research is unethical, because it amounts to treat or to use human beings as means to an end.

**4. Respect for Life after Birth.** Should every born life be protected and cared for? Who should survive when not all can live? Is it ever right to displace a poor-prognosis patient A in order to provide intensive care for a better prognosis patient B? Is it ever right to withdraw life-support devices from a clearly diagnoses, poor-prognosis patient? Is it ever right not to resuscitate an infant at birth, for example, the severely abnormal? Isn't keeping the terminally ill alive more cruel than letting them die? Is there much distinction between passive and active euthanasia? Could it be that withholding care is more cruel than actively easing or ushering people into death? Who makes the decision to treat or not to treat in these death and life situations and on what grounds? How do we harmonize the right to life with the right to die? These are some of the many moral dilemmas we encounter when caring for the newly born, the abnormal, the terminally ill, and the aged.<sup>2</sup>

Since I do not have the time to deal with all these dilemmas in detail I will limit myself to formulate and explain some general principles which serve as basis of medical decisions. These principles can be reduced to three: Bias for life, Respect for Persons and the Principle of Justice.

**First Principle:** Life is a basic moral right, it has intrinsic dignity and value, the substrate and core for the realization of all the other values. The decisions of life and death nature should be made with bias for life.

**Meaningful life.** When we speak of bias for life the focus of attention is not physical survival or biological life. We refer to a life with an **actual or potential** for a meaningful "humanhood", a life in which at least minimal relationships can be realized, like being capable of conveying and receiving love, having actual or potential for consciousness, inwardness, autonomy, freedom, privacy, etc.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Jonsen A.R. *Et al*, "Critical Issues in Newborn Intensive Care: A Conference Report and Policy Proposal." *Pediatrics*, 55 (June 6, 1975), pp. 756-768.

— Duff, R.S. and Campbell, "Moral Ethical Dilemmas in Special Care Nursery." *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 289 (October 25, 1973), pp. 890-894.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsey, *The Patient as Person*, Yale University Press (1975). "On Caring for the Dying", pp. 113-164.

— McCormick R. "To Save or Let Die.", *JAMA* (July 8, 1974), pp. 172-176.

**Second Principle:** Each individual possesses moral rights and is entitled to be treated with respect.

Respect for persons implies an attempt to recognize others as possessing "I-ness", capable of being self-affirming self-determining, and rule-following. Respect implies appreciation of the uniqueness of the individual, shows sympathy for him, and "agape" towards him. Respect for persons places value in individual freedom and helps to maximize human fulfillment. Respect for individuals implies reluctance to intrude with their privacy and their "style of life". Respect for persons minimizes harm, forbids "unconsented touching", and unfair discrimination. Respect for persons means regarding the other's ends as one's own and never treating them as means to an end.<sup>4</sup>

**Third Principle:** When conflicts arise concerning the application of the above two principles, competing claims should be adjudicated by appeal to the principle of justice.

**Justice** means treating "similar cases similarly". Dissimilar treatment of similar cases is injustice. Justice means impartiality. Exceptions or unequal treatment has to be justified by morally relevant reasons. All human beings have equal intrinsic dignity and value. Unequal treatment based on color, race, blood, intelligence, sex, social rank is unjust, and morally unjustifiable.<sup>5</sup>

In the existential dilemma of being and doing humans never quite meet the ideal. But as humans we are obliged to strive for the ideal. The following are some concrete guidelines derived from the above principles which will enlighten us in the process of making decisions.

### **Ethical Guidelines**

1a. Every person possesses intrinsic dignity and value that entitles him to medical and social care necessary to effect his well-being.

2a. The Physician is never a technical adviser but always a fellow counselor to his patient.<sup>6</sup> The Physician offers his patient

<sup>4</sup> Downie, R.S., and Telfer, Elizabeth, **Respect for Persons**, Schocken Books, New York, 1970, pp. 13-37; 47-64; 83-92.

<sup>5</sup> Frankenna W. *Ibid.* pp. 49-52; Frankenna, **Social Justice** (edited by Brandt R.), A Spectrum Book, Prentice-Hall Inc. "The Concept of Social Justice", pp. 1-31.

— Outaka, Gene, "Social Justice and Equal Access to Health Care". **The Journal of Religious Ethics**, Vol. 2, Spring 1974.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsey Paul, **Patient as Person**, pp. xi-xvii.

the best medical treatment he knows of to effect his cure and well-being.

3a. Medicine must always be an attempt to cure". The Physician's principle is "Do not harm".<sup>7</sup>

4a. When it is impossible to cure, care and comfort should be given to the patient. The best interest of the patient (rational being) is not necessarily ensured by **curing** (when a meaningful human life is not possible) but by **caring**.<sup>8</sup>

As humans we face unavoidable future finitude. We inescapably reach the term. We are all dying everyday. It is the moment of death that we don't know. There will be times that it will be obvious to all—the doctor, staff, nurses, etc. that death is inevitable. The patients themselves know it, and develop tranquility. In these instances "non treatment might be the best treatment." "Living without life is more frightful than death."<sup>9</sup>

Doctors must keep in mind the quality of life they are preserving. Often, rather than prolonging life, they are prolonging the agony, or mercilessly executing patients over long months! In these instances it is the love that we give and receive that counts. It is better to visit with the patient, let the relatives stay with him, keep him comfortable, and let him die with dignity.

5a. When the decision to withhold or withdraw treatment is considered, the expected outcome of this decision must be death, not simply further debilitation of the patient.

There is a difference between allowing people to die and directly killing them; between pulling out support and doing something actively to put people to death; between active and passive euthanasia. Active euthanasia is not allowed. It is the termination of life by a commission (injecting air in the veins or drugs in serious dosage, etc.). In passive euthanasia, you make a judgment that medical skills are no longer useful, and let people die. In instances of pain as much medicine (pain killer drugs) may be given to alleviate this pain as it is necessary, even though the patient's life is thereby shortened.

<sup>7</sup> Hippocratic Oath; AMA Principles of Medical Ethics; World Medical Association Code (1949).

<sup>8</sup> Dumphy E. "On Caring for the Patient with Cancer", *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 295 (August 6, 1976), pp. 313-319; McCormick, *Ibid*; "The Freedom to Die" by Daniel Maguire, *Bio-Ethics* (Edited by Shannon Thomas), Paulist Press (1976), pp. 171-181.

<sup>9</sup> Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, McMillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1974, pp. 1-10; 269-279.

d. Random patient selection or some sort of human lottery.<sup>10</sup>

These are some of the ethical principles to guide Physicians in life and death decisions. While in the abstract these principles are clear; however, in concrete situations there will be doubts and possible mistakes. One needs the courage to admit them and to start all over again.

We must also keep in mind that life is very valuable and precious, and death very certain and inevitable. Dying is a part of living. We are dying everyday. We just don't know the exact moment. We all die alone. In our aloneness we need love and care. The dying face an unknown future. Courage comes from without and from within. The dying must never be pushed. They must be loved and accepted no matter where they are at. The most precious moments of life are experienced with others. In these moments it is the love that we give and receive that counts. All the other things come too soon and they are too terrible to pass.

I should like to conclude with a quotation from *Le Pensee* of Pascal: "If in the madness of passion and in the wild commotion of my life, I forget you (God), do not forget me." And if we should forget everything else, may God make us understand what it means to be human and to appreciate the value and meaning of life. For as it is written in the Psalms:

It was you, God, who created my very being  
and put me in my mother's womb;  
for all these mysteries I thank you:  
for the wonder of myself  
and for the wonder of your works. (Ps. 139, 13)

<sup>10</sup> Ramsey, *Ibid.*, "Choosing how to choose: Patient and Sparse Medical Resources", pp. 239-266; Outaka Gene, *Ibid.*; Childress James, *Bioethics* (edited by Shannon), 1976, "Who shall live when not all can Live?", pp. 397-413.

# MYTH AND REALITY: CHURCH MARRIAGE TRIBUNALS IN THE PHILIPPINES

By

**Florencio Testera, O.P.**

For a Roman Catholic couple who want to end a rocky marriage there has only been one avenue within the Church: a decree of nullity. As critics have repeatedly pointed out, that avenue has been tortuous and expensive, often leading from local hearings at way up to the Sacred Rota, the Church's supreme marriage tribunal. In recent years, Pope Paul VI has streamlined the cumbersome process, allowing more decisions in the local level and eliminating the legal delays that could drag a case out for as long as twenty years. But despite Vatican attempts to limit legal fees, costs at the Roman Rota remain high, sometimes running into thousands of dollars and making annulments available mainly to the prosperous.

The above paragraph is a news report. For the moment, its source is immaterial. But it gives an obviously somber picture of the marriage tribunals in the Church. Indeed, a derogatory opinion about the Church's tribunals is widespread not only among Catholic laymen but also among many clerics, as the former and the latter are not sufficiently conversant with the real situation in matrimonial courts.

But is the condition of matrimonial tribunals in the Church, specifically those in the Philippines, as bleak and dreary as the above press release and frequent hush-hush gossips of run-of-the-mill Catholics would make us believe? This is a basic and relevant question, for Church's tribunals are not merely legal institutions. They developed out of a theological need to settle a doubt about the existence of a sacramental bond in a given case. The role of the tribunal, therefore, is to uphold truth and administer justice. But can married couples expect truth and justice from tribunals like those pictured to us by newspaper reports and well-nigh common public opinion?

The present article will try to answer this question with reference to Church marriage tribunals in the Philippines. For, indeed, a married Filipino Catholic has the right to be well-informed on the

possibility of settlement through the services of the Catholic matrimonial courts, if and when — God forbid! — and his marriage would founder. Is it true that these courts discriminate in favor of the chosen few in the big money? Or rather, can a “broke” Catholic avail himself of the services of local tribunals and with reasonable dispatch? Many Filipino Catholics are anxious to be told authoritatively the truth about these matters, the knowledge of which may surface under the most improbable circumstances.

### Why Go to Rome to Annul Your Marriage

Definitely, the Filipino Catholic does not need to make a trip to Rome to seek for a declaration of nullity of a given unfortunate marriage. However, this may be a surprising though good news for many a plain Catholic who has been bombarded with much irresponsible talk and reporting to the contrary. Even some Catholic priests have succumbed to this black propaganda, and discourage couples seeking to solve their problems from going to the Church marriage courts, on the false assumption that perforce such problems should eventually reach Rome through a tortuous, protracted and costly process. Were such rumors true, a gross injustice would be done to scores of Filipino Catholics who will not be able to have their marriage cases adjudicated at all.

In truth and in fact, however petitions for marriage annulment are rarely referred or appealed to Rome. The Matrimonial Court of Manila, for instance, has processed during the last four years something over two hundred cases, without having had to refer one of them to Rome. Of course any Catholic in this country or elsewhere can appeal to Rome — or to the Pope — in case of any grievance.<sup>1</sup> It is likewise correct to say that the final settlement of cases of non-consummation<sup>2</sup> and of the “Privilege of the Faith”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Codex Iuris Canonici, c. 1569. Hereinafter cited as CIC.

<sup>2</sup> A consummated marriage is absolutely indissoluble and admits of no exception (CIC, cc. 1015,2; 1118). It is only when the consummation of the marriage is wanting that the principle of indissolubility admits of certain exceptions.

The consummation of a marriage is affected by the conjugal act, suitable in itself for the purpose of generation. Consummation, therefore, according to its physiological elements, implies penetration of the vagina by the male organ and the emission of semen within it. Physical virginity is not always a proof of non-consummation. If the spouses have cohabited together after the celebration of marriage, the consummation is presumed until the contrary is proved (CIC, c. 1015,1).

<sup>3</sup> The *Privilege of the Faith* in the strict sense is the so called *Pauline Privilege* (CIC, c. 1120), though in a wider sense includes many other related cases not clearly covered by the *Pauline Privilege* (CIC, c. 1125). It is known as the *Pauline Privilege* because its historico-theological

is decided in Rome.<sup>4</sup> But non-consummation cases are rather uncommon, and those of the "Privilege of the Faith" are rare in a country with a predominantly Catholic population such as the Philippines.

In practice, the Roman Rota,<sup>5</sup> the highest marriage tribunal based in Rome, acts ordinarily as the final court of appeals or Supreme Court in marriage cases only when the First and Second Instance Courts have failed to reach an agreement as to the validity or nullity of a given marriage and the need arises to break the deadlock.<sup>6</sup> But whenever the suit can be settled locally in the First and Second Instance Courts, there is no point or need in elevating it to the attention of the Roman Rota.

The services of the Court of First Instance, called Diocesan Tribunals, are supposedly to be made available in every diocese, for every diocese should by law have one of such. The same is also true of Second Instance Courts, called Metropolitan Tribunals, which should be established in every archdiocese of the country.<sup>7</sup> A rigid screening of applications by the Diocesan Tribunal will render extremely remote the need of a further appeal to the final decision to the Roman Rota.

Which are the steps, then, a Catholic should take to enter an annulment plea?

---

foundations are to be found in one of Paul's epistles (I Cor., 7:12-15). The ancient teaching, practice and legislation of the Church confirm the existence of the Privilege, which though promulgated by Paul, is considered as of divine origin. As outlined by Paul himself, a valid marriage between unbaptized persons (infidels) may be dissolved by virtue of the *Privilege of the Faith* whenever one of the parties is converted to the Christian faith through baptism and the other spouse departs from or refuses to cohabit peacefully and constitutes a constant danger of the spiritual wellbeing of the baptized party.

<sup>4</sup> CIC., c. 1962; *Constitutio* "Regimini Ecclesiae Universae". AAS., LIX (1967), nn. 34.35.

<sup>5</sup> The *Roman Rota* is one of the three tribunals of the Roman Curia. Its origin go back to the thirteenth century. The cases at the Rota are normally heard by a panel of three judges or auditors, who are appointed by rotation, hence the name of Rota. The Rota functions normally as a court of last instance — Supreme Court — though oftentimes it handles cases in the second instance when they have been lodged directly with the Pope without passing through the appellate court (CIC., c. 1599).

<sup>6</sup> For a marriage to be declared null and void, the affirmative sentence of two tribunals is needed (CIC, c. 1987). The petitioner, therefore, is not free to remarry until the second favorable sentence has been handed down. It is only when the two tribunals fail to arrive at a concurrent decision that an appeal may be lodged with the Roman Rota.

<sup>7</sup> CIC., c. 1594.

He or she should show that there have been an essential defect at the time of the wedding, and then leave everything up to the Diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal, the Church's counterpart of the secular Court of First Instance. A case in point is that of Gee.

She was merely sixteen when she eloped and middle-aisled it with a youth one year older. At twenty, she was already a frustrated young female seemingly doomed to a life of solitariness. Her marriage had lasted only a couple of months. She wanted to find a solution to her problem that would quiet the qualms of her conscience and open the way for a new and meaningful family life. But she regarded a decision on her case as too costly since the final sentence would have to emanate from Rome. She simply gave up. She did not have the money or the patience for such a costly, complicated and far-flung process.

But her hopes resurged when casually she confided her problem to a friendly priest at a local university. Gee will tell the rest of her story:

"The good father listened attentively to me and said: 'I find your case most interesting. I'll do whatever I can to help you. So you don't need to look so sad. Cheer up! Offhand, I tell you that you can cherish high hopes. Just go home and jot down on a piece of paper the highlights of this conversation. Dig a bit into your past. Sleep on your problem and see me again tomorrow! I stayed till late that night to put in black and white my personal history. I read it and re-read it the following morning, and it seemed like a novel or the script of a movie. But I was the heroine and no other else.

"After he has read it, the good padre drafted a petition addressed to the Matrimonial Court of Manila. 'Read this carefully', he enjoined, handing it to me, 'and let me know if the draft tallies in every detail with reality'. A few days later, I signed the petition or bill of complaint, and together with a list of possible witnesses who might consent and be able to shed some light on my behalf, together with my baptismal and marriage certificates, it was mailed to the Metropolitan Tribunal of Manila, and, of course, the gist was a prayer for a declaration of nullity of my marriage, on the ground of lack of judicial discretion or immaturity of judgment on my part and on that of my partner.

"A couple of months later the postman delivered a note from the presiding judge of the Matrimonial Tribunal inviting me to a preliminary hearing of my case. Then and there, at the San Carlos Seminary, Makati, Metro Manila, where the tribunal is based, the

date for the first formal hearing was set. My parents and witnesses and myself would be heard on that date, while my husband and his witnesses will appear the following day.

"The case rested for a couple of months and then the summons came. I found myself in the courtroom answering questions about my case. All in all, the persons sitting on the tribunal bench were, beside myself and my lawyer, three judges who were all priests, another priest called the Defender of the Bond, and a middle-aged woman who took our declarations on tape. In a couple of hours, the ordeal was over. The good priest greeted me and said: "Go home now and take a rest. Leave everything in my hands. But about money or a possible trip to Rome. It won't be necessary. Get me, No?"

### One Needs Not Spend a Fortune to Seek an Annulment

Church matrimonial courts have been denounced time and again as elitist for the services of the rich. A noted columnist of a local daily once wrote that "Church leaders have been granting annulments to moneyed people and remarrying them to new spouses."

Such irresponsible statements are to blame for the widespread belief among the rank and file of Catholics that Church Tribunals are mainly for the rich while the poor have little if any chance to secure an annulment, since they can not defray the prohibitive fees asked by matrimonial courts.

Nothing is farther from the truth. Church tribunals serve the rich and poor alike. Of course, it stands to reason that the moneyed clientele should defray the expenses of their suits, yet such is just a modest amount and never a fortune. On the other hand, the poor will be served *gratis et amore*, or they can give whatever little they would like.

The presiding judge of the Manila Matrimonial Tribunal did not mince words in his answer to a query on this subject: "The tribunal charges variable fees in the sense that the expenses depend on the number of hearings, the transcript of records and court-expert intervention if so needed. Hence it would be hard to pronounce categorically how much a given case would cost by way of procedural expenses prior to the termination thereof. To date, charges range from P300.00 to P2,500.00. But **frankly** the Tribunal has **not** the least difficulty in accepting pauper cases: this is evidenced by our books. Hence, no problem really in this angle."

The fees are computed as per expenses incurred during the proceedings and not according to an arbitrary rule of thumb such as the ability to pay. The funds raised through fees are used to defray court expenses and to compensate the working personnel. The Manila Tribunal has fixed the monthly compensation of two lay secretaries at P400.00 each, with free meals and snacks to boot. The priest-judges are given P30.00 per sentence pronounced, if there is money available. The presiding judge, the defender of the bond and the notary receive each P10.00 per hearing, on condition that there be money left in the till.

The applicants are not required to make cash advances. There are no charges for cases lost, neither for suite dismissed after the preliminary hearing, or dropped in the course of the trial. Furthermore, court accounts at the Manila Tribunal show that only one-fourth of the clients are paying ones at an average fee of P1,000.00 per terminated case. Another fourth are entirely gratuitous cases, while the remaining two-fourths, though not indigents, are not bothered with the settlement of fees. Even the average fees of the paying higher bracket are quite modest in comparison with fees charged in the civil courts for similar cases.

The foregoing data bely the popular misconception that Church tribunals serve mostly the affluent or rich. From them it is evident that only one fourth of all matrimonial suits processed dealt with high society persons.

The actuaciones of the Manila tribunal are in perfect accordance with the universal law and practice of the Church.<sup>8</sup> The Church, keenly aware of the need of making possible the actual and efficient attainment of justice under the circumstances, has always been solicitous for the protection of the poor who are unable to bear the costs of legal proceedings. To this end ecclesiastical law provides a double remedy, viz., that of **gratuitous legal assistance** to all poor or indigent litigants, and that of **redction of costs** for those who are midway between the rich and the poor.<sup>9</sup> In both cases the services of the Counsel or Attorney are free of charge. It is the duty of the presiding judge to appoint such an attorney duly registered with the court to give gratuitous patronage or assistance to those whom the tribunal may extend this favor.<sup>10</sup> An advocate appointed for such a gratuitous service may not with-

<sup>8</sup> CIC., cc. 1914.

<sup>9</sup> CIC., cc. 1914-1916; *Instructio* "Provida Mater", (AAS, XXVIII, pp. 312-370), arts., 232-240.

<sup>10</sup> "Provida Mater," art., 237.

draw from the performance of his duty, nor will he be allowed to render it half-heartedly, except for a reason duly approved by the presiding officer.<sup>11</sup>

While advocates or attorneys are usually free to deal privately with their clients, they are, however, forbidden to haggle for high or exorbitant fees.<sup>12</sup> In fact, attorney's fees must be in accord with the official scale fixed in the regional meeting of bishops.<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after the Italian people ratified civil divorce in a national referendum, the Vatican sought to correct the problems of costs of trials by clamping a fixed ceiling on fees for the Italian Church tribunals. Lawyers' honoraria for annulment cases would henceforth fluctuate from US\$255 to 510; trial costs, from US\$425 to US\$595. All lawyers were required to sign an affidavit under oath to conform to this scale, and, moreover, they can not collect directly from their clients, but through the court itself.<sup>14</sup>

The Italian lawyers an élite group of lay and clerical canon law experts registered with the various ecclesiastical tribunals, immediately denounced the system as truly humiliating and unprofessional, since they would no longer be permitted to negotiate directly with their clients.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the aggrieved lawyers saw in the new system a means for government tax-collecting agencies to have a clear insight into their incomes, shows that lay lawyers rather than priests were over-concerned with the amount and collection of fees.

### But One Will Surely Need Oodles of Patience

An applicant for a marriage annulment in the church tribunals needs not wait very long for action, especially if there are sufficient grounds for a judicial process. But whoever the applicant may be, he or she should be forewarned that the court proceedings will most likely take quite a time, and that he should brace self with patience and persistence.

<sup>11</sup> CIC., c. 1916; "Provida", art., 240.

<sup>12</sup> CIC., c. 1665; "Provida", art., 54.

<sup>13</sup> CIC., c. 1909; "Provida", art., 233.

<sup>14</sup> *Supremum Signaturae Apostolicae Tribunal. Litterae Circulares* 14 oct., 1973. Cfr. *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici*, XXVIII (1972), p. 382-385.

<sup>15</sup> Three public statements issued by various groups of Italian lawyers and university professors describe the new provisions on the payment of legal fees as a dangerous innovation in procedural canon law, and incompatible with fundamental human rights. The lawyers demanded that the new rules be modified without delay. Cfr. *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* XXVIII (1972), pp. 389-395; XXIX (1973), pp. 146-152.

The question of a quite trying duration is possibly the only valid objection against the complex processing of marriage claims in the courts of the Church at all levels, including the Roman Rota. Thus, there have been a world-wide dissatisfaction in this regard which gave way to a veritable deluge of complaints and requests for pertinent reforms.<sup>16</sup>

Bishops Conferences, canon lawyers, theologians and a great many lay people have all echoed the urgency of the problem.<sup>17</sup> In places where broken marriages have proliferated to unmanageable levels, the need for expediting marriage processes has overshadowed the pastoral concern to become a question of plain justice. In the USA, for instance, where allegedly 2,100,000 Catholic couples or 4,200,000 individual Catholics are living either within a state of invalid wedlock or in obligatory isolation, the dismally slack performance of matrimonial courts due to numerous delays is regarded as a gross injustice to the uncounted Catholic couples who can not possibly have their cases adjudicated in Catholic Church Tribunals.<sup>18</sup>

The Philippines fares no better in this regard. Authoritative statistics show that in this country, too, the number of applicants for a decree of marriage annulment is on the rise. Records available at the Manila Metropolitan Tribunal state that there were 167 applicants in 1974, while in the first half of 1975 there were 333. With only one collegiate tribunal actually functioning in the Archdiocese of Manila it is inevitable that a big backlog that grows more and more be the order of the day.

The universal clamor for the reform of the judicial system has not gone unheeded. The Church, after taking cognizance of the problem, has introduced in the procedural laws various substantial innovations that have resulted in the shortening of the time-factor in the settlements of marriage claims or suits.<sup>19</sup> The **Motu Proprio** "Causas Matrimoniales", of March 28, 1971, beside cutting in time-consuming technicalities, introduces certain modifications on the constitution or organization of ecclesiastical tribunals and on the judicial process to the end of expediting the matrimonial process itself.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Basset, W. W., "Divorce and Remarriage". *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CLVII (1970), p. 99; *Communicationes*, 1970, p. 103.

<sup>17</sup> Gordon, I., "De Nimia Processuum Matrimonialium Duratione". *Periodica*, LVIII (1969), pp. 491-493.

<sup>18</sup> Pospishil, V. J., *Divorce and Remarriage: Towards a New Catholic Teaching*. Herder, N.Y., 1967, p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> *Motu Proprio* "Causas Matrimoniales", AAS, LVIII (1971), p. 441.

<sup>20</sup> The most important reforms introduced by "Causas Matrimoniales" refer to the additional number of tribunals; to the permission of having in special cases a one-judge tribunal instead of the collegiate court of three

The results of such reforms were promptly felt.<sup>21</sup> However, the same old complaint has remained in the minds of many people; and indeed the new reforms do not seem adequate enough to meet the tempo of modern life and to speed up the administration of justice. And if the legal innovations or reforms can not cope with the gravity of the situation, then one can not but ask whether the total or partial failure be due to the system itself which simply does not work and should be scrapped? Or is it a mere functional defect in this or that tribunal due to the shortage of qualified personnel? Or still could not the blame be laid on the inefficiency of the court personnel, and on the half-hearted cooperation by the parties and witnesses themselves? In short, what makes the judicial proceedings slow, dilatory and lengthy? This is a moot question.

Before any attempt is made to find a suitable solution, it should be said that ecclesiastical law itself frowns on lengthy procedures. Canon Law stresses the duty devolving on judges and tribunals to expedite trials, and invests them with the necessary powers to do so. This is done to prevent unnecessary and costly delays that may cause considerable damage to the parties involved. To this effect, the law sets a time limit of two years for trials filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI), while the trial in the appellate court should not last more than a year. However, speed is not haste, for a hurried-up trial might result in injustice. Hence, speed is to be desired and pursued *salva iustitia*, — without prejudice to justice.<sup>22</sup>

Any marriage suit, therefore, should be tried and decided within the three-year period laid down by law. Three years are not a very long time inasmuch as the final settlement of all marriage claims involve a mandatory appeal to, and a sentence by the appellate court. Neither the three-year period seems long in comparison with the duration of civil suits of similar nature. But the common practice by civil courts must not set the pattern for Church courts or a justification for delays or tardiness in ecclesiastical trials. For, indeed, tardiness in settling marriage cases in ecclesiastical courts is more harmful than in civil courts, since ecclesiastical courts are more concerned with spiritual values, and lengthy trials in such courts usually result in spiritual harm and loss to the spouses who are often compelled to lead a life of sin as the only solution to the psychological frustrations which stem from the urgency of getting a new partner, or even from the

---

judges; to the enlistment of lay people for the tribunal work; to the new form of appeals; to the slight extension of the scope of summary processes, etc.

<sup>21</sup> *Monitor Ecclesiasticus*, 1973, pp. 3-76.

<sup>22</sup> CIC., c. 1620.

necessity to raise a family in a legitimate second union. All these factors create an atmosphere of hostility towards the judiciary system, and scare the spouses away from the tribunal and justice.

That Church Law is intended to expedite trials, to finish them as quickly as possible, is shown by the immemorial practice of excluding from its judiciary system those time-consuming procedures that are traditionally responsible for undue delays in civil courts, such as cross-examinations, public hearings, etc.

Furthermore, ecclesiastical law empowers the judge to stop any attempt to introduce in the procedure dilatory tactics and even evidence, such as new witnesses, documents, experts and the like, when they are manifestly brought in for no other purpose than to postpone the sentence, unless such additional evidence be required because of the lack or insufficiency or other proofs.<sup>23</sup> With the same purview, during the period of investigation, the judge must assign to each party a prudential period of time during which he or she may or must present the proofs that are necessary for the defense or furtherance of his or her interests.

Despite all these positive and concrete steps on the part of law, and the new reforms introduced later in an earnest effort to accelerate the settlement of marriage claims, it still remains a disturbing fact that Church tribunals the world over often overshoot the three-year maximum limit laid down by law. Even the Roman Rota, regarded as the model tribunal in most aspects, can not claim a perfectly clean state in this point.<sup>24</sup>

Why is this so? The defect lies in the tribunal system itself, (so some self-styled experts say) which is no longer adequate to handle marriage suits, and therefore should be abolished.<sup>25</sup> Others, while maintaining that there is a need for continuous changes in procedural law, uphold the continuing need of marriage courts as the only way to protect the values of Christian marriage and to safeguard the rights of individuals.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> CIC., cc. 1749, 1760, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Gordon, I., Op. cit., pp. 500-501.

<sup>25</sup> Croghan, Leo M., "Marriage Law and Real Life". *America*, CXXI (1969), pp. 352-355; Curran, C.M., "Divorce: Catholic Theory and Practice in USA". *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, CLXVIII (1974), p. 74: "The reality of divorce and remarriage should be handled on a local level (not in court) in a pastoral way by a small group representing the local community". Kelleher, S., "The Problem of the Intolerable Marriage". *America*, CXIC (1968), pp. 178-182: "The personal responsibility of the couples themselves becomes the ultimate factor in determining the freedom to marry." He sees the need, however, of the Church's participation in the judgment.

<sup>26</sup> Orsy, L., *The Future of Christian Marriage*. Herder, N.Y., 1973, p. 43.

## PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **LEONARDO LEGASPI, O.P.**, Rectori Pontificiae Universitatis Sancti Thomae Manilae, electo Episcopo titulo Elephantiensi in Mauretania atque Auxiliari sacri Praesulis Manilensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Nihil quidem impensius curantibus quam ut satis omni dominici gregis portioni ubique terrarum degenti provideamus, perspicuum Nobis apparuit morem esse gerendum voluntati Venerabilis fratris Nostri Jacobi S.R.E. Cardinalis Sin, Archiepiscopi Manilensis, qui ob potiora pastoralia negotia magis in dies augescencia postulavit ut alius sibi Auxiliaris daretur Episcopus. Quapropter, cum nihil omnino obstiterit, quo minus relatum ea de re Nobis sententiam Venerabilis fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis, Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti, comprobata ratam haberemus, summa Nos potestate Nostra Apostolica te, dilecte fili, quem novimus animi ingenique egregiis commendari dotibus, Episcopum titulo **ELEPHANTARIENSEM** in Mauretania nominamus sacroque assignamus Praesuli, quem diximus, iuribus tibi factis huius officii propriis iuxta Litteras Nostras — Ecclesiae Sanctae — die VI mensis Augusti datas anno MCMLXVI. Facultatem tibi facimus ut episcopalem ordinationem a quolibet catholico Episco, liturgicis de re servatis regulis, ubivis accipias, post tamen quam coram eodem aliove Episcopo cum hac Petri Sede fidei vinculis coniuncto tuam feceris professionem fidei tuamque erga Nos et Successores Nostros fidelitatem iuraveris. Quibus rite actis, tuum erit curare ut adhibitae formulae, eademque translaticia forma signatae sigilloque impressae, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittantur. Te demum, dilecte fili, cui amplio rem ad dignitatem evecto gratulamur, enixe hortamur ut, graviore considerato officio tibi credito, sedulam operam tuam in pastoralibus negotiis cum ipso Pastore consocies, cui ut quam maxime prosis traderis. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die decimo mensis Septembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto decimo.

**JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
Secretarius Status

**MARCELLUS ROSSETTI,**  
Proton. Apost.

# CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AFTER VATICAN COUNCIL II

by

**Jordan Aumann, O.P., S.T.D.**

*Director, Institute of Spirituality  
University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome  
Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy*

Since the close of Vatican Council II, the Church throughout the world has been engaged in the necessary but painful task of self-evaluation and adaptation. This is a need imposed upon the Church by reason of the fact that mankind has entered upon a new age — an age that brings with it the problems and crises peculiar to itself, just as surely as the ages of adolescence or maturity bring with them their own particular challenges to the human person. Moreover, the nature of the Church as the People of God in pilgrimage or as a dynamic organism subject to the laws of its interior development and evolution requires that the Church periodically face the challenges of its growth and expansion. Thus, Cardinal Newman stated:

If Christianity be a universal religion, suited not simply to one locality or period but to all times and places, it cannot but vary in its relation and dealings towards the world around it; that is, it will develop. Principles require a various application according as persons and circumstances vary, and must be thrown into new shapes according to the form of society which they are to influence.<sup>1</sup>

The same thing is true of spirituality or the Christian life; it must be dynamic, not static; therefore, it is constantly developing and adapting itself to new needs and changing culture patterns. At the risk of becoming irrelevant and non-authentic, Christian spirituality demands constant renewal and *aggiornamento*. The special or particularized spirituality of fourteenth-century England or seventeenth-century France may be as alien to twentieth-century Christians as is the Christian life-style of a contemplative nun to a diocesan priest or Christian husband and wife.

---

<sup>1</sup> John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, chapter 2, section 1, n. 3.

This does not mean that we can totally reject the spirituality of past centuries, but that we must know how to distinguish and preserve the essential elements of fundamental Christian spirituality as we adjust to the secondary or particular aspects that characterize the different conditions or needs in various periods of history or in a given culture. These secondary aspects in turn, are the basis for the division of Christian spirituality into the various "schools" of spirituality such as the French school, the Dominican or Franciscan school, the spirituality of the diocesan priest or the laity, etc.

### DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY

In order to discover what Christian spirituality is and ought to be for modern Christians, it is necessary to begin with a definition of terms. This presents some difficulties; first, because the word "spirituality" is an analogous term and therefore admits of a variety of applications; secondly, because there is no common agreement among modern theologians in the use of the term as it applies to the Christian life or to theology.

In its widest meaning, the term "spirituality" designates "that basic practical or existential attitude of man which is the consequence and expression of the way in which he understands his religious — or more generally, his ethically committed — existence".<sup>2</sup> In this sense, there is no need to restrict the term spirituality to a Christian context, because any person who has a belief in a transcendent being and strives to live according to his religious or ethical convictions will by that very fact experience and manifest a spirituality of Mahatma Ganhi, Jewish spirituality, etc.

In a more restricted sense, we speak of **Christian** spirituality, which is a spirituality that follows upon faith in Jesus Christ and the commitment to live according to his example and teachings. Groussouw describes it simply as "faith in God and love for man, in the fellowship of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, all those who profess faith in Christ and strive to live according to his twofold commandment of charity (love of God and love of neighbor), are able to experience and give witness to Christian spirituality, whether they be Catholic Protestant or Orthodox.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, "The Gospel as Norm and Test of all Spirituality in the Church," *Spirituality in Church and World*, ed. C. Duquoc. O.P., New York, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> W. K. Grossouw, *Spirituality of the New Testament*, St. Louis, 1964, p. 194.

Vatican Council II has recognized that many persons outside the visible body of the Catholic Church are capable of living a deep spiritual life and of having an authentic religious experience. The Church "looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, 'the way, the truth, and the life' (Jn. 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to himself (cf. II Cor. 5:18-19)."<sup>4</sup>

Again, in the pastoral constitution, **The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)**, the Fathers of Vatican II teach explicitly that there is only one spirituality for all mankind and it consists in a participation in the mystery of Jesus Christ:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light... Christ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear... He who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) is himself the perfect man... For by his incarnate the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man... The Christian man, conformed to the likeness of that Son who is the firstborn of many brothers, receives the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23) by which he becomes capable of discharging the new law of love. Through this Spirit, who is "the pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14), the whole man is renewed from within, even to the achievement of "the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23)... All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.<sup>5</sup>

It follows, then, that Christian spirituality is the sharing in the mystery of Jesus Christ, through faith, grace and charity, as an adult Christian and according to one's personal gifts and talents and within the framework of one's vocation or state in life. The unchanging norm for all authentic Christian life is participation in Christ, who came that we might have life and have it to the full.

<sup>4</sup> *Nostra Aetate*, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

## SCHOOLS OF SPIRITUALITY

However, the mystery of Christ must become "incarnated" in a particular time and place and in individual persons, with the result that we find in the course of history a variety of particularized spiritualities or "schools" of spirituality, each manifesting in its own manner or mode the mystery of Christ. Some contemporary theologians, to safeguard the unity of the Christian life, prefer to emphasize three essential elements of fundamental Christian spirituality; as a consequence, they tend to reject any pluralism and refuse to admit the classification of Christian spirituality into "schools."<sup>6</sup> But it seems inevitable that schools of spirituality should emerge, and there are two reasons for this diversity: on the part of God, who gives the life of the Spirit, and on the part of the persons who receive this gift.

The basic theological reason for the multiplicity of spiritualities within the general framework of Christian spirituality is given by St. Paul: "Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us" (Rom. 12:4-6). "Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted" (Eph. 4:7). And St. Thomas Aquinas states that "the first cause of this diversity is to be sought on the part of God, who dispenses his gifts of grace variously in order that the beauty and perfection of the Church may result from these various degrees."<sup>7</sup> In other words, the mystery of Christ is so rich and varied that it cannot be perfectly duplicated in any one person or in any school of spirituality. Even the greatest of the saints exemplified one or another aspect of the mystery of Christ, but never "the whole Christ."

As regards the human causes for the diversity of particularized spiritualities, we need only recall the theological axiom that grace does not destroy nature but perfects it.<sup>8</sup> Grace and the infused virtues respect the individual personality of the one who receives them; consequently, the immediate subjective basis for the different ways in which an individual experiences and witnesses to the mystery of Christ is found in the unique pattern of personality traits peculiar to that individual. The temperament of an individual,

<sup>6</sup> Cf. L. Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality*, New York, 1961, pp. 19-23; F. Vandebroucke, "Spirituality and Spiritualities," *Spirituality in Church and World*, New York, 1965, pp. 45-60.

<sup>7</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 112, a. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2; q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.

his predispositions to good or evil, the type of character he has formed — all these elements will exert a great influence on his response to grace and the use he makes of the gifts God gives him. They will to a great extent determine his practices of devotion, the facility or difficulty in practicing certain virtues, his taste for prayer and apostolic service, and even his attraction to one or another dogmatic truth. They will likewise affect his choice of vocation or state of life, and that in turn will introduce him to the factors that constitute the duties of state in life.

Father Besnard has shown clearly that the spiritual life is something proper to each person and is at the same time a sharing in the mystery of Christ: "When one speaks of spirituality, one refers to a living synthesis of human and evangelical elements. Spirituality is really the structuring of an adult personality in faith according to one's proper genius, vocation, and charismatic gifts, on the one hand, and according to the laws of the universal Christian mystery on the other."<sup>9</sup>

The history of spirituality provides us with countless examples of saintly Christians who were the leaders of particular schools of spirituality. They attracted followers who wanted to follow Christ by committing themselves to the same pattern of Christian life as exemplified, for example, in St. Francis of Assisi or St. Dominic. In the course of time, the particularized spirituality was synthesized by a speculative theologian, as St. Bonaventure did for Franciscan spirituality and St. Thomas Aquinas did for Dominican spirituality. But schools of spirituality are not limited to the charisms of individual Christians; equally important are such factors as the national temperament (e.g., Spanish or English spirituality as distinct from French spirituality), the cultural conditions at a specific period in history (e.g., spirituality of the Rhineland mystics), and the needs of the Church at a given time (e.g., the post-Reformation spirituality of the Jesuits).

The schools of spirituality are therefore an indication of the diversity of the ways of the Spirit and a sign of the Church's respect for personal freedom under the same Spirit. The Christian life is not lived by all the faithful in slavish conformity to one pattern, but is constantly adapting itself to the diversity of needs, charisms, ministeries, and national and individual temperaments. Nevertheless, it is necessary to stress the fact that all the differences that distinguish one school of spirituality from another are merely **accidental** or **modal**. All schools of spirituality are branches of the one vine

<sup>9</sup> A. M. Besnard, O.P., "Tendencies of Contemporary Spirituality," *Spirituality in Church and World*, New York, 1965, p. 26.

man resembles God and, therefore, in a totally transcendent way, God resembles man."<sup>10</sup> The Fathers of Vatican II said the same thing in a different way: "The principal purpose to which the plan of the Old Covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming both of Christ, the universal Redeemer, and of the messianic kingdom."<sup>11</sup>

The continuity between the Old and New Testaments is evident from the fact that Christ frequently supported his teaching by quoting from the Old Testament and insisted that he had not come to abolish the Law and the prophets but to complete them (Mt 5:17). Christ is the culmination of all that had been promised and foretold by the prophets; he is the source and model of our life in God; hence, the Christian life is a participation in the mystery of Christ. But to know Christ, it is necessary to turn to the Gospel, which records what he said and did for our instruction.

For some, it is of paramount importance first to rediscover Christ as man, so that Christian spirituality can be based on an authentic humanism, a Christian anthropology. Vatican II has also stated something to this effect:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of him who was to come, namely, Christ the Lord... He who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) is himself the perfect man.<sup>12</sup>

To rediscover Christ as man means to become aware of every man as called to sonship in the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to see the mystery of man and the mystery of Christ as intimately related. Jesus is both the prototype of every authentic man and the source of all true humanity because he is "the image of the unseen God and the firstborn of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth" (Col. 1:15).

However, too much emphasis on Christ as man, on the "historical Jesus," could detract from his divinity. Our relationship with Christ does not consist simply in the remembrance and imitation of the historical figure we meet in the pages of the Gospel. That could easily result in a religion of hero-worship, a liturgy of memorial services, and a spirituality of pious nostalgia for the past. The Christian life requires that we live the mystery of Christ here and now; the Christian life must be seen as the present facing the

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. P. Jossua, O.P., *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God's People*, Chicago, 1968, pp. 129-130.

<sup>11</sup> *Dei Verbum*, n. 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

future, and not the present trying to recapture the past. In this sense we can understand the need to "demythologize" the Christ of the Gospel in order to discover the universal Christ, the Christ of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and then present that Christ to the contemporary world. The mystery of Christ that constitutes Christian spirituality is the Word made flesh and dwelling among us now.

To participate in the mystery of Christ means to share in the divine life of Christ, and to such an extent that Christ is not only present to us now, but dwells within us. The Word condescended to "humanize" himself in order to "divinize" human nature by raising it to the level of the divine. As in Christ, the human and divine natures are united in a mysterious and hypostatic manner, so also in man, the natural and the supernatural are united in such a way that the natural is not destroyed but elevated and perfected, though the two always remain distinct and separable. And the life that Christ gives to us is the selfsame life that animated the God-man; it is the very life that the incarnate Word shares with the Father and the Holy Spirit; it is consequently the life of God in the august mystery of the Trinity. The Christian life is being by grace what Christ is by nature: the son of God.

This is precisely what constitutes the supernatural order, the manifestation of eternal life: entrance into the fellowship with God by sharing in the communication of his life and his intimate secrets.... God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that all those who believe in him may have eternal life. This life is the intimate life of the sacrosanct Trinity in the ineffable communications of the three Persons, because all three, and each of them in his own way, contribute to the work of our reification... It is the Father who adopts us; the Son who makes us his brothers and coheirs; the Holy Spirit who consecrates and sanctifies us and makes us living temples of God, coming to dwell in us, together with the Father and the Son.<sup>13</sup>

The New Testament makes many references to the new life that is given to us through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. St. Peter states that "by his divine power, he has given us all the things that we need for life and for true devotion, bringing us to know God himself, who has called us by his own glory and goodness. In making these gifts he has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come: through them you will be able to share the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:14). St. Paul says:

<sup>13</sup> Cf. John G. Arintero, O.P., *The Mystical Evolution*, St. Louis, 1950, vol. I, pp. 349-351.

"The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:15-17). Finally, St. John teaches: "We are already the children of God, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is" (I Jn. 3:2).

But life is not static; it is meant to grow and develop. The Gospel reveals this under a variety of figures, but the one most frequently used by Christ is "the kingdom." "This kingdom," says Father Bonsirven, "can be understood in two ways. According to one of them, Christ had in mind a spiritual kingdom, already existing at the time and progressive, an **evolution**; according to the other, he was looking forward to it as something which had to come into existence suddenly as a result of an eschatological **revolution** which would shake the whole world."<sup>14</sup>

As a spiritual kingdom, an evolution, its within us (Lk. 17:21); it is capable of growth because, as Aquinas says, it is of the very nature of grace to increase; then, from individuals, it can extend throughout the world and constitute the extension of God's kingdom on earth, the Church. But essentially the kingdom is life in Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:23). We enter the spiritual kingdom through faith, repentance, forgiveness of sin, and baptism; this constitutes our justification. But justification is only the first step in a new way of life that demands the works of virtue, growth in grace, and the striving for the perfection of charity. All this is evident from the Sermon on the Mount, the charter of Christian spirituality in which Christ emphasized the superiority of the interior over the exterior (Mt. 6:1-18) and proclaimed the vocation of all Christians to perfection (Mt. 5:38-44). The follower of Christ must live by the dynamic principle of spiritual evolution and growth.

However, Christ did not give a detailed code of morality to his followers; he was content to restate the teaching of the Book of Deuteronomy regarding the double precept of love of God and love of neighbor (Mt. 22:37-3). But at the Last Supper he gave charity a new and challenging dimension and placed it at the very heart of the Christian life:

<sup>14</sup> J. Bonsirven, S.J., *Theology of the New Testament*, Westminster, Maryland, 1963, p. 37.

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another . . . As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:9-12).

Love of neighbor occupies a crucial position in the Gospel teaching on Christian spirituality, and in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ insists that a vague and universal love for all men in general will not suffice; the Christian is obliged to practice love on the existential level of interpersonal relationships and, indeed, to make our love a response to those who need our love. Nor is this to be construed simply as doing good to others; the command of Christ is: Love one another **as I have loved you**.

It is therefore as much of an illusion to think we can love God without loving our neighbor as it is to think we can love our neighbor with Christian charity without loving God. There is only one love which is charity; it cannot be divided; for that reason there can be no true charity which consists exclusively in the love of God or in the love of neighbor (cf. I Jn. 4:20). Moreover, it is necessary to emphasize today, when so many speak of "finding Christ in my neighbor," that the ideal proposed by Christ is to love our neighbor as Christ loved us, which is very different from experiencing Christ in others. For the goal of Christian perfection is to attain the transformation in Christ to which St. Paul attests: "I live now, not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). In the terms of the virtue of charity we would say: "I love now, not with my own love but with the love of Christ who loves through me."

Such, in broad perspective, is the Gospel teaching on Christian spirituality. It is a teaching and an ideal that applies to all times and all peoples. It cannot be restricted to any time or culture, for it rises above them as a universal and perennial doctrine. Yet it adapts itself wonderfully to all the conditions and differences that distinguish one age or nation or culture from another. Thus is God glorified in the variety of manifestations of Christian holiness throughout the centuries and all saintly Christians are united in the one bond of love, making them truly the People of God, a holy people.

## CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

Fundamental Christian spirituality consist in the following and imitation of Christ as he reveals himself by its teaching and example, recorded in the Gospel, but it is a spirituality that is lived in the world by persons of a specific time and culture. Hence, Gospel spirituality must necessarily become particularized at a given time or place, which means that it must be applied to particularized at a given time or place, which means that it must be applied to particular needs and conditions. The saintly pontiff, Pope John XXIII, was well aware of the necessity of giving a new orientation to the Christian life in the modern world and the primary task of the Fathers of Vatican II was to initiate this updating and adaptation. It is still too early to say with precision what the emerging spirituality of this age will be, for the Church is still in the process of renewal. Nevertheless, certain elements are already rather well defined, while others must still stand experimentation and the test of time. And throughout this period of adjustment and emergence, two extremes should be avoided: first, to cling tenaciously to out-moded and irrelevant practices, for this would be resisting the Holy Spirit; secondly, impatiently to run ahead of the Holy Spirit with a man-made spirituality, instead of being guided and led by the Spirit.

Some of the characteristics of contemporary spirituality are definitely a return to the Gospel sources, as was requested by Vatican II; other aspects are modern innovations or adaptations that respond to the needs of the contemporary Christian. And one of the surest signs that the emerging spirituality promises to be an authentic Gospel spirituality is evident from the first characteristic: it is centered in Jesus Christ. Thanks to the various prayer movements, the liturgical revival, and the innovations in retreats and spiritual exercises, many of the faithful have re-discovered Christ and have experienced the power of Jesus in their lives. They see him not merely as the source and model of Christian holiness—which he surely is—but also as the one in whose presence they should live, the one to whom they should give witness in their lives, and the one who presents himself to them in their neighbor. They understand that to be a Christian means to be profoundly identified with Jesus Christ, now passed into the glory of his paschal mystery. Through Christ, they hope to find identification with the Christian community and with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Together with the Christocentric aspect, we find in contemporary spirituality a biblical and doctrinal orientation. The biblical renaissance began long before Vatican II, but today we are reaping the fruitful harvest of those who were pioneers in biblical study and research. Thanks to their efforts, the revealed truths are more easily grasped in all their clarity, while the mystery of Christ has become

more meaningful to us because of their historical and exegetical study of his life and teaching. In the field of doctrine, we note a new emphasis on theological method. Christians today, for the most part, are not attracted to the purely academic or speculative theology (though this has its place in the Church); rather, they want a theology to live by, one that is both practical and pastoral. This accounts in great part for the renewed interest in practical moral teaching and in the theology of the spiritual life.

Another characteristic of the emerging spirituality is that it is "incarnational" rather than eschatological; it is a spirituality of involvement rather than withdrawal; it is more of a secular than a monastic spirituality. Throughout history the Church has alternated between the city and the desert, without becoming totally committed to one at the expense of the other. Today, however, Christians are again seeking a genuine Christian humanism and are manifesting concern for the world rather than distrust of the world. The contemporary Christian sees the world as basically good and he sees himself as part of that world; it is his area of witness and apostolate and he must be a part of it. This is especially noticeable in the rapid growth of secular institutes and in the charitable dedication of Mother Theresa of India. True, the eschatological element is always present in Christian spirituality but not so much today as a vigilant waiting for the end of the world and the return of the Lord, but emphasizing that the Church is in the world, though it must never be of the world. Christ stated that his followers are not of this world, and in the Church this is strikingly manifested by those men and women who dedicate their lives to the prayer, penance and solitude of the contemplative life.

Together with a Christian appreciation of the world, the contemporary spirituality is logically characterized as being social or communal rather than personal and individualistic. In former times the emphasis in spiritual writing was on the individual person, his need to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, to repent of his sins and to grow in personal holiness and virtue; today, however, Christians are told to commit themselves to apostolic and charitable works at the very beginning and to sanctify themselves by their good works. The social aspect of modern spirituality is a logical consequence of man's greater solidarity, his discovery of the effectiveness of working as a team, and perhaps his latent fear of the loneliness of solitude. The community emphasis has already produced powerful changes in the life of the Church: greater participation in the liturgy, a more intimate bond of fraternal love in religious communities, a sense of collegiality among priests and bishops. This has been accompanied by a greater demand for autonomy, but not individual autonomy; rather, the autonomy of the local community, be it parish or diocese or religious community.

Another characteristic of post-Vatican II spirituality is that it is eminently apostolic; it is, in a good sense, a spirituality of action. There has always been a tension between the active and the contemplative lives and in the past the emphasis was usually on the latter. Indeed, Pope Pius XII warned against "the heresy of action." Obviously, any extreme is to be avoided, but today we are realizing that rather than accept the dialectic between the active and contemplative aspects of life, it would be much more beneficial to relieve the tension by striking the proper balance between the two. Theologically there is no doubt that contemplative activity must take precedence over action, not only because it is an end in itself, but because the interior or contemplative aspect of the Christian life is the soul and the source of the apostolate. It is in this perspective that Vatican II has advised diocesan priests to sanctify themselves by the very works of their ministry and has reminded active religious that their apostolate pertains to the very essence of their religious life.<sup>15</sup> Today's Christian understands very well that the love of neighbor, commanded by Christ, impels him to be concerned about his neighbor and to serve his neighbor. The various campaigns for social justice and human rights are evidence of the awakened consciousness of the Christian laity, clergy and religious that they have an obligation to work for the brotherhood of mankind and the reign of peace and justice. Together with this apostolic characteristic, flowing from love of neighbor, there is also a deeper and more delicate respect for the individual person, and a greater effort to relate to others on the level of interpersonal communication.

Finally, the new spirituality balances the commitment to apostolate with the practice of personal mental prayer. There is a deep desire in modern Christians to experience the divine, to make the divine presence a reality in their lives. During and immediately after Vatican Council II there was a definite trend away from personal prayer in favor of communal prayer; in fact, some persons explicitly rejected personal mental prayer. Now, however, we are witnessing an increasing appreciation for the interior life of prayer, and the Pentecostal Movement is a striking example of this.

Reviewing the characteristics of the spirituality of the contemporary Christian, we cannot help but feel optimistic and secure about the future. If we can discern rightly the signs of the times and if we can respond with love to the needs of others, we can, with God's help, come closer to the perfect fulfillment of Christ's twofold precept of charity: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, and with all your mind and strength; and love your neighbor as I loved you.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 12; *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 8.

# THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES

By

Magin Borrajo, O.P.

1. **Concept of rights.** It is very important before we speak of the Right to Life to understand the concept of **right**. Often people confuse what is **legal** with what is **right**. They think that rights are societal. Different societies have different rights. So I think it is very important to make clear from the very start that **morality** and **legality** are not synonymous. An action is legal or illegal insofar as it is, or is not, in accordance with civil law, i.e., with the particular laws that a country or government promulgates or introduces at any given moment. An action is **moral** or **immoral** in so far as it is, or is not, in accordance with right reason, or in conformity with human nature which is part of the eternal law of God.

It is a well established fact that many people do not seem keen on admitting this distinction. They believe, so it seems, that once an action has been declared legal, it may be carried out without any possible scruple of conscience. I don't think one needs to reflect much in order to realize that this is not so. Government or civil laws can be unreasonable, unjust, and therefore inhuman and immoral. For example in Nazi Germany there were laws authorizing the execution or extermination of millions of Jews. These actions were legal, but not moral. In the United States prior to January 22, 1973 it was illegal to procure an abortion except on medical advice for the purpose of saving the mother's life; after January 22, 1973 (with Jane Roe et al., Appelantes v. Henry Wade) the Supreme Court has legalized abortion, that is, it has rejected the humanity of the fetus and its right to life and has given unbridled license for its destruction for up to six months after conception. Therefore, those committing abortions for whatever reason within the first six months of pregnancy will not commit any crime or legal offense. But this is not to say that those who commit abortion are doing something which is human, reasonable, right and moral. Whoever commits abortion, even if it is legal, will commit a crime against humanity and against God.

The right to life is rooted in human dignity. This dignity is not bestowed on persons by the family or society or the state. Rather, it makes a claim on the persons and societies. This human dignity

---

\* Addressed given to the Medical Society during the Medicine Week, Sept. 19, 1977, Olongapo, Philippines.

is the foundation of all moral obligation and of all human rights. Humans are "individuals of rational nature", and what humans ought to do must not contradict what they are — human nature, human dignity, human rights. As long as there is actual or potential for meaningful "humanhood", individuals of rational nature are to be respected and cared for. Allowing one to suffer harm, when one can easily prevent it, is unworthy of humans, and is lack of respect. The minimum a human being ought to do for another human being is to recognize and respect his rights. The right to a meaningful human life is a personal and fundamental right.<sup>1</sup>

**2. Respect for Human Life.** Most societies value life after birth and refuse infanticide. But with regard to life in the womb different societies have different laws. In some societies the fetus is only "a bit of vegetating unborn matter" that counts for nothing, or "literally part of the mother's body" that she can dispose of as she wishes. In other societies the fetus is the subject of rights, like any other person. Whether the fetus claims its rights or not, to violate its rights is lack of respect. And since the right to life is a personal and fundamental right, abortion is a crime against life, or a "slaughter of the innocent unborn".

When it comes to individuals there is still a wider range of opinions with regard to life in the womb. Some people have taken an increasingly liberal attitude toward abortion. Others have consistently campaigned against abortion and condemned it as a terrible crime.

We mentioned at the beginning that legality and morality do not necessarily coincide. Much less to coincide with morality, the liberal clamors and opinions of individuals or social movements against the right to life of the unborn. Moral matters cannot be settled by statistics or polling people. The right to life is antecedent to birth, given by God, independent of our subjectivity or opinions, inviolable and inalienable.

**3. Respect for the Unborn.** In relation to the unborn and abortion there are many biological, philosophical and theological

---

<sup>1</sup>Yale Task Force on Population Ethics, "Moral Claims, Human Rights, and Population Policies", *Theological Studies*, March 1974, Vol. 35, pp. 83-113.

—Frankenna W., *Ethics*, Prentice Hall Inc., Second Edition, (1973) pp. 48-52.

—Rawls John, *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, (1973), pp. 440, 396, 178.

—S. Theol., II-II, q. 60, a. 5 ad 1 et 2; *Ibid.*, q. 75, a. 2 ad 2; I, q. 29, aa. 1, 3 et ad 4.