

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

**THANKS, POPE JOHN PAUL I FOR THE SMILE
AND THE WORD**

Editorial

EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

CATECHETICAL SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Pedro S. de Achutegui, S.J.

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EDITORIAL

THANKS, POPE JOHN PAUL FOR THE SMILE AND THE WORD

"In 33 days he probably said what he had to say, that is, that this world has need for humility and simplicity," Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles said of Pope John Paul I as he passed away. "He gave mankind that joy and warmth that it needed so much."

Others who spoke of the death of the Pope whose winning smile, not so many days ago, flashed on TV screens all over the world, said words in a similar vein. Thank you, Pope John Paul I, for your contagious joy, for your heartening smile.

We Filipinos have something more to remember him by: his word. On his last day on earth he addressed the Archbishop of Cebu, Cardinal Julio Rosales, and the nine Filipino Bishops with him. The words he pronounced in this address are so meaningful and beautiful that we should like to share them with our readers. They follow in full:

"Dear brothers in Christ:

In welcoming you with deep affection, we wish to recall a passage found in the breviary..

This passage has struck us forcefully. It concerns Christ, and was spoken by Paul VI on his visit to the Philippines: "I must bear witness to His name: Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God... He is the King of the new world; He is the secret of history; He is the key to our destiny" (13th Sunday of the year: Homily of Nov. 29, 1970).

On our part we hope to sustain you, support you, and encourage you in the great mission of the episcopate: To proclaim Jesus Christ and to evangelize His people.

Among the right of the faithful, one of the greatest is the right to receive God's word in all its entirety and purity, with all its exigencies and power. A great challenge of our day in the full evangelization of all those who have been baptized.

In this, the bishops of the church have a prime responsibility. Our message must be a clear proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ. With Peter we must say to Christ, in the presence of our people: "You have the words of eternal life."

For us, evangelization involves an explicit teaching about the name of Jesus, His identity, His teaching, His kingdom and His promises. And His chief promise is eternal life. Jesus truly has words that lead us to eternal life.

Just recently at a general audience, we spoke to the faithful about eternal life. We are convinced that it is necessary for us to emphasize this element, in order to complete our message and to model our teaching on that of Jesus.

From the days of the Gospel, and in imitation of the Lord, who "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), the Church is irrevocably committed to contributing to the relief of physical misery and need.

But her pastoral charity would be incomplete if she did not point out even "higher needs." In the Philippines Paul VI did precisely this. At a moment when he chose to speak about the poor, about justice and peace, about human rights, about economic and social liberation at a moment when he also effectively committed the Church to the alleviation of misery he did not and could not remain silent about the "higher good," the fullness of life in the kingdom of heaven.

More than ever before, we must help our people to realize just how much they need Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary. He is their Savior, the key to their destiny and to the destiny of all humanity.

Dear brothers. we are spiritually close to you in all the efforts you are making on behalf of evangelization: As you train catechists, as you promote the biblical apostolate, as you assist and encourage all your priests in their great mission at the service of God's world, and as you lead all your faithful to understand and to fulfill the requirements of justice and Christian love.

We greatly esteem these and all your endeavors on behalf of the kingdom of God. In particular, we fully support the affirmation of the missionary vocation, and earnestly hope that it will flourish among your youth.

We are aware that the Philippines has a great vocation in being the Light of Christ in the Far East: To proclaim His truth, His love, His justice and salvation by word and example before its neighbors, the peoples of Asia. We know that you have a privileged instrument in this regard: Radio Veritas. It is our hope that the Philippines will use this great means and every other means to proclaim with the entire Church that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world.

Our greetings go to all your local churches, especially to the priests and religious. We encourage them to ever greater holiness of life as a condition for the supernatural effectiveness of their apostolate. We love and bless the families of your dioceses and all the laity. We ask the sick and the handicapped to understand their important part in God's plan, and to realize just how much evangelization depends on them.

To all of you, brothers, we impart our special Apostolic blessing, invoking upon you joy and strength in Jesus Christ."

PASTORAL LETTER

EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

By

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

JUSTICE AND PEACE!

The Philippines is a developing country and, as such, its national leadership has been harnessing all available resources, among other purposes, to hasten the process of development. It may happen that, in the rush towards progress, violations of certain human rights are committed.

Such violations run counter to the principles of truth and justice and have a detrimental effect on freedom.

It is in the light of this situation that the Bishops of the Philippines are issuing this Pastoral Letter, for it is their deep conviction that the Church's mission of preaching the message of salvation must include the mission of giving witness before the world on the need for love and justice. While this Pastoral Letter is primarily directed to our Christian faithful in the various institutions of our life, we would like to share our vision with all those who are similarly concerned.

CATECHESIS ON JUSTICE

The Church exists for one purpose, to continue Christ's salvific work through the preaching of the message of salvation (GS, 3). This message contains a call to man to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, to universal brotherhood in Christ and a consequent demand for justice in the world. (*Justice in the World*, IPS, Vol. 16, 1971, pp. 382-383).

The Church knows that no renewal in Christian life would be true without a corresponding renewal in the area of justice. For the simple reason that man's relationship to his neighbour is bound up with his relationship to God, his response to the love of God, saving us through Christ, is shown to be effective in his love for and service to men. Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot

be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely, recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbour. Justice attains its inner fullness only in love. Because every man is the truly visible image of the invisible God and a brother of Christ, the Christian finds in every man God himself and God's absolute demand for justice and love." (*Synod, Justice in the World, TPS, Vol. 16, 1971, p. 382.*)

Because Christian life and the practice of justice, as understood in the light of Revelation, are one and the same in the context of God's plan, the Church "has the right, indeed, even the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation demand it. The Church, indeed, is not alone responsible for justice in the world; however, she has a proper and specific responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the Gospel message, a witness to be carried out in Church institutions themselves and in the lives of Christians." (*JW, TPS, Vol. 16, 1971, p. 383.*)

Since love begets justice, the greatest injustice is the refusal of love to God and to our brother. The foundation of all justice is the merciful love of God for men in Christ Jesus, who is the center of history and God's plan (*GS 45; LG 42*). Injustice then is the denial of love to God Incarnate (*Mt. 24, 31-46*), man's refusal to adore and to obey. In the same way, injustice is the refusal to love, to serve and to be in fellowship with our brothers.

Justice is authentically Christian when there is a loving conversion of life to the Father, a radical turning away from sin against God and our brother, a sincere openness to love and an acceptance of all men.

If we want to see love and justice in our midst, then we should respect the human person. This respect for the human person without discrimination of age, sex, social standing, political color, race or nationality, requires the acceptance of the vision of man as the center and master of all creation (*GS, 12; PT, 10*) because by his origin and destiny he is far superior to all of creation (*PT, 11*).

As a human person, every man has the right to life and to the means necessary to living it with dignity. (*G, 27; PT, 11*). This right, flowing directly and simultaneously from his condition as a

human person, is universal, inviolable and inalienable (PT, 9). To this right is the ineluctable correlative duty of society and individuals. Without the right to life and to a life worthy of the human person, all the other rights of the human person would be meaningless. Without respect for human life, justice is inconceivable.

There is however an attempt against human life not only when life of persons is taken (**homicide, direct abortion**), but also when, either by action or omission, man's physical integrity is jeopardized. Human life, whether our own or others, is a good of which we are merely the administrators and for which we can not arbitrarily dispose of, without violating justice.

It is in the light of respect for human life that we should find the reason why the Church rejects vehemently the road of violence as a solution, the only solution, to contemporary injustices and sufferings. Rejection of violence does not mean "solidarity with abuses and egoisms, individual and collective, unjust oppressions... Its whole action aims at bracing the moral forces of individuals and groups, at promoting their education, the elevation of their human and Christian values... to prepare... in collaboration and peace... the desired and necessary social changes." (**To the Ambassador of Brazil, 14.11.68. O.R. 15.11.68**). She knows only too well that the establishing of justice is the most effective way of making violence disappear from our midst.

Neither is a claim for a just cause-defense of the oppressed-sufficient justification to use or advocate "violence and terrorism" as normal means to overthrow the established order, even when that order assumes an open, violent and unjust form of oppression that cannot be overcome or reformed by other means. (**Paul VI, General Audience, 21.10. 70. O.R. 22.10.70**). The more basic reason is stated in **Populorum Progressio** (n. 31): "We know, however, that a revolutionary uprising — save were there is manifest long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country — produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters. A real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery."

The Church, therefore, because of its evangelical principle of "non-violence" will not accept as even possible a situation where her theological hope would see no other outlet except the destruction of other fellowmen. For her "the solution to the sad, and even very sad situations," of our times, is "neither revolutionary reaction

nor recourse to violence... For us, the solution is love. Not weak and rhetorical love, but love which gives itself... love which sacrifices itself." (*Gen. Audience, 21.8.68. O.R. 22.8.68*).

For the human person, the communitarian dimension of man is as essential as its individuality. Man is born, is fulfilled and is saved within a community. That is why, to live justice is to build the community.

The Christian message requires a love which results in collaboration and solidarity. "As God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of a social unity, so also it has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals without bond or link between them, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness." (*GS, 32*).

The Christian should know by Revelation that the true community is the one which is united with the head, Christ from which flows out through joints and ligaments the vital impulse which supplies the body with energy, ensures its cohesion and produces its harmonious growth.

There is one important term of reference within this community: the categorical acceptance of the priority of the human person over any other temporal reality. In the ultimate analysis, it is human nature which evaluates results and indicates all the roads to progress. Social relationships can transform human groupings into a true community only when there is "a mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person." (*GS, 23*).

This mutual respect is certainly not merely the avoidance of transgressing the rights of others; it is, above all, the positive obligation of an efficacious love. Efficacious because it continuously strives to create the proper condition where every man and all men can realize his personal and social vocation (*MM, p. 23*).

The tendency to join together to attain objectives which are beyond the capacity and means at the disposal of single individuals has given life to a wide range of groups, movements, associations and institutions with economic, cultural, social, sporting, recreational, professional and political ends, both within single national communities and on an international level (*MM, 21*). In view of the growing importance of associations, Christians should strive to promote the various forms of associations in order to develop their social responsibility as individuals and to help insure the inviolability of liberty and human dignity which sometimes suffer due to an exaggerated sense of loyalty to the group.

More than ever before, the citizens of the political community should feel equally responsible for the realization of the common good among the various sectors of society (MM, 33). "The Christian has the duty to take part in the search for developmental models and in the organization and life of political society... It is for cultural and religious groupings, in the freedom of acceptance which they presume, to develop in the social body, disinterestedly and in their own ways, those ultimate convictions on the nature, origin and end of man and society (OA, 24).

In virtue of these principles of solidarity and its demands, human perfection requires solidarity with the entire humanity. There is this universal dimension when, within the same country, there is a just equilibrium between works and benefits among the various sectors of production and among the different regions. In the international order, there is solidarity when "nation meets nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God" (PP, 43); when "through mutual cooperation, all people should be able to become the principal architects of their own economic and social development;" and when "people, as active and responsible members of human society should be able to cooperate for the attaining of the common good on an equal footing with other peoples."

The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty, both to men of today and to those who will come after (PP, 17).

The Church is fully aware that if she is to be credible in her preaching of justice, she should precede all others in the living example of a just institution, just in her word, in her sacraments and in her pastoral action. Service to the cause of unity demands before hand signs of unity.

The Christian community finds in the Eucharist a permanent call to realize that unity in justice, in peace and in love. For the Church the Eucharist is not only a sign of unity; it is also and above all, a source and cause of unity. It will be the ultimate contradiction therefore to celebrate the Eucharist and remain at the same time unmoved and unconcerned in the midst of injustices and hatred.

The practice of justice should positively integrate all the relationships of man with authority, his liberty with his social responsibility. Subsidiarity is precisely the norm by which relationship between authority and liberty are regulated.

"Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry

can accomplish, so too, it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies (MM, 53)." Thus *Mater et Magistra* describes the principle of subsidiarity.

Accordingly, the State should not take away from the parents the right and duty to educate their children, because such right belongs primarily to the parents. However, in virtue of the same principle of subsidiarity, it is the obligation of the State to complete the educational work when the efforts of parents and other private entities are not sufficient, provided that the parental will is always considered (GE 3,6).

One of the fundamental duties of civil authorities is to coordinate social relations in such fashion that the exercise of one man's rights does not threaten others in the exercise of their own rights nor hinder them in the fulfillment of their duties. Civil authorities should likewise maintain a careful balance between coordinating and protecting the rights of citizens, on the one hand, and promoting them, on the other. It should not happen that certain individuals or social groups derive special advantage from the fact that their rights have received preferential treatment. Nor should it happen that government in seeking to protect these rights, becomes an obstacle to their full expression and free use.

Justice and common good are indissolubly linked; this is so because of the condition of human society. Common good touches the whole man, the needs both of his body and of his soul. Hence, viewed in the light of the principle of totality, it includes not only those which are economic in character but also those which promote the spiritual well-being of the citizens. For this reason, *Mater et Magistra* says that "the common good of all embraces the sum total of those conditions of social living whereby men are enabled to achieve their own integral perfection more fully and more easily." (MM, 65)

Therefore, social order has a dynamic character: "it is in constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow everyday toward a more humane balance," (GS, 26). The dynamism of a society in continuous search for new forms of realizing justice, of practicing liberty and of achieving the common good — all these are therefore also in the divine plan: "God's Spirit, who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this development." (GS, 26)

Material reality, because it affects the concrete human existence, should also be the object of justice. Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in turn the true victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace — pollution and refuse, new illness and absolute destructive capacity — but the human framework is no longer under man's control, thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable." (**A Call to Action: Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, May 14, 1971**).

One of the demands of justice is the conservation and construction of our physical environment. Justice requires that man's earthly city be truly a habitat worthy of man. As the center and master of all creation, man is the administrator of the things of the world. Any neglect or outright misuse of the material things strikes directly against his vocation and therefore is unjust. Man should urgently be convinced that the world was made for him and for his community.

Earthly goods are meant to promote the total perfection of man. Consequently, the egoistic appropriation of created goods, of the goods of production by individuals or by any group, is unjust. Material goods then have a universal destiny, and this is the basis of the right to work and to property.

Work is a badge of liberty and not of slavery. Every man has a right to work and to human conditions for development. He is entitled to exercise his profession and live from it for himself and his family. He has furthermore the right to self-defense, to protest against injustices. But at the same time he has the obligation to be responsible in his work. For there can be injustice on the part of the employer as well as on the part of the worker: the first by exploitation, the second by being irresponsible. (GS 26, 67, 71; OA, 14, 15, 18).

It is unjust to create conditions which result in unemployment or force the workers to accept any employment at whatever price.

While it is true that man has a natural right to property, it is also true that, by its very nature, private property has a social quality which is based on the law of the common destination of earthly good. "The right of every man to use material goods for his own sustenance is prior to every other right of economic import and so is prior to the right of property. Undoubtedly, adds Our Predecessor, the right to property in material goods is also a natural right. Nevertheless, in the objective order established by God, the

right to property should be so arranged that it is not an obstacle to the satisfaction of the unquestionable need that the goods, which were created by God for all men, should flow equally to all, according to the principle of justice and charity." (MM, 43).

There is also injustice when some of the major phenomena of our time like urbanization, industrialization and utilization of the biosphere are at the service of only a handful of people. The injustice is then committed not only against the men of today but also against the men of tomorrow.

Urbanization affects society to a large degree. While it brings with it technology, planning, and industrialization, at the same time, it causes mass exodus from the countryside, concentration of populations, and serious social disequilibrium. Far from being a means of development, urbanization is turning out to be simple business. Frequently it becomes an occasion to exploit the natural anxiety of having a house of one's own.

Our urban plans do not always take into account the proper human environment which permits family growth. On the contrary, urban plans are used in a number of occasions to force into the people the means of birth control. Our urban laws — if justice is to be a reality in this field — should take into account the vital environment.

Industrialization is another modern phenomenon with ambivalent consequences for society and men. While new forms of culture are brought about, thereby creating certain conditions which enable man to live a life in accordance with his dignity, at the same time, it brings about also a new and worse slavery and exploitation of men. It is just when industrialization leads to a reasonable degree of economic independence for the country. Finally, industrialization is just when there is respect for the inalienable rights of the person (OA, 8).

Real action for justice calls for a change in outlook. To bring about this change, it is necessary to promote an efficacious education to justice: the overcoming of individualism, the conversion of the heart, the capacity of criticism and reflection about situations, with regard to the dignity of the person, the sense of universal brotherhood, etc.

This education takes place within the family and other social institutions. It is important to reactivate the principles of justice that are found in the social teaching of the Church.

In this part, "Education for Justice", we intend to make some remarks of a practical order, in keeping with the doctrine expounded in the previous section, as regards those levels which we deem more expressive and decisive in the life of the people of God in the Philippines.

We have kept in mind the principles and orientations of the Church in Vatican II, of "Mater et Magistra" and "Pacem in Terris," of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, of the Encyclicals, "Populorum Progressio" and "Octogesima Adveniens," of the Synodal Document, "Justice in the World," and the "Document on the Evangelization of the Modern World" for the 1974 Synod. It is thought that the foregoing reflects the basic contents.

The above mentioned sources are by no means exhaustive; rather they are indicative of action and they lean towards those points more strongly emphasized or more obvious in the Documents.

Some criteria or basic objectives for the development of "Education for Justice" have been indicated; a specific vocabulary to facilitate a better understanding and application of the Documents, has been intended. Moreover, it should be noted that we have chosen some levels — human groups or institutions — which better represent and are more influential of our society and are instrumental — or else provide the ground — for an education for justice: such are the family, the school, the parish community, labor, public authority and the means of social communication.

For each of those levels or sectors the following procedural approach has been followed: statement of some specific objectives, interrelations with each one of the other sectors or levels; practical suggestions for the education of justice on the respective level or sector.

The following are general objectives of the education for justice:

- Formation as regards the dignity of the human person, with the concept of the whole of man's life and the human values in their transcendental dimension (cfr. GS, 1).
- The christian notion of ownership which implies the right use of riches in keeping with its social dimension.
- That human activity should aim at the common welfare.
- The growth of the Christian into manhood according to the mature measure of Christ (GS, 2; Eph. 4, 13).
- Justice as an expression of charity.

JUSTICE AND THE FAMILY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES IN THE FAMILY EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

The family is the structural cell of any society; therefore the constitutive elements of both the civil society and the Church are the families that compose them. Organized society has certain duties towards the family, protecting her identity and enabling her to reach self-fulfillment. Those duties become rights on the part of the family. Conversely, the family, as the generative cell of the society, has duties towards both the social and the ecclesial societies.

The specific objective of family education for justice is to create family awareness as to her rights and duties towards both the civil society and the Church.

The individual has a right to set up a family through free and legitimate choice, once a sufficient degree of human and christian maturity has been achieved, as will enable the person to take up the pertinent commitments (cfr. GS 50); responsible parenthood also is a personal right. Each family has a right to education, to improvement and to self-rule; a right to be respected by any government and by any other society concerned, as to her essence, her values and the normal exercise of her activities as a family.

It is a duty of the family to aim at the total welfare of each member and also at the welfare of the whole community — be it household, ecclesial or civil community — and to provide its members with a life in keeping with their human dignity and with their dignity as children of God; also to deal equitably with all members and to avoid discrimination.

THE FAMILY INTERRELATED WITH THE OTHER SECTORS

The family maintains an interrelatedness with other sectors of society. These sectors are the school, the parish, the labor world, the means of social communication, and the public authority.

The Family and the School

As regards the school, the family has the following rights and duties: to assume primary responsibilities for the education of the children (GS, 3) and to get integrated into the educative community (GS, 8); to choose such a type of education as may, in conscience,

be deemed suitable for the children and therefore to demand from the State a fair distribution of economic resources, (GS, 6); also to demand that education takes the faith into account (GS, 7; DH, 5).

The school should respect the primary right of the family to the education of the children; it should cooperate with the family, acting within its subsidiary capacity (GS, 3), should lend the family its technical knowledge so that the latter may be able to improve her educational task. It should offer the family practical and adequate means of participation in the management of the educative process. With a spirit of cooperation the school should consider the christian formation of the students in their homes.

The Family and the Parish

The family is duty-bound to educate the children with a view to the christian community, a community of faith, hope and love. The parish is expected to encourage the family so that this should be the real educator of the children in their faith. The faithful have a right to demand spiritual goods for the full development of their faith. The parish has the right and the duty to defend the basic rights of the family whenever they may come under attack. The parish should promote and help the family in the latter's duty to foster the christian communitarian spirit.

The Family and the Labor World

In its relationship with the labor world, it is a duty of the family to educate for work in such a manner that the latter be given its Christian meaning; also to educate in the rightful use of material goods and to encourage habits of thrift. The family should strike a sense of responsibility, of solidarity and of dialogue with the enterprise. It should convey social awareness, a sense of service, of understanding and of dialogue in everything pertaining to labor unions.

On the other hand, the enterprise, besides recognizing the dignity, the capacity and the right of the worker to participation and to a just salary, should facilitate the promotion of the human and the transcendental values of the worker's family. Labor unions should not limit their action to purely personal matters of the worker but rather should orient him towards the family and family values. They should favor intermediate institutions such as cooperatives, etc. for the benefit of the family.

The family holds the inalienable right and duty to educate man integrally and to prepare him for a worthy, free, responsible life as a person and as a member of society.

The family should educate man for work.

It is a fundamental binding duty of the family to acquire and own the indispensable means for the support of its members.

The family has a right to work and to the ownership and administration of her resources.

The family has a right to demand from the world of labour the respect due to the dignity of her members and to the inner essence and nature of the same family.

The family, through example and education should train the members to understand the nature, the dignity, the value and the christian meaning of work, of material resources and their social dimension.

The family should train her members even in their childhood in habits of work and in the right use of material goods; this should be done in keeping with the sex of each person and with the social sphere where they live; the family should encourage her members to seek to promote both their individual and communal well-being.

The Family and Mass Media

As regards its interrelationship with the means of social communications, the family should demand that their dignity be respected, especially considering that the family is consistently decied by the means of social communication.

The family should receive such a formation as to make her perceptive; as to enable her to take an active participation in the process of social communication. Thus she will be able to defend herself from the harmful influences that come to her through mass media and at the same time she will be ready to exact from those media a product of quality and demand respect for its own dignity. Otherwise the family will be prey to the vested interests that motivate many of the owners and directors of Mass Media.

The Family and Public Authority

Lastly, as regard the family and public authority, the following are the basic principles that must guide their mutual relationship: any authority must respect the rights of the family; the State with its laws and institutions should encourage the legal constitution and the stability of the family; it should never support the breaking

of the same through indiscriminate application of the law. The family should be the first school to teach the right sense of authority as a service; the authority of the family should be viewed in terms of a service to the household community in a climate of corresponsibility.

Civil authority should make education accessible to all citizens, while at the same time avoiding monopoly over the school it should foster and accept the cooperation of all the citizens and institutions who are ready to cooperate in the task of education; it should support equitably and without discrimination all schools, public or private, aiming always at a fair distribution of financial support; finally, it should view the initiatives and the creativity of educators with respect and avoid imposition of inflexible rules and uniform programs which only serve stunt the rich potentials of a creative pluralism and impoverish the school.

Therefore, civil authority should regard teachers as necessary elements in the education for justice of the people; thus civil authority should deal with the teachers with respect in keeping with dignity of their mission; they should be compensated adequately and offered opportunities for professional growth.

MEANS TO EDUCATE FOR JUSTICE WITHIN THE FAMILY

The whole doctrine as well as the suggestions and the principles that have preceded should materialize in concrete study guides easy to understand; these should be conveyed through the already existing means within our disposal: such as preaching, catechetics, systematic teaching, types and methods, education for mass-media, broadcasting, continuing education, work-teams and action teams.

The family should be helped to acquire the true communitarian spirit and to promote vital experiences.

The education of the family should primarily and fundamentally be carried out through a basic formation in love and for love — for love is a unique source of redemption and of justice within the Church. In order to achieve this it is imperative to prepare the layman, to trust and give responsibility to the laity as the only way to reach every possible milieu. It is also necessary to integrate the programs of family education of the various schools and colleges in the preacher's programs and the catechetical schemes.

THE SCHOOL AND JUSTICE IN GENERAL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOOL AS REGARDS THE EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

The school should foster the true education whose objectives are the formation of the human person towards his ultimate goal and for the good of societies (GS, 1). While imparting an integral education, the school should spell clearly the meaning of justice and the practice of the same; it should foster a spirit of service to the community among the students (GS, 5). The school should direct intellectual as well as technical knowledge towards service to the community; and not solely for personal gain. In her curricula the school should present a total vision of man so that the student may understand the dignity of the human person, his relations and his duties to the society in which he lives; this will equip him with useful and practical tools that will enable him to contribute towards the harmonious development of the national community (GS, 50).

The school should help to develop in the students a healthy critical attitude such as will evolve fair solutions within society and will be conducive to a truly human maturity. The school should educate in the exercise of political rights and duties; it should train concerned citizens able to share in the service of the community (GS, 5).

The Catholic School and Education for Justice

The catholic school should educate in the faith and for the faith; in love and for love; it should be a model of education for justice both in her organizational and academic structures (GS, 2 and 8).

The organized teaching of the social doctrines of the church, the training in the true christian social awareness, the direct contact with national realities in order to know and transform them, should ever be present in the school plan.

In order to impart a complete and totally christian education, the school should provide apostolic training even from primary level, for "christian educators are expected also to train their students for apostolate" (AA, 30).

The catholic school should serve the community; it should be open to dialogue and it should project itself towards the local community which she should animate culturally, socially and spiritually (GS, 8).

The Catholic school must endeavor to make education the servant of youth so that it becomes for him, through assimilation of the best examples and teachings of his elders, a force that would liberate his creative capacity and orientate his vast strength towards the configuration of his country as to contribute towards the strengthening of her national identity and the realization of her full development. Because it is through the exercise of his intelligence and will that man becomes more truly a man, because it is through them that he enhances his human worth and renders himself relevant and integrally fulfilled, this liberating task of education should also be, for the youth, a personalizing force. Founded as it is on love and dialogue and counting on the active participation of those who compose the educative community, this it must, thereby, also communitarian. Being personal and communitarian, genuine liberation consists coming out from less to more human conditions until the faith which calls all to share in the life of the living God is attained.

The catholic school should create a proper atmosphere conducive to the formation of a christian community (GS, 8).

In view of the great needs confronting education in the Philippines, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the Church, calls on the Christians and men of good will to work in unison for the democratization of education whereby all cultural, scientific and religious values are placed within the reach of all men irrespective of condition and social status.

THE SCHOOL IN ITS RELATION TO OTHER SECTORS

The school, as discussed above, has an interrelationship with the family. Aside from this, however, it maintains an interrelatedness with other sectors of society, the parish, the means of social communication, with the labor world and, with the public authority.

Interrelations with the parish

The school should seek a working connection with the parish as a means to help educate the students live up to the christian spirit of community imparted by the parish. The school should be considered as a privileged ground for the development of the pastoral action of the parish since it is the meeting point of young and adult christians with different connections and interests.

The parish expects the school to impart such formation as may be conducive to communitarian life and to an adequate sharing of community goods both spiritual and material.

The Parish should lend its help in the preparation of teachers so that they may be able to live up to the exigencies laid down in the section that deals with the objectives of the school as regards education for justice.

Interrelations with the Means of Social Communication

The school should understand the educational value and the influence of mass media in the modern world. Consequently, it is imperative to import to the young a proper formation towards mass-media so that they may approach those Means of Social Communication with a positive frame of mind and with the right critical attitude. The school should integrate the study of the Means of Social Communication into the curriculum in a practical way in order to enable the students to take advantage of those means all throughout their lives for their own intellectual and spiritual improvement. Moreover, the school should encourage the youth to actively participate in Mass Media and to avail themselves of such means especially as regards creating public opinion.

The school should recognize that the Means of Social Communication is also adequate to impart knowledge and formation. Therefore, Mass Media should be organized into an educational system of its own holding the same rights and prerogatives as the traditional systems. That will provide a swift way to reach the whole population and especially to educate the underprivileged areas.

Both civil and ecclesiastical authorities should direct their efforts towards helping the Means of Social Communication to fulfill the social function they are called to perform and to be ruled by the common welfare in their development and in their performance.

Public authority should demand respect for the dignity of man and his need for total growth, from mass media owners, publishers, editors, producers, artists, etc. This should give rise to pertinent services to the community such as: systematic progress aimed at total education as regards professional training; programs where national values of all kinds are extolled, programs that would encourage general cooperation; programs of civic training.

Mass media educational programs should be supported and especially fostered.

The christian family should be made aware of the fact that the greater bulk of the contents offered at present by the instruments of social communication are by no means favorable to the moral and spiritual structure of the family, that is to say, they have a highly disruptive quality. Therefore christian families should organize themselves under the leadership of the Pastors of the Church in order to defend themselves against this conspiracy.

The people of God has the legitimate aspiration to demand that the means of social communication be instrumental to their total education-as well as honorable channels of their own Christian values and ideals.

The means of social communication enjoy the possibilities of reaching people of different ages, different cultures, and different social conditions; therefore they cannot dispense with the caution and rightful practices, and they must avoid offending the dignity of people of manipulating them as if they were commodities; they should respect peoples' personalities and idiosyncracies.

The means of social communication should collaborate with the school so that the students may acquire a critical attitude towards the manifold contents transmitted by such media.

Therefore, it is necessary to educate: in the proper understanding of the language of Mass Media; in order to turn them into instruments of creativity, and in order to convey the realization that the means of social communication constitute an efficient instrument for change of which man should be not only beneficiary but also the agent.

Interrelations with the Labor World

The school should intend to prepare the citizen for work, intellectual as well as manual, by inculcating in him the appropriate work habits and values.

The school, at all levels, should integrate into its curricula such activities as may encourage the development of skills useful to the community and the rational use of natural resources for the common good and to foster attitudes of mutual cooperation solidarity.

The school should seek connections with local enterprises so that the students can acquire working habits and experience.

The school should complement the family in its task of educating in the sense, the value and the transcendence of work; the school encouraged creativity and responsibility through the performance of work itself the school should favour the kinds of work that

make study possible and compatible with it; she should prepare men for the choice of a profession or trade in keeping with his possibilities and with the exigencies of the respective social milieu.

Interrelations with Public Authority

The school has a right to organization as well as the right to impart the kind of education that is in keeping with such trends that are favorable to and encouraging of the particular characteristics of the Filipino people.

As a necessary instrument for the development and improvement of the people, the school should be able to count on the support of public authority and should be accorded preferential treatment as regards the allocation of public funds.

The school should enjoy a certain amount of autonomy to enable her to provide various solutions and alternatives to meet the needs of the country and different peoples. Therefore the school should not be subjected to a single, maximal, inflexible program but rather be allowed to develop her own initiatives based on minimal programs.

As promoter of the common good, civil authority should encourage effective cooperation and participation among all the active forces of the country; it should provide adequate channels so that every one may get the benefits of education. To achieve this is a fair allocation of public funds that should be made according to the following criteria:

- a. to guarantee the families and the individuals the right to choose the type of education;
- b. to encourage democratization of education and integration of all social classes within every institution;
- c. provide incentives for the institutions which disinterestedly wish to share in the task of educating the people.

Taking into account the existing socio-religious context of the Filipino people and especially the existence of parish organizations, civil authority should respect the same and give the consideration due them as community-serving institutions helping promote the common welfare.

MEANS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE SCHOOL TOWARDS THE EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

It is essential to integrate the social teaching of the Church within the school curriculum.

It is urgent to reintroduce the Catholic social doctrines in all the Catholic schools. This practice seems to be on the decline nowadays.

The school should train in a communitarian spirit and promote a vital experience of the same. To that end the Educational community, the Parents' Associations should be created; also courses for teachers of all educational levels should be organized in order to impart the contents and the methodology of the social doctrines of the Church. Textbooks and study-guides for students and for teachers should be published in keeping with the programs approved by the *Bishops* for the education for justice.

It is necessary to work out TV and radio scripts on the basis of the programs approved by the *Bishops* for the education for justice.

Generally speaking it would be advisable that all possible means towards the education for justice follow the programs approved by the *Bishops* for the purpose; thus the safety of the trends and the criteria to be followed will be assured. Each means will have to use its own methodology, respecting however, the doctrinal contents suggested in the programs.

THE PARISH COMMUNITY AND JUSTICE IN GENERAL

SPECIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY AS REGARDS EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

The Parish Community has the following rights and duties:

The right and the duty to proclaim evangelical justice at all levels with a view to educating in the faith, to training for the communitarian life and to promoting the apostolic spirit. The right and the duty to the free exercise of her ministry for the benefit of the whole community. The right and duty to educate the faithful as regards the values of evangelical justice. The right and duty to provide the spiritual goods necessary for the development of faith for all the faithful without discrimination. The right and duty to give a testimony to justice in her dealings with her employees, in her communitarian life and in her concern for the poor and the needy. The right and the duty to own such financial means as may be necessary for the proper performance of her ministry and to use them adequately in agreement with cannon and civil laws.

MUTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PARISH AND THE OTHER SECTORS

Besides maintaining a relationship with the family and the school the principles of which have been discussed above, the parish also has an interrelatedness with other sectors of society like the labor world, the means of social communication, and the public authority.

Interrelations with the world of labor

Through the whole of her pastoral activity, the parish should educate about the meaning of work, the right utilization of material goods and on the social dimension of ownership.

Depending on the variety of milieus the parish should emphasize both the responsibility of labor and the sharing in the enterprise.

The local enterprises should be given attention by the parish which in the light of evangelical justice will promote solidarity and dialogue between employers and employees.

The interpersonal relationship created through pastoral activity especially in the working class districts, provides opportunities for the training of the workers in the service-dimension of their work and for the creation of strong attitudes regarding their rightful demands as well as an attitude of understanding and dialogue without neglecting the sense of fidelity to their duties.

The enterprise should help the pastoral activity of the parish by facilitating for the professional and spiritual formation of the workers..

It is the mission of the Church within the parish to educate the People of God in the Theology of Work so that the people may show the world the christian meaning of work.

The parish is duty-bound to guide and to train men in their responsibilities as individuals as well as members of the human family and to foster in them the genuine notion of the transforming power of work for the benefit of the world and also as an instrument of the common welfare.

The Church should convey her social doctrines through all the means within her reach.

Moreover, the Church should set an example and a living testimony in her dealings with her workers, and in the use and administration of her resources.

Interrelations with the Means of Social Communication

The parish has a right to be respected as a community and, therefore, to demand from the instruments of social communication honest information about itself; any false or erroneous utterances about the parish can be seriously damaging.

All throughout its action, the parish should inculcate in the faithful a critical attitude towards the means of social communication thereby enabling them to remain free from any harmful influence that such means may have.

The parish should be present in the process of mass media and should encourage the parishioners to participate creatively in such process. For this purpose it should be necessary to train Christian Speakers.

Hence, the parish has the right and the duty to use the means of social communications of cine-forums, TV-forums, etc., for educating to justice.

Interrelations with the public authority

The parish should convey the christian meaning of authority as a service rather than a power of dominating and enslaving. At the same time the parish should teach obedience to the rightful authority.

The parish has a duty to denounce — with due evangelical courage and prudence — the injustices against the whole community or against any of its members done by public authority.

MEANS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE PARISH IN THE EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

The people have a right to expect from Christians, rather than words, the genuine example of justice and charity both within and without the Church; the teaching of the doctrine which forms the conscience and guides social awareness; this should be carried out through preaching, especially through the homilies, through catechetical activities about the sacraments, and through the liturgy; the true commitment to the people revealed through the permanent concern to promote lay people able to multiply the work of education for justice in all possible spheres.

THE WORLD OF LABOR AND JUSTICE IN GENERAL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD OF LABOR AS REGARDS THE EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

While keeping into account christian philosophy and theology of work, the education for justice should favor the christian meaning of work through all possible means and at all possible levels.

In the task of education for justice within the labor world the following statements should always be considered:

Work is dignifying: it is an eminently human activity. Through work man grows and becomes mature. Through work he develops both the material world and himself. Work expresses human personality and human greatness. Work should not be regarded as a commodity. Hence the preeminence work should be given over the capital and the enterprise. Man has a right to work, to look for it, to find it, in keeping with his dignity and his capacity; he has a right to fair pay. Work should be regarded as a special calling and mission handed down by nature and by God Himself.

Work and ownership: Work should be considered as a genuine natural source of procurement and possession of goods.

Ownership and freedom: Ownership is the basis for a certain amount of independence and freedom. However, the fact should be realized that the desire to own could go wrong in practice. Often a man believes himself to be worthier than others not precisely for what he does but for what he owns.

Work binds men together: Work is also performed for the benefit of others. Human work creates unity and solidarity among men.

Work and mankind: Mankind collectively owns the world. Balance between ownership and common welfare is achieved by a fair distribution of goods. Justice demands that the resources of this world be reasonably and equitably shared and distributed.

Material goods and the fact of owning them should humanize men: Ownership holds a risk for man: the risk of becoming owned by the things themselves and the risk of wanting to own what belongs to others.

Work has a religious projection: In addition to its human sense, work has a definite religious projection. Man fulfills himself by

developing the world. Work makes a man's life meaningful and happy. To rule the world means to make it human and inhabitable. This is a God-given task.

Christianity has given a dimension to work: In the realm of economics, love means fairer distribution of resources, a more reasonable use of the same, a more responsible and better shared solidarity and a more determined and generous help to the needy.

THE WORLD OF LABOR AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OTHER SECTORS

The world of labor has interrelationship with the family, with the school, with the parish as discussed above. Moreover, it maintains relationship with the means of social communication and with public authority.

The Means of Social Communication are the result of technical work and of a culture belonging to all mankind. Therefore they should be at the service of all men.

The Means of Social Communication plays a decisive role in the world of work, a role of information and formation which is of the highest importance.

The Means of Social Communication should maintain their independence and preserve their freedom in order to avoid being manipulated by any agents of power such as the capital, the enterprise or the labor force.

Those responsible for mass media should avoid the two dangers threatening them: to become accomplices of a consumer society which oppresses man through fake needs or else to become instruments of anarchy.

The means of social communication reach both employers and employees; therefore they should collaborate by encouraging reciprocal dialogues, provide for the formation, orientation and information of everyone; and offer opportunities for intercommunication and for expressing the various opposing points of view.

The means of social communication are duty-bound to promote and help general education especially for the underprivileged classes.

The directors of mass media have the duty to promote and take care of the technical improvement and the better professional preparation and practice of the mass media people.

The workers should be aware of their right to voice their opinions through mass media, and that theirs is an active voice within society, so that they may not be possibly exploited.

Interrelations with authority

It is the right as well as the duty of public authority to see to the development of a proper employment policy which affecting all citizens according to their respective capacities; public authority should also evolve a policy where the rights of man regarding work are respected and where the performance of work and the administration of its benefits are in keeping with human dignity; appropriate attention should be given the area of social security and fair distribution and access to material goods; also to fair interaction within the enterprise; to a wider participation of all the different sectors which are part of the enterprise itself; to an honest administration and use of public funds; public authority should also see to it that the right of association is respected; the same holds true for the means conducive to any fair demand.

Civil authority is duty-bound to respect every citizen's right to work, to diversity work, to further it by providing appropriate mechanism of contributions and loans, and advisory services; to supervise the interrelations existing among the enterprise administration, the financing body and the labor force while at the same time keeping a balance so as to avoid undue State interference. As the arbiter of common welfare, civil authority should supervise the preservation of natural resources so that the national economy does not need to depend wholly on foreign aid which, though apparently beneficial at first, may be a dangerous commitment in the long run. Civil authority should also watch so that the trades, the profession, and the country's wealth may fulfill their special function and not be exploited simply for private gain and become dehumanized.

MEANS OF EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE AS REGARDS THE WORLD OF LABOR

Among the means of education for justice in the labor world the following should be considered:

Publications on the social doctrine of the Church for the consumption of both employers and employees; also specialized courses on the same topic in order to make it known and deeply understood. Advisory services offered to the labor institutions, such as unions,

associations, etc., in order to orient them in the practice of the principles of social justice. To celebrate Labor Day with a properly Christian orientation.

It should be realized by those concerned that, in order to further the continuous education of the workers, the very space where they work should be utilized; as to the time, both the enterprise and the workers jointly — should be willing to make available a portion of their time.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY AND JUSTICE IN GENERAL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY AS REGARDS THE EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE

Authority ultimately comes from God. And because it comes from God and is accountable to God, it should be exercised by the one legitimately chosen to wield it in accordance to the laws of truth and justice. Because it is a duty it cannot be given up without incurring irresponsibility. Authority should always consider the close implications it bears to justice.

The evangelical notion of authority as a necessary element in any society should be developed and practised. The just exercise of authority is a service (Mt. 20, 26): "To let things go their way" is to give up that service. It is the purpose of authority to aim at the common good dynamically (GS, 66). Authority should be exercised as a service to everyone without any distinction, respecting the dignity of the human being always. Authority should seek for peace and for true order in society; both are bases for genuine justice.

Coordination of all sectors of society is an important factor in the satisfactory exercise of authority. To avoid the serious harm that might derive from lack of coordination, all the people who are charged with authority must seek coordination among themselves.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY AND HER RELATIONS TO OTHER SECTORS

The relationships of public authority to the family, the school, the parish, and the world of labor and the principles governing such relationship have been discussed above.

In its relationship with the means of social communication civil authority has the right and inalienable duty to preserve the freedom of thought and of speech through mass-media as demanded for truthful information conforming to justice, charity and reliability, yet within the prudent limits of discretion, honesty and character formation. It should also see to it that the respect due both to individuals and to groups and institutions as regards their integrity, their national and international reputation is safeguarded; it must also see to the equal apportionment of opportunities of access to mass media for all members of society, always within the framework of public order, justice and equality; to demand from the Means of Social Communication the timely correction of misinformation whenever truth, or the reputation of either of people or of institutions has been damaged.

As promoter of society, therefore, civil authority should channel the means of social communication towards the common welfare.

Civil authority should see to it that communication keeps its essential requirements such as: truthfulness, sincerity, honesty; it should also supervise the quality of mass media so that moral and cultural values may be promoted and respected.

All those concerned and influential in the means of social communication have a serious responsibility towards the formation of sound public opinion. Civil authority must respect this responsibility.

MEANS OF EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE AS REGARDS AUTHORITY

Public authorities should present a living testimony of justice in the performance of its functions.

Civil authority should gear programs or curricula proposed for the various levels in education, especially those pertaining to social studies and philosophy, towards education for justice.

Civil authority should respect the responsible action of citizens and their participation in affairs that concern their role both in the spiritual and in the temporal order. Christian citizens, in particular, enjoy this right as a consequence of the existing correlation between rights and duties conferred together with christian initiation in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

THE MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND JUSTICE IN GENERAL

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

The Church has a right as well as a duty to utilize all means of social communication for the purpose of evangelization. The word of God cannot be chained.

It is necessary to promote and coordinate the means of Social Communication available to the Church. It is also necessary to seek ways to secure the Church's active and full presence in the human and christian orientation of all mass media also to train the christians in a critical spirit so that they may take advantage of those means and yet not be manipulated by capricious commercial interests or by ideologies alien to the Christian Spirit.

The means of social communications should have as their fundamental objective their educative and cultural function through a genuine formation and an honest information that cannot be limited to the political and economical fields such as has been the case up to the present.

Moreover, the means of social communication should act as integrating elements of the community, ecclesial as well as civil, and should promote the creativity of the person and the community.

This will only be possible when the criteria governing the education for justice is the objective truth, dignity and respect to the person within the framework of charity and evangelical prudence.

THE MEANS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER SECTORS

The principle governing the relationship of mass media to the other sectors of society — the family, the school, the parish, the world of labor, and authority have been discussed above.

MEANS OF EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF MASS MEDIA

The presence of Church in the means of social communication is justified because of the message she is bound to convey and because of the decisive and efficacious influence mass media has today.

"Since the means of social communication (press, cinema, radio, TV, etc.) shape and control modern public opinion to a very great extent, the Church should be present in those fields. The use of such media generally includes: a) pre-evangelization that is to say the right information about the christian doctrine, christian ethics, relationship between the Church and the world which is prior to faith; b) cooperation in the work of evangelization so that catechetical and preaching activities may be accompanied by audio-visual means that will help a better grasping through images as in appropriate to modern culture; c) direct evangelization so that this may reach even those spheres or milieus that are normally beyond the scope of the preacher; and this with such a frequency as would not be possible through direct preaching." (Synod of Bishops, 'Evangelization in the Modern World' part 3, I. e).

Systematic education should include the study and practice of mass media with the purpose of training minds to critical thinking and fostering creativity. Therefore, the use of audio-visuals should be taken into account when the programs for preaching and catechetics are being elaborated.

It is desirable that the Seminaries, Universities, Colleges, Schools and other educational centers be concerned with the formation of critical thinking as regards the means of social communication.

The Church is aware that she is not alone in the responsibility for the promotion of justice in the Philippines. We believe, however, that she has a proper and specific responsibility — a responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness to love and justice in accordance with the Gospel message. And this witnessing if it is to be effective, must be carried out in Church institutions and the lives of all Christians.

May the merciful love of God for men in Christ Jesus, Who is the foundation of all justice, remain with all of you.

For the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of the Philippines

✠ (Sgd.) JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN, D.D.
President

September 14, 1978
Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

CATECHETICAL SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Tentative Report on the Initial Survey

By

Pedro S. de Achútegui, S.J.

N.B. The following report was prepared to be presented to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines during their semi-annual meeting in July. The author thanks especially Fr. Joseph L. Roche, S.J., for the help extended to him in its preparation.

On Dec. 16, 1977, Bp. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, Chairman of ECERI (Episcopal Commission for Education and Religious Instruction) sent questionnaires to all the ecclesiastical territories of the Philippines, several institutions for the formation of catechists, and some Catholic schools. The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter.

All the addresses were given two questionnaires: one "general" and another specific ("diocese", "school"). Some of the questions were materially the same in the "general" questionnaire and in the specific one, but the point of reference was understandably different. The respondents, however, did not always take into consideration this difference in perspective.

A total of fifty-seven (57), answered. About one-third of the respondents sent in some materials, printed or mimeographed, originally published by them or simply used in their courses. Some sent only materials **without answering** the questionnaire.

1) The following 32 ecclesiastical territories sent in their answers and/or materials they use in the catechetical apostolate:

Balanga	Legazpi	Ozamis
Bangued	Lucena	Palo
Batanes	Maasin	Romblon
Bayombong	Malaybalay	San Fernando (La Union)
Cabanatuan	Malolos	San Jose (Antique)
Capiz	Manila	Surigao

Cebu	Marbel	Tacloban
Davao	Masbate	Tagbilaran
Dumaguete	Mountain Province	Tagum
Iligan	Nueva Caceres (Naga)	Tuguegarao
Iloilo	Nueva Segovia (Vigan)	

2) Of the **institutes** 11 answered the questionnaire:

Bukidnon Institute of Catechetics (Malaybalay)
 Catechetical Training Institute (Cebu)
 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Manila)
 De La Salle University Catechetical Center (Manila)
 East Asian Pastoral Institute (Manila)
 John XXIII Catechetical Center (Davao)
 Lumen Christi Catechetical Formation Center (FMM, Manila)
 "Mensa Domini" Catechetical Institute (San Jose, Antique)
 Mother of Life Center (Novaliches, Manila)
 Stella Maris Catechetical Center (Ozamis)
 University of Santo Tomas' Institute for Catechetics (Manila)

3) The following 13 **schools** also sent in their answers:

Ateneo de Davao University (Davao)
 Ateneo de Manila University (Manila)
 Centro Escolar University (Manila)
 College of the Holy Spirit (Manila)
 De la Salle University (Manila)
 Divine Word University (Tacloban)
 Far Eastern University (Manila)
 Philippine Women's University (Manila)
 St. Louis University (Mt. Province, Baguio City)
 San Carlos University (Cebu)
 University of San Agustin (Iloilo)
 University of Sto. Tomas (Manila)
 University of the East (Manila)

The Religious of the Virgin Mary (R.V.M.) answered the questionnaire in a kind of comprehensive view of catechetical activities in their schools.

Method followed in summarizing and interpreting the survey.

Because of the relatively and absolutely small number of respondents in the different categories and the lack of enough "qualified" answers the analysis of the various items cannot be expected to render conclusions that may be considered "scientifically" valid. Hence it has been decided to proceed rather by presenting **trends** and offering **samplings**.

Part of the reason may be attributed to the questionnaire itself. It might have been **too general**, thus possibly discouraging answers in depth. This, however, is understandable—perhaps even unavoidable—because of the nature of what was desired in this initial attempt.

As indicative of **trends**, the **number** of affirmative and negative answers is generally given in the form of percentage when there are clearcut answers. This percentage, however, should be taken in many cases as an **extrapolation** from the answers given, leading to more general conclusions—a kind of “Gallup poll” survey. Thus, for instance, the answers given by only 13 schools could hardly be indicative of the actual situation.

The **sampleings** are offered as particularly representative of already existing models or patterns which in turn may be of help for other groups.

Discussion or epistolar communication with some of those who had sent answers or materials, and some individuals who had commented on the report in its original form, have also helped in distinguishing elements that appeared to belong to the same “unit” in the sources, when in fact some of them belonged, for instance, to the diocese rather than to the school or institute, and vice versa.

I. ELEMENTS COMMON TO THE VARIOUS GROUPINGS

1. **General situation.** The overall picture is rather encouraging if we consider the number and variety of catechetical activities, especially in the dioceses and schools. Among the answers these are the opinions: good (30%), fair (30%), active (20%) with the formation of catechists as one of the top priorities (10%), satisfactory (10%).

2. **Conscientization.** In some dioceses and schools (both Catholic non-sectarian) there seems to be a great interest in imparting religious instruction. As for the existence of “catechetically” conscientized priests and religious the rate given is 87%, with 13% considering it as “minimal”.

Just how profound and dynamic this conscientization is may be gathered, among other factors, from the consideration of various coordinates:

a) **Formation of personnel** for the catechetical apostolate:

Dioceses, schools or institutions having **experts** in catechetics (72%); without experts (28%).

Proportion of people **specially trained** for the catechetical apostolate: 60% of the groups have specially trained personnel with numbers varying as high as 11, 14, or even a whole religious congregation dedicated to it (Missionary Catechists of St. Therese, Lucena). Other groups report "few" (30%) or none (10%).

One school, CEU has 10 out of its 12 religion teachers trained as catechists. Other dioceses or schools have them formed at ACUP. Among the schools, San Carlos University (Cebu) has 12, Divine Word University (Tacloban) 7, FEU has 6 full-time catechists, who attended seminars on Catechetics trice a month at the Manila CCD.

b) To keep up the spirit, zeal and knowledge needed for this apostolate several dioceses hold **periodic seminars** for catechists on a **regular** basis: annually (28%), twice a year (10%), bimonthly (25%), monthly (30%). Other dioceses or schools have seminars on an **irregular** basis (5%).

c) **Personnel dedicated** to the catechetical apostolate. 84% of the **dioceses** state that they have priests dedicated to this apostolate. Various figures are given: 4, 5, 11, 17. One of the dioceses states that "all" the parish priests are dedicated to catechetical work. However, 16% acknowledge they have no one "dedicated" to it. One particular ecclesiastical territory (Tagum) reports the existence of 2,500 volunteer catechists. The following figures may also be worth nothing: Baguio reports 260 full and part-time catechists, Malaybalay 408, and Tagbilaran 797.

The number of people dedicated to "catechesis" in the **schools** varies considerably from institution to institution. Often it depends on the concept itself: religious instruction or catechesis? Some samples. The University of San Agustin in Iloilo reports 2 full-time theology teachers "in catechetical work", 4 full-time teachers for religious instruction in the high school department, 6 part-time teachers in the elementary, and twenty-two (22) full and part-time professors dedicated to the theology subjects in the eight colleges of the university. De La Salle University reports fifty-six (56) catechists.

A total of fourteen (14) instructors in theology at the college level work is reported by the Divine Word University in Tacloban. The CEU has 4 at the high school and 8 at the college levels.

It should be noted, however, that in this respect much depends on the **school program**. In fact the number of teachers is not the dominant factor; but the number of **units** in theology in the program, is. On the other hand, one of the reporters remarks: "I

think there can be too much theology in college — too many units. This holds especially for Catholic schools for girls — run by Sisters — if the majority of the students come from their own High School and Grade School”.

3. **Participation of religious communities in the direct or supporting work of the catechetical apostolate.** The reports from the dioceses give 44% of the religious communities cooperating with or supporting the catechetical activity of the diocese and 33% of the seminaries, 12% say “not all”, and 10% “minimal”. (One of the respondents writes: “I even doubt whether catechetical education is truly given” in their schools). Obviously the percentages are not real indication of the concrete situation, given their limited source.

4. **Program of action.** 90% of the dioceses report the existence of a program of action but 10% indicate that there is none. The program is varied: a yearly catechetical feast, adult seminars, summer courses for children and adults, teaching catechism to children especially in public schools, “fostering Muslim/Christian reconciliation”. The following examples may serve as illustration:

a) The diocese is divided into catechetical districts (vicariates); catechists meet regularly; there are uniform lesson guides (Lucena.)

b) There are four programs under the umbrella of the CCP: catechists’ formation; family life apostolate; youth encounter; pre-sacramental catechesis (Legazpi). Parishes in Mindanao usually have a standard set of “offices”.

c) Lesson plans are prepared; coordinators meet every two months (Tagum).

d) Four (4) professional religious catechists are in charge of professionalizing the catechetical staff of every parish; they act as supervisors of volunteer catechists in several parishes; adult catechesis is to be implemented in 1978; catechetical retreat seminars for Sunday students during weekends (Balanga).

e) Formation of **Parish Assistants** (graduation after 2 years at the Catechetical Institute) to assist the parish priest in training local parish catechists, instructing adults, preparing for the sacraments, visiting homes, liturgy. At present there are 30 of them. Formation of **Parish Catechists** after three months of intensive training period. At present there are 60 of them. There are also live-in seminars on **Christian Leadership** at the professional level.

(teachers and others), non-professional level (leaders of the barrios), and the out-of-school youth. All this is accompanied by publication of catechetical materials (Antique).

One element that seems to be missing in the program of action in the majority of territories and schools among those who have responded to the questionnaire is the knowledge of the **General Catechetical Directory** (GCD). This seems to be due to various factors, one of them is its too technical and too general character. Only one school and 2 dioceses indicate that there is sufficient knowledge of the **Directory** among the people involved in catechesis.

5. **Regular catechetical instruction.** Reports from the dioceses give an almost unanimous affirmative answer to the question whether or not there is regular catechetical instruction in their territory. The frequency varies: once a week, twice a week, thrice a week. Some even have daily instruction. Only one diocese has given a negative answer: However, from the context it may be assumed that it denies not the fact of instruction but of its **regular** character. However this is not necessarily the case in the great majority of barrios. One diocese (Maasin) reports that 95% of the barrios have been visited by catechists in the last 5 years.

As for the "audience", a 34% refers explicitly to instruction given also of out-of-school youth and holding regular Sunday classes for adults.

6. **Publication of catechetical literature.** A very high number of respondents (61%) answered this question. Of them, 50% indicate that they publish materials, and in particular "syllabi", in printed or mimeographed form; while others give the high cost of printing as reason for not publishing anything. They prefer using materials published by others. From the samples sent to ECERI, a 36% are original materials; the rest are materials from abroad, "transplanted" without much adaptation.

In this matter of **publication of catechetical literature**, it seems that one of the reasons why dioceses often publish their own catechetical materials is not only that the **General Catechetical Directory** (GCD) appears to them to be "too technical in character" and also too general, but that usually they all want something immediate and concrete. But they may not always bother how their own materials are actually used.

It is also to be noted that in the **more active dioceses**, much of the 'catechetical work' is "community-development", "leadership seminars", conscientization etc. In terms of the **Christian kerygma**, explicitly presented, there is much to be desired.

7. **Use of audio-visuals.** From the "no use at all" (one of them giving as reason lack of electricity) through the "minimal" use, or making their own, to the "yes" (even if "too expensive"), it is clear that over 75% make use of audio-visuals as an important tool in imparting religious instruction.

8. The problem of **financial support** for the catechists comes sharply in various reports. Most "catechists", if they are trained and not just volunteers (women of the parish or students), need to teach to support themselves. They cannot live off what the parish or diocese can pay.

A good analysis of this difficulty, as well as other related ones, is offered by one of the respondents: "In terms of personnel, a survey last year indicated a lack of permanency among catechists and religion teachers. Better job opportunities or possibilities for further studies are some reasons for these to leave. This is closely related to the remuneration these, specially catechists, receive. No doubt, this is very minimal, even with catechetical funds. Employment for most has to be on part-time basis due, among other things, to geographical distances that make the area of responsibility — and thus fullness of employment — very limited for the catechist. For school-centered kind of catechesis, there are the added difficulties with the educational system that sometimes do not allow for more and better teaching time allotment."

"The majority of catechists are young, female, single and high school graduates. Culturally, they have a hard time for acceptance in their communities. Educationally, it will take them some time to be at home with the Message they have to impart, how to impart it and make it relevant to the life situation of their people".

II. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF VARIOUS GROUPS

A. DIOCESE

1. In 80% of the dioceses there exists a **Diocesan Catechetical Commission**, or its equivalent. However the relationship of the Commission to the various units or institutions, either within or outside the diocese, is not totally satisfactory. While 70% claim that the relationship and coordination within the diocese is satisfactory, 10% claim that it is too little, and 20% that it is non-existing. As for its relationship with other commissions or catechetical institutions to the regional and national levels, again it is totally

non-existing. Similarly non-existing is the relationship with the National Catechetical Commission for 80% of the respondents, 20% say "hardly" or "minimal".

2. 70% of the dioceses receive a **subsidy** for catechesis mainly from the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, while 30% do not receive any help from abroad. Some of them advocate a greater effort in favor of finding local resources, without having to be depending on foreign donations.

B. SCHOOLS

1. **Organization.** In all the schools that responded to the questionnaire there is a department in charge of religious instruction.

a) **P.W.U.** The Religion Department is an integral part of the university, and the salaries of all the teachers are paid by the university itself. Religion is a required subject for all the students (non-Catholics are exempted). Each student is required to take two semesters of Religion (4 units), attending two classes a week of 1 1/2 hours duration each or 3 hours of religion per week.

b) **University of San Carlos, Cebu**, has a small Catechetical Training Center in cooperation with the archdiocese, with 23 residents, half of them college students taking an education course with a major in religious education. For Catholic students Religion is obligatory (12 units at the college level).

c) The **Ateneo de Manila University** has 15 units in the college 16 more in Philosophy.

d) The situation at **F.E.U.**, Manila, is not satisfactory. In the course 1977-78 there has been no catechetical program, due mainly to lack of convenient time and place for classes. Nor is there at present a catechetical program for college students.

e) In contrast, the **C.E.U.** program may be considered very good in the context, a non-sectarian institution. This is so because the program is financially underwritten by the university administration as an integral part of the curriculum (only non-Catholics are exempted). The program is carried through formal classes of religion at all levels, annual retreats for high school and college students, with a predominantly catechetical content, and by college students giving religion classes during their visits to penal institutions, hospitals, homes for the aged and the handicapped. Certain weakness are present such as insufficient allotment of classrooms producing oversized groups, insufficient time, difficulty in recruiting fully competent teachers.

The above cases have been given as samples. It may be said in general that the **Catholic** schools that answered the questionnaire are pretty well organized as far as imparting **religious instruction** is concerned. It does not appear, however, that, as a rule, they are up to the demands of real "**catechesis**" either for their own students, or for **outside** their school. As for the **non-sectarian** schools that answered the questionnaire, they are generally zealous in the work of religious instruction, even if their facilities (personnel, time, place) are rather limited. The "**catechesis**" aspect seems to be absent.

2. The problem of **method** appears rather unclear. Some schools follow the CCP system; others acknowledge not to have any; while others are, as they themselves put it, "**ecletic**" (whatever the word may mean in this context).

3. **Proportion of teachers to students.** The figures, and consequently the proportion too, vary: 1 teacher for every 7 classes; 1 teacher for 35-40 students per class; 1 teacher for 16 students, 18 hours for one teacher per class when the teacher is full-time; 7 full-time college theology teachers.

4. **Time allotted to teaching religion.** Three colleges report 3 times per week of one hour each or 3-unit courses. The same is true for some high school departments, with others reporting daily classes or only one hour per week. In the elementary department one of the schools also reports a daily class of religion. PWU has 24 class sections, twice a week, with periods of 1 1/2 hours each, or 3 hours per week. San Carlos University (Cebu) has a very elaborate program, with complete curricula and a very distinctive set-up.

5. **Students involved in teaching catechism.** In one of the schools (University of San Agustin, Iloilo) this activity is a requirement for graduation. Others have it only on a voluntary basis. CEU and PWU do not have any formal organization in this respect, although some individuals help in this apostolate in their respective parishes.

6. **Bible groups** exist in various schools. In some of them people are prepared for Bible study and discussion; in others they are not. In 3 of the schools reporting, the non-Catholic group is predominant, with real influence and a kind of proselytist attitude. PWU reports the frustration of the administration at the fact that they have been unable to persuade the 20 or so religious Sisters studying at the university to engage in this kind of work.

C. INSTITUTES

The institutes to which a special questionnaire was sent may be divided into three different categories according to their OBJECTIVE, as explained by them:

a) In the first category the objective of the institute appears to be **more general** and less specific. Within that more general objective the catechetical section/aspect is geared to the initial training in the **art** of teaching catechism or giving religious instruction or the "praxis of catechetical apostolate". Catechetics is only a **part** of a wider program.

b) In the second group or category, the objective of the institute is to train "**religion teachers**" mainly for schools, or for "teaching catechism" to different groups.

c) The third group aims at **forming "catechists"** who will be truly dedicated to "catechesis", or at updating their catechetical training. It does more than prepare people to give religious instruction.

It is this third group which should be given special support. The second group, while it should keep the positive values it already has, should not be contented with merely training "religion teachers" or "teachers of catechism", but should try moving into the formation of true "catechists".

1. The **curriculum** which is followed in various institutes is drawn-up in function of their respective objectives. Two main trends may be seen, corresponding also to the above-mentioned distinction between training of "teachers" and formation of "catechists".

a) The "teacher training" approach puts the accent in the content, emphasizing the comprehensiveness and systematization of the doctrine to be taught. Quite a number of "syllabi" composed by various schools for use in their classrooms and by some of the institutes for the training of teachers fall into this category.

b) The "catechist formation" approach, while giving the importance that is due to the doctrine and the content, goes beyond it to the "formation of the person", through a process of interiorization. Two examples of the "catechist formation" approach are:

1) **Institute of Catechetics: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine** (Manila). The 'Religion Teachers' Training Program' of CCD comprises,

a) An Introduction to contemporary Catechetics. Besides the acquisition of knowledge, it tries to go into leading the teachers to a "sympathetic" understanding of the personality and milieu of the learner (a Filipino), thus helping in becoming more effective mediator between God's message and the learner. It uses both the inductive and deductive method.

b) Catechesis on Life and Death, with emphasis on the inductive method.

c) Catechesis on Freedom and Responsibility, with the Theology of Vocation and Redemption (the social aspect is taken up in this context).

d) Religion Coordinator's Course for updating the catechetical training in line with the Church's contemporary approach to revelation.

There is also a "Refresher Course", that gives emphasis to the study of the 1974 Synod on Evangelization — with special attention to "Evangelii Nuntiandi" — and the 1977 Synod on "Catechetics in Our Time".

2) **Mother of Life Center** (Novaliches, Manila). The Center prepares young men and women for Christian community leadership and the catechetical apostolate. The first year is a live-in at the Center's campus, providing the experience of authentic community life. Various courses and workshops are intertwined. The second year contains Field Work as Practicum (with remuneration) in the student's own diocese, parish, school, and in close relation with the Center. There is also a Summer Course where the integration of study and experience leads to the final examination. After it, the "apostolic mission" is given to deserving candidates, together with 4 government-recognized certificate of proficiency in Guidance/Counselling and Religion.

For the funding scholarship grants are also available from sponsors in Germany, covering tuition fees, board and lodging with a counterpart from the corresponding local sponsor for workshop materials, necessary books, and a monthly allowance for personal expenses and medical fees. Besides, it assures the candidate's future employment.

A feature of the Center is the fact that it aims at, and is connected with, the real life of the Filipino, mainly in its rural setting.

2. **The number of professors** in the institutes varies: 5 full-time staff members with 12 part-time professors (Mother of

Life) and 11 professors at IC-CCD Manila, with intermediate figures in the other centers. (The EAPI professoral body, although more numerous, is not exclusively dedicated to catechetical training).

3. The respondents have not always indicated the **number of students** enrolled in their respective institutes. Around 400 have graduated from Mother of Life Center in ten years (at present they have 6 men, 2 of them married, and 33 ladies). From the summer of 1969 to the 2nd semester 1977-78, the CCD has had a total of 4,287 graduates. Of these 2,004 are lay people, 2,125 religious Sisters, 26 priests, and 132 brothers. The Malaybalay Institute in Bukidnon has produced 408 graduates and the "Lumen Christi" Institute in Manila 617.

4. **The educational level of students** goes from high school graduates (CCD), to college graduates (CCD and Mother of Life Center), to professionals (Mother of Life), and to some who have taken post-graduate courses (CCD).

5. The **"audience"** they are aiming at is elementary and high school students as well as adults, professionals and non-professionals (C.C.D.), or mainly public schools and parishes especially in the rural areas (Mother of Life). Other centers, mainly school-connected institutes of catechetics, aim at training religion teachers for schools.

In general the school-related centers are also more academically-minded. The other centers are contributing in great measure to teaching religion classes in public schools, to reach the far away and less attended parishes and barrios, to the formation of catechists in a truly Filipino setting, and to publication of high school Lesson Guides.

III. MATERIALS ON CATECHESIS, CATECHISM, AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION SENT TO ECERI

Thirteen (13) ecclesiastical territories, 4 schools, 2 institutes and one religious congregation sent in materials used for catechesis, catechism, and religious instruction. A total of 128 items (7,923 pages) were received. Of them, 75 items (2,761 pages) are mimeographed, and 53 items (5,162 pages) printed.

Most of the **mimeographed** materials come from the ecclesiastical territories. The prelature of Malaybalay leads the list (22), followed by Cebu (12), Bangued (10) and San Jose, Antique (9). A

good deal of the mimeographed materials are written in one of the Filipino languages (37%), while most of the printed materials are in English (63%).

Among the schools, UST has 17 items, and CCD (Manila) 7 very substantial productions. The Carmelite Missionaries are represented with 10 books, booklets or syllabi.

Materials intended for **college** students are abundant (30 items). Abundant also are materials for **elementary** school children (32 items), with some complete and very well elaborated sets from grades 1 to 6. By contrast, materials intended for **high school** students are extremely scarce (3 items). The rest of the materials sent, practically one half (65 items), are mainly meant for catechism and religious instruction in the parishes or in public schools.

Most of these materials contain **doctrines to be "taught"**. Some describe also methods that may be used in the presentation of the message. Relatively few consider "catechesis" as distinct from catechism or religious instruction.

It is not easy to assess their **value**. They deserve a more careful study and evaluation than what the present writer is able to do. A browsing, however, shows the enormous variety of interests, emphasis, approaches and methods, as well as the **lack of coordination** among the various entities. This makes imperative the need of interchange of ideas among those responsible for the production of catechetical literature, if only to avoid compounding the already existing confusion. There are many and valuable elements and aspects in practically all these materials: but it is difficult to avoid the impression of a catechetical "mini-chaos", as far as literature is concerned. Without looking for uniformity, a certain coordination will go a long way, while avoiding waste of time, effort and money — and producing better results.

IV. SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above analytical description cannot claim to be an exhaustive study or presentation of the initial survey on the catechetical situation in the Philippines. One of the main reasons is the low percentage of responses (or at least qualified responses) to the questionnaire. Rather than a statistically-grounded conclusion, we may see **patterns or trends**. However, certain positive and negative aspects are clearly perceived. It is these aspects that we will consider now in the form of synthesis and recommendations.

1) **Positive aspects.** Indisputably there is seriousness in and commitment to the catechetical apostolate. The importance given to it is manifested in the formation of personnel, the number of people dedicated to this apostolate, the interest shown by dioceses, parishes, schools, institutes and individuals in this work, as well as in the abundance of literature on the subject.

That in general there is a heightened awareness of the importance of catechesis, no one would doubt. The problem is: what to do in terms of the **size and proportions** of the need.

The zeal of some non-sectarian schools in imparting religious are moving from classroom catechetics (which we still do) towards community catechetics via Sacraments and Community Building". (Antique)

The zeal of some non-sectarian schools in important religious instruction to their students speaks highly of the administration and of the chaplains in charge of the spiritual welfare of these institutions. It is an example that should be emulated even by Catholic schools.

2) **Negative aspects.** The first minus-sign that strikes the reader of the various reports on the catechetical situation in the Philippines and the literature produced to help in this apostolate is the **lack of coordination** among the various groups — be they dioceses, schools, or catechetical institutes. Not only there is no coordination; but even knowledge of what is being done by "the others" in this important apostolic field.

A second very fundamental aspect **absent** in most of the responses, as well as in the materials sent, is the important **distinction** between **catechesis** on the one hand and **catechism** or religious instruction on the other. As long as this distinction is not clearly understood, it will be extremely difficult to get out of the mentality that the recent synod of Bishops wanted to do away with: namely, the dichotomy between orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

Often also those who have been 'trained' as catechists give their 'lessons' to all, from grade school to professionals.

The **General Catechetical Directory** is unknown to the majority of those involved in the catechetical apostolate. This makes imperative the need of preparing a **National Directory** which will be adapted to the concrete Philippine situation. The **National Directory** should avoid the too technical presentation of matters which seems to characterize the General Catechetical Directory, and which has been mentioned as one of the reason for the lack of interest in it.

3) Suggestions and Recommendations

At this point of the present report it seems that some suggestions and recommendations are in place, either as they have been explicitly proposed in some of the answers to the questionnaire or as obvious conclusions from the reports received. It is to be hoped that these suggestions may be further discussed by interested individuals, groups or institutions for what they are worth.

A. On methods. There is a real danger that the various methods simply become fads. Several (even many) schools are known to have their "own".

1) It seems therefore that some critical work needs to be done here to **clarify** the situation as it really exists: the many "different" methods end up exactly the same, since in their execution they depend mostly on the actual work of teachers/catechists in the field;

2) It is important to be aware of the danger of seeking for the "new", without having worked seriously at any one method.

3) Something should be done to remedy the lack of concrete planning in terms of specific goal (e.g. of Catholic college);
specific nature of religious instruction;
specific method to be used.

B. On seminars. It would be useful, and perhaps necessary, to **discuss** the whole notion of 'seminars'. Some seem to begin to realize that the results of years of seminars are often very **meager**. A critical evaluation is needed on how to improve them and cut down on the waste of time and energy expended on them, e.g.

1) Seminars should be directed toward a concrete, practical, limited goal — that can be checked;

2) They should be organized **NOT** by "visiting lecturers" alone, but always with the **local** heads, in direct relation to their concrete needs;

3) They should **NOT** be one by one — piecemeal. They have to be planned and interrelated, having some basic **continuity**, directed towards formation, etc.

C. Formation and materials.

1) The need for the **formation** of teachers and catechists over the proliferation of materials should be stressed, especially the formation of catechists on the grass-roots level.

2) **Basic** materials are needed; **but how to use** them is also very important.

3) The multiplication of "**syllabi**" is perhaps inevitable; but what should be done is:

1) make **standard** sources available;

2) work on **team-cooperation** and development of those who are actually teaching these "**syllabi**".

4) As for the '**content**', a plan prepared for the Ateneo de Manila College (by Fr. Joseph Roche, S.J.) spells out an approach to **college Theology** which is '**adult** catechesis in school context'.

5) An effort should be made in preparing catechetical literature in the **vernacular** if we wish to reach the majority of the people. That will demand of greater effort for adaptation, contextualization and indigenization in this particular field. It may be safely assumed that easily 60 to 70% of the population do not know — or at least not enough — English.

6) Attention should be given to producing catechetical literature for **high school students**, an age-group that appears to have been greatly neglected notwithstanding the fact that the high school years are usually a crisis period in the process of man's formation.

D. General

1) Greater attention needs to be given to **family** and **adult** catechesis.

2) It seems desirable that the **students themselves** be more involved in the catechizing activity of the Church. This kind of apostolate helps them to deepen their faith and commit themselves to the apostolic activity that is expected of the laity today.

3) Preparation for **Bible-group study** seems necessary if we hope to make catechesis more biblical, while preventing non-Catholic groups from becoming proselytise even in Catholic schools. This particular aspect seems to need emphasis in the formation of Sisters as well as in the seminaries. More practical courses should be envisioned.

4) Finally, there should be a means to encourage the **sharing** of information and knowledge, personnel and resources among the various groups dedicated to the training of teachers or the formation

of catechists. From certain comments I personally heard, it seems that some groups were reluctant even to answer the questionnaire because they interpreted it as an initial step to control their activities (which obviously is not!). That may also explain the very low percentage of responses elicited from Catholic schools.

Without any intention of suggesting a "granting of awards", it would be good to be aware of the fact that certain ecclesiastical territories, schools or institutes appear to be particularly worthy of praise for their commitment to, and performance in the field of catechetical apostolate. Antique, Malaybalay, Manila, Tagum and Tuguegarao may be at the top of the list (using alphabetical order). CEU, Divine Word University (Tacloban), PWU, UST and the University of San Carlos (Cebu) deserve special commendation. UST has produced abundant catechetical literature. CCD (Manila), Mother of Life Center (Novaliches, Manila) and John XXIII Catechetical Center (Davao) are among the most effective formation centers in the country.

Manila, Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
June 2, 1978

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HOMILIES . . .

Continued from page 738:

such a Son! Daily they grew in the mystery of Christ. Daily they understood better the ways of God for the happiness of man.

Let every family realize that their happiness does not consist in their earthly possessions of goods, houses, cars and other facilities, but in the interpersonal relation of each member of the family with the others. Deepest happiness is found in simplicity of life, where daily work and prayer bind the members of the family close together, and Christ reigns over the household. There the Spirit of peace and love heals all wounds, strengthens all ties, and supports all suffering and trial. The world will only find peace and happiness if it returns to the simple joys of family life, modelled on that of the Holy Family, whom God has given as a blueprint for the Christian home.

HOMILETICS

By

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

A TIME TO BE ALERT

December 3, 1978: First Sunday of Advent

The Human Situation: The Christopher Movement, started by Fr. James Keller, M.M., has alerted many people to helping their fellow-men. Here is what one man wrote in: "I heard the Christophers on the radio again. I was impressed with the idea of what one person can do. Now I have been alerted to the needs of others. I like to write letters, make over greeting cards to cheer the sick and shut-ins. Also to call them on the phone and visit them in person whenever possible. Really, to show our elderly folk that we care for them means very much".

The Good News: Advent is the time to be alert. One is alerted that Christmas is soon at hand, the birthday of the Savior. He became one of us to bring peace, joy and fellowship, to make us one family of God. All the preparations during the weeks of Advent, all the purchasing, the decorating, the music and song are directed to that happy event, even though many are no longer aware that Christ is the focal-point of Christmas. One has to be alerted that Christmas has a deeper meaning, and that these external preparations are meant to renew us in the true spirit of Christmas, which Christ set before the world in the proclamation of the Good News.

Yet even this is not the ultimate purpose of our Advent preparation. Renewal in Christ, as each succeeding Advent season rolls around, has a further purpose, namely to keep us alert that this is a passing world, so it is futile to attach ourselves too strongly to it, because the world and everything in it is passing away (1 Jn. 2:17), to be transformed into a new world by the glorious Coming of the Savior when he inaugurates the endkingdom. Then all our preparation of the present time will be amply rewarded and everyone will receive from God the praise he deserves (1 Cor. 4:5). Then the just will share in the glory of the Risen Christ, when he comes to reward everyone according to his works.

Thus Advent is a time to be alert to our purpose in life and what God expects of us in our respective calling. It is a time for sincere compunction for having neglected many times to do the will of the Father, and to take to heart the saving message of his Son. For parents, to be alert not only to the temporal and physical needs of their children but even more of their spiritual needs: to have an eye open as to what companions they are going with, what TV and movie programs they are witnessing, what reading material is in their possession. It is a time for professional men and women to examine whether their dealings with their clients are honest, upright and just. A time for all workers to "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar".

Advent is also a time to give greater attention to those around us who are in need: the lonely, the sick and the feeble, the bed-ridden or those wandering down our streets with no one to give them any help. It is a time to practice genuine Christian charity to all those in whom Christ is begging for food or shelter, provided they really are in need. How often there is a crying need among minority groups for social justice, but their cries go unheeded as did the plea of Joseph and Mary that first Christmas night as they sought shelter for the Babe to be born. Helping an unwed mother may prevent a serious crime.

Advent is also the time to be alert to the missionary needs of the Church, and to keep in mind those men and women who labor in far off lands, who have left home and country to bring Christ to those who as yet have not received him. In this way we too can be Christophers and bring forth Christ in the hearts of many who have not as yet received the faith, by our willingness to help the missionaries in their work of evangelization and Christification of the world. These and many other ways can make us alert to the needs of our times, and to do our part to satisfy the need of man for God, for without God in his heart, man is never truly happy.

Our Response: Poison gas, seeping from a big oil refinery near Mexico City, snuffed out the lives of many workers. What was still more deplorable was the fact that they were overcome not in broad daylight, but at night. The fumes did their deadly work while the men were sleeping in their homes around the refinery. They had no warning. No time to prepare themselves for eternity, unless they had been prepared already before going to sleep. There was no one there to alert them to the impending danger. Can we not save our fellowmen from impending spiritual danger by alerting them to the pernicious poison of certain TV programs, reading material, movies, or evil places?

MARY MOST HOLY**December 8th, 1978: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**

A beautiful pure white gown prepared for a queen cannot be presented to her if it is marred by a single spot of indelible ink, be it ever so small. Nor can an elegantly woven bed-spread be offered to the First Lady if it has a flaw anywhere in its make-up. The home of the highest authority in the land would have to be put in perfect order with no defects in wiring, plumbing or other fixtures, before he takes possession of it. Is it any wonder, then, that the one whom God had chosen to be the Mother of his Son, was created by him in utter holiness, without any moral defect or any least contamination of the Evil One? Mary was predestined from all eternity to be the Mother of God's Son, and therefore all holy in his sight. From the first moment of her being conceived, Mary is immaculate. How well she could say to little Bernadette: **"I am the Immaculate Conception"**!

Our non-Catholic brothers sometimes confuse the Immaculate Conception with the Virgin-Birth of Jesus. These are two different realities. The Immaculate Conception refers to Mary, who, though conceived by the marital union of her parents in the ordinary way of all mankind, was nevertheless, from the first moment of her being conceived, flooded with God's friendship and love, a state of being which is usually described as being filled with sanctifying grace. Her being conceived by her parents was not miraculous, but her being conceived immaculately is her singular and unique privilege. The Virgin-Birth refers to Jesus her Son, who was conceived of Mary, not in the ordinary way by mother and father, but miraculously, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who empowered Mary the Virgin to conceive Christ without the aid of a human father. If God can give man the power to engender human life through both parents, he can certainly also give that power to a virgin in a way that is above but not contrary to nature. Jesus of course is without sin by reason of his divine Person, for God is all-holy.

From early Christian times, Mary was referred to as the Most Holy Virgin. It was most fitting that the Home where the Lord himself would take up his abode on earth would be all-holy in its very origin, for he the Lord is the Holy One of Israel, the all-holy God. St. Augustine put it tersely: "When there is a question of the Mother of the Lord, I do not want any mention of sin". Yet it was only in the course of centuries that it became clear how

Mary, a child of Adam, could be conceived free from original sin. Every child of Adam comes into the world in a state of aversion from God and needs the saving grace of the Redeemer of all men.

Mary's Immaculate Conception does not mean that she was granted this privilege independently of the saving action of her Son. Being a member of the race of Adam, Mary also needed this redemption. Only in the course of time, after much deliberation and thought, did it become clear that Mary also would have incurred original sin, **if she had not been prevented from doing so by the merits of her Son and Savior.** In other words, she was preserved from incurring original sin, because of the death and resurrection of the One to whom she was destined to be Mother. Thus Mary was redeemed in a most singular and unique manner, or to use a theological phrase: she was pre-redeemed. Once this became clear, the door was open to the promulgation of the decree of Mary's Immaculate Conception. This took place in 1854 when Pope Pius the Ninth announced it to the whole Catholic world, to its great joy and jubilation. Both before and after that decree, many countries have chosen Mary Immaculate as their principal patroness. This is exactly the case in our own Philippines. Mary Immaculate is the foremost and principal patron of our country. Under her immaculate mantle, the dark clouds of subversion and error have been kept away, and its people kept close to Christ in the fulness of Catholic life and belief. All praise to Mary Immaculate for her motherly care in our regard.

Every child looks up to its mother, not only for love and care, but also to imitate and follow closely in her footsteps. To imitate our Mother's holiness is the aim of every sincere Catholic, man or woman, boy or girl. Sinfulness is the opposite of holiness. Our Christian striving is a constant and determined striving to eliminate sin and selfishness from the heart. This is an on-going process which continues on during our whole life. With mind and heart united with our blessed Mother, who is free from sin from her very conception, it will be easier to accomplish the task before us, because even psychologically it will be a positive striving to imitate what is good rather than a mere striving to avoid what is evil. That goodness is the holiness and sinlessness of One who is Mother and Queen of all, One who understands our difficulties, our weaknesses and our mistakes, but who always can win the grace of sincere compunction for all who turn to her with humble petition and prayer. Someday, we too shall be with our Mother in the mansions of the Father. There we shall be like Christ her Son, sharing his glory and splendor. Then Satan, sin and death will have been utterly conquered. Then the children will again be like their Mother, without spot or wrinkle, immaculate and all-holy in God's sight (Eph. 1:4).

POINTING TO CHRIST

December 10, 1978: Second Sunday of Advent.

The Human Situation: Toward the end of World War II, a squad of soldiers came to a little Italian village that had been bitterly fought over. In the village square they found a statue of Christ lying on the ground, battered and broken. Some of the soldiers put it together as best they could and set it back on its pedestal. But they could not find the hands. Finally, one of the group made a crudely lettered sign which read: "I have no other hands but yours". Truly, the Christians are the living hands of Christ. They ought always to point to Christ by word and example.

The Good News: When John the Baptist appeared on the scene, he soon won a large following. What attracted the crowds was both the appearance of the man and his intriguing message. John practiced what he preached: penance. He was not clothed in fine garments, but in camel's hair which is rough, and for a belt he wore a strip of skin that had been tanned. His food was that of the wilderness: honey extracted from wild bees' nests, and roasted grasshoppers. A more rugged picture of an ascetic can hardly be drawn. Yet this is what drew the crowds, for they knew that the prophets of old practiced rugged ascetism and were close to God. The people were hungry for God.

Also his message was one of penance: "Repent, for the reign of God is at hand". "There comes One after me who is mightier than I. I am but his lowly slave, not fit even to perform the slave's task of untying his sandal-straps." With these words spoken in deep humility, John the Baptist prepared the people for the Coming One. He had no intention of attracting people to himself, he was not out to make friends nor to win applause. Rather, his whole purpose was to point to the One who alone is the Savior of the world. John came solely to bear witness to Christ. All his words and deeds were pointing to Christ.

Our lives as Christians ought always to point to Christ, both by our conduct and by opportune words. If the entire Church is missionary, each one of us has the duty to try to lead others to Christ. Sometimes it is by a mere word that people are brought to Christ. How often converts have mentioned that for years no one invited them to attend Catholic services, or to read some Catholic literature or listen to a sermon preached on some special occasion such as a mission, or at midnight Mass on Christmas. Yet they were hungry for the truth and only lacked the courage to take the

initiative. Again, how often the faithful example of a devout Catholic wife has brought back a wayward husband to the practice of his boyhood faith, or to marital fidelity after a longer period of unfaithfulness. How often, too, the sterling example of students, who bear witness to their faith openly and with courage, win over the doubts and uncertainty of other students who wish to share their convictions.

There are many ways to point to Christ and the Christ-life: parents have ample opportunities in the home with the atmosphere of Christian love, a respect for the ordinances of the Church, faithful gathering for prayer, and a noble care for the poor at their door. Teachers can instill love for Jesus and Mary both by an encouraging word, a fitting song, or some meaningful pictures on the walls, or prayers written on the blackboard. Business managers can give their employees an opportunity for mass on First Fridays right in their own compound. Youths can invite other youths to the Eucharistic sacrifice or charismatic prayer-meetings as well as decent entertainments. All these avenues lead to Christ. Like John the Baptist, the true Christian does not wish to draw others to himself, but in a truly missionary and apostolic spirit to point to Christ and draw all men to him. For it is Christ the Lord who will accomplish the transformation in men's hearts by his Spirit of Love.

Our Response: What can be done is shown by the following: Ligaya spent all her early life in orphanages or being boarded out to various homes. She attended whatever denominational Church was at hand. After marrying and having four children, her husband was stricken with an incurable ailment that made him an invalid for life. Anxiety for her family brought her great depression and close to panic. It was then that the St. Vincent de Paul men stepped in, regardless of her Methodist religion. The weekly spiritual and material help given by them meant very much to Ligaya. Today both she, her husband and eight children are very happy in the Catholic faith. Those men were the living hands pointing to Christ.

- SUGGESTIONS FOR HOMILIES FOR THE AGUINALDO MASSES

December 16: **Mankind's need of a Savior.**

1. Religious bankruptcy at the time of the Lord's Coming:

a. Paganism was rampant: there were idolatrous cults of many gods. Immorality was at its worst. (Both are reflected in modern man's cult of false gods: power, money, pleasure; and his steadily increasing immorality.)

b. Jewish religion was stagnant: the cold legalism of the Pharisees crippled all true devotion, and the scandalous example of the corrupt priesthood (the Sadducees) kept many away from the Temple and from God.

2. The Coming of the Savior:

a. Jesus restored man to the belief in one, true, living God, the Father of all. All men are called to be his children and to possess his Spirit: this is the Good News Jesus brought to earth.

b. Jesus himself became man's sacrifice and his spiritual Food. He gave his followers one Law of love instead of the multiple obligations of the Old Law. All are called to be brothers in the one Christ.

Response: All Christians ought to receive the Good News with joy, modelling their lives on him and his Gospel, not on a world hostile to God. The mass media have a tremendous responsibility.

December 17: **The Joy of our Christian Calling:** See the Third Sunday of Advent.

December 18: **Joseph, simple and humble, yet exalted by the Most High**

1. Joseph was an ordinary workman, living in an obscure village; he was unknown to the great ones of the world, yet he was great in God's eyes, for he faithfully did the will of God in the daily tasks of his trade. He was a man who combined work with prayer. Joseph is the model for workmen of all types. From him they can learn to value the daily work God gives man to do.

2. Joseph is given the sublime calling to be husband of Mary, the Virgin, and Virgin-father to her Child: God's greatest treasures on earth. Joseph's docility to the divine plan brought him much toil and suffering, but his prudence in all actions, his faithfully carrying out God's will once it became clear to him, makes him the model of all Christians. To cooperate with God's plan for us, and to carry it out faithfully is man's noblest task on earth.

Response: Let all the members of Christ rely on Joseph's powerful protection, which shielded Mary and the Child from all dangers in Bethlehem and Egypt; and provided for all their needs at Nazareth. He will likewise provide for us. He is the patron and protector of the universal Church.

December 19: **Witness to Christ:** John the Baptist.

1. The entire life of John was a witness to Christ, the Light. John was merely the lamp suffusing this Light. He remained extremely humble in his own eyes despite his own great popularity. He claimed not even to be worthy to offer a slave's service to his Master. Also his preaching was only to prepare the hearts of his fellowmen to receive the Coming One. He even led his own disciples to Jesus, pointing him out to them as the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29). He explicitly stated he wanted his own influence to decrease and that of Christ to increase. He died a martyr for his convictions.
2. Every Christian is called to witness to Christ throughout his whole life. As visible members of the invisible Christ, we must make his countenance known by our own words and deeds. This will be done by humble service of others, and by leading others to Christ by our opportune words and good Christian example. Courageously will the true Christian defend Catholic beliefs and genuine Christian morals, even though that means at times opposition, persecution and suffering.

Response: Be proud of the name of Christian. Bear witness with joy to Christ the Lord. Be another Christopher, by bringing Christ to others.

December 20: **The Power of the Spirit:**

1. At the very origin of Christianity, the Spirit was powerfully at work: He came upon Mary, overshadowing her to carry out his momentous plan. He filled Elizabeth so that she broke forth in prophetic praise. He took possession of John from his mother's womb, so that he became the great ascetic and prophet (Lk. 1:16ff). Jesus himself was impelled by the Spirit from the very outset, for it was the Spirit who animated and directed his every movement: by the Spirit he prayed, by the Spirit he worked his miracles, by the Spirit he chose his Apostles (Acts 1:2). The Apostles too did not sally forth to evangelize the world before they had received power from on high, and were invested with the power of the Spirit.
2. Today, marvellous deeds are again being done by the Spirit of God, all over the world. The Body of Christ is alive with new vigor and childlike simplicity. Even youth is willing to relinquish fleeting pleasures and shallow entertainment, to come together for ardent prayer. This can only be the accomplishment of the Spirit who is putting the Church on the offensive against the

onslaughts of modern paganism and immorality, and establishing more fully the Reign of Christ. With and in the Spirit, little man is again able to rebuild a world that had fallen away from God and his Anointed One, and adorn it with the beauty of Christian living.

Response: Every encouragement ought to be given to this army of men and women, young and old, who are driven by the Spirit to live fully the Christian life. We too can join them and taste the goodness of the Lord.

December 21: Love in Action.

1. Modern man often tends to be extremely selfish. So often he is only out for his own advancement, his own advantages. Even in religious matters, if he does get something out of it, he is unwilling to attend Church-services or to join any good project. It is always his little self that is the center of all his aims and ambitions. The thought that he owes his God and Creator worship and praise does not register in his mind. That he also owes his fellowmen love and the sharing of his goods are not on his agenda. His little self has become the god around which everything revolves.
2. What a different picture our Lady gives us as she went quickly to the aid of her aged cousin Elizabeth. Mary had just received the stupendous news of the angel telling her that she was to be the Mother of the Savior. Mary had given her consent and the Word was made flesh in her very womb. Yet that did not deter her from hastening to the aid of her cousin who was already six months with child and who, being advanced in age, would need her assistance these last months. Here is love in action. Forgetful of herself, not at all demanding any attention or advantage for herself, Mary's one aim is service to her fellowman.

Response: It is Mary's spirit of charity, Mary's example of love in action that modern man must take up again today, to sow the seeds once again of the true Christian spirit: denying oneself of one's selfish aims, and serving others for the love of Christ.

December 22: Praise the Lord!

1. A new wave is sweeping the Catholic world: whereas it was customary to pray mostly for favors needed, now gatherings of men and women, teen-age boys and girls are taking place to praise God for his love and goodness, and to give honor and love to Jesus as Lord. With animated song and fervent prayer, these

groups willingly spend hours in sending up to the Father in heaven the praise that is so worthy of. "Praise the Lord", "thank you, Lord", are phrases often poured forth at these prayer-gatherings. Those who gather there have become aware of the infinite goodness and great love of God for them, and wish to unite in a mighty chorus of praise, singing from their hearts to the Lord.

2. This is the spirit in which Mary poured out her "Magnificat". When Elizabeth gave her a word of praise, Mary at once praised her God and Savior. Acknowledging the marvels accomplished in her, above all the Incarnation of God's own Son, Mary remained ever in her own eyes the humble handmaiden, channelling all her thoughts to God Most High. She prophesies that the mercy of the Lord would be poured out down the ages on all who would likewise serve him humbly with generous love.

Response: We raise our voices with Mary to praise him for the marvel of the Incarnation, and for giving us a share in it, by knowing Jesus the Lord, Son of God and Son of Mary. With gratitude we shall sing Mary's magnificat for all the graces and favors bestowed on us and our dear ones. Let us share our goods with one another this Birthday of the Savior with joy and generosity. Let us also share our spiritual favors and tell all that God has favored us his lowly servants.

December 23: **Serve the Lord with Joy!**

1. Elizabeth and Zechariah had served the Lord through long years faithfully, remaining steadfast in prayer, and loyal to their duties to God, although they had had no offspring, something that every Jewish couple longed and prayed for. The answer to their prayer was long delayed, even unto their old age. But they continued to serve the Lord without complaint, and put their trust in him. Now this trust was awarded. A child was given to them.
2. This was not an ordinary child, but one who would be the greatest joy in their old age. God himself had named him John, which means: Yahweh has shown favor. He is not only filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb, but he will be the very forerunner of Israel's Messiah-King, the greatest of all the prophets. Once the aged Zechariah wrote on the tablet: John is his name, his tongue was loosed and he broke forth into that canticle which is daily sung in the morning prayers: Blessed be the God of Israel, for he has visited and ransomed his people.

Response: We must always persevere in prayer, for God will hear them far more than we would even imagine. He is a God of infinite

love. We share the very sonship of God's Son, and in Christ our prayers will always be heard. Let us serve him with joy for his great love.

December 24: **Spotlight on Mary:** See the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

THE JOY OF OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING

(A homily on "Witness to the Light" can be found in Bol. Ecl. Oct. 1975, 730f)

December 17, 1978: Third Sunday of Advent

The Human Situation: Joy is a universal delight. Everyone loves to hear joyous peals of children's laughter. The joy of young people is contagious. Some people are joyful by nature, others need a little practice. Joy often reveals itself by a winsome smile. It takes 65 muscles to frown but only 15 to smile. Joy and smiling go hand in hand, especially with Christmas music in the air.

The Good News: Today can be called the Sunday of joy, for the liturgy fairly sparkles with sentiments of joy. We are coming ever closer to the stupendous Christ-event that brought untold joy to the whole world.

Our Blessed Mother was the first to receive the Good News that the Son of God would become our Brother, and she was the first to break out in exultant joy over that momentous event, when she sang in her Magnificat: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior". The responsorial psalm re-echoes that joy with the phrase: "My soul rejoices in my God." In the first reading, the Spouse of Christ, the Church, rejoices exceedingly over the robe of salvation with which the Lord has clothed her. She is decked out as the Bride of God. In the second reading, St. Paul exhorts us to rejoice always, and to render constant thanks for God's great favors.

How well the liturgy realizes that the gift of faith in Jesus who brought us salvation is a great gift indeed, and we ought to celebrate it with joy of heart and deep gratitude! This we will willingly do, if we are continuously aware of Christ's saving Presence in our midst, not like those in today's gospel about whom the Baptist complains that there was One in their midst whom they did not recognize, and that One was the Savior of the world. Yet how well these words of complaint could be uttered today in regard to

so many: There is One in your midst whom you do not know, though he is the only One who can give you true peace of heart, true joy of spirit.

Christian joy is one of the chief fruits of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul points out in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 5:23). And rightly so. Our Christian religion was never meant to make us morose or stern. We can hardly picture Jesus winning over the crowds, the children or even the disciples, if his manner was morose and stern. His countenance must have been bright and cheerful, his smile most appealing, reflecting the deep joy of his Sacred Heart. St. Luke tells us that one day "he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: I offer you praise, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because what you have hidden from the learned and the clever, you have revealed to merest children" (Lk. 10:12). The apostles were the recipients of this joyful revelation. They were gradually initiated into the wonder of the Christ-event, that God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son (John, 3:14), who entered into our human race and became one of us.

It is the Christ-event that we are preparing to celebrate. A Savior is given to us who brings remission of all our sins, a powerful Savior, who conquers Satan and pours out upon his own Holy Spirit, whereby we are reborn as children of God and co-heirs with his Son. The Good News he brings to earth unfolds the plan of the heavenly Father to make man perpetually happy and brim-full of joy, by uniting mankind with himself in the bonds of the Spirit of love, whereby all men form one Christ in his Son, and enjoy forever the divine joys of God himself. Is it any wonder that the angel proclaimed to the shepherds: "I bring you tidings of great joy! Today a Savior has been born for you" (Lk.2: 11).

Called to be God's children, the joy of the Spirit ought to fill the heart. Let that joy express itself in many and various ways: in song and prayer, in greeting and gift, in humble service of our fellowmen, especially of those who are in great need. Many too join the ranks of those who come together every week to sing with holy joy the praises of the Lord for all his wonderful works. It is the Spirit in their hearts who unites all present in a chorus of exultant joy, which finds expression both in word and deed.

Our Response: Joy is catching. Recently the word "smile" is placed in many little sayings, and found on stampitas, on post-cards, on blackboards and on stickers for vehicles of transportation. On writing paper: Smile, and the world smiles with you. In a jeepney: Always enter with a smile and pass it on. On a hospital wall: If

you are not smiling now, practice up for tomorrow. If we put these sayings into practice, many others will smile along with us and be filled with the joy of the Spirit which we are trying to communicate. Then all will see that the Christian heart is happy, full of confidence and joy, for it realizes the reality of God become our Brother.

SPOTLIGHT ON MARY

(For another homily entitled "Waiting with the Dawn for the Day" see Bol. Ecl. Oct. 1975, 732f)

December 24, 1978: Fourth Sunday in Advent.

The Human Situation: Some decades ago, Mary was celebrated with great enthusiasm, and at times the emphasis may have been more on the Mother than on the divine Son. Today, some have gone to the opposite extreme, hardly ever, if ever, mentioning the name of Mary at all, even discarding the Rosary so often favored by the recent Popes, and relegating Mary to a forgotten shelf. The liturgy set the path in the golden middle. Christ is and will always remain the focal-point of the Christian religion, but Mary is the Dawn of the Day that gives us Christ the Light; she is the Blossom that gives the world the Fruit which brings immortality and Life everlasting; she is the shortest and easiest means to approach the throne of her divine Son, for she is Mother and Queen. God made her such, not man. Who are we to deny her that God-given place in our religion?

The Good News: Today's liturgy casts the spotlight on Mary, Mother of the Savior. In the alternate opening prayer the keynote is struck: "The mystery of your eternal Word took flesh on earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan." All the preparations of the prophets of old, all the Old Covenant's sacrifices and longings culminated in that act of total abandonment to the divine will, when Mary placed her life at the service of God's plan with those momentous words: "I am the little maidservant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say". Then the Spirit moved, as once he moved over the waters in the first creation, and the Christ-event became a reality for all time and eternity. The new creation took place. God had become man in the living Temple of the Virgin Mary, and would draw all men to himself in the one Body-Person of Christ.

He is the promised David's Son, as given in the prophecy of Nathan, and he is heir to David's royal throne. He is son of David legally through Joseph his legal father, but physically only through Mary his Mother according to the flesh. David wanted to build a house to the Lord, but it was the Lord instead who told David that he would build a house, that is, a dynasty for David, and it would last forever, because Christ, David's Son, is King of the universe for all time and eternity. Today's gospel gives the climaxing fulfillment of this prophecy when it was announced to Mary that she is to be the Mother of David's Son, and heir: Christ the Lord.

How simply, yet how nobly did the virgin answer the call of God. There was no fuss or fanfare. She paused to think over the matter, she asked a simple question, and when informed of the marvellous plan of God, gave herself up totally to the Spirit. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt within her. Truly she is the highly favored daughter, the most blessed among women. The Lord himself is with Mary to bring about his plan hidden from all ages, yet embracing all nations and peoples. The Almighty has done great things for her and holy is his name. By placing her life at the disposal of the Spirit, her motherhood was raised to the highest possible level of dignity, and Mary becomes Mother of God's own Son, the holy Mother of God. Man boasts of doing great deeds by himself, but Mary's boast is to have let the Spirit of God do great things in her. She prefers to be his little handmaiden, the docile instrument of his mighty divine action. Therefore the liturgy sings in the response today: Forever will I sing of the goodness of the Lord.

With the spotlight on Mary, the model for all God's children, we sing in the alleluja verse: "I am the servant of the Lord. May his will for me be done." Like Mary, the entire Church places herself at the disposal of the Spirit, so that he can work again his wonders in each member, and the Christ-event take on greater splendor this Christmastide, when each one who lovingly submits to the advances of the Spirit in true compunction of heart and genuine love of God will have Christ reborn in his heart for the glory of the Father. Once the Spirit of God finds a heart docile and open to his plan, he does great things in that heart. Just as by a little paint brush in the hands of a Michelangelo or a Raphael, great and magnificent paintings come into existence, so in the heart of one that leaves itself willingly in the hands of the divine Spirit, Master Painter and Sculptor, wonderful things take place.

Our Response Mary's response to the angel ought to be our response today as Christmas draws so near, and every day of our life. Only then can God realize best his wonderful plan for us.

DO WE GIVE HIM ROOM?

December 25, 1978: Christmas, the Birthday of Christ.

There is a Grail Christmas playlet called "No Room". The theme centers around the fact that the labors, hardships and sufferings in the world had overwhelmed us so much that we had allowed Christ to be crowded out of our hearts, and when he asked for shelter, we had no room. The play demonstrates clearly that if we allow Christ to come into our hearts, he can take our labor and weariness, our pains and disappointments, and make all of it one with his own, so that he with us together can work the world's salvation.

While we rejoice on this Birthday of our dear Savior, for which we have prepared all during Advent, and while we greet one another today with holy joy, it is a sobering thought that there is much misery in the world this very day in many countries of the world, even after almost two thousand years of Christ in our midst. So many people are still torn by wars and riots, by doubts and despair; so many thousands are homeless because of recent floods or earthquakes; so many will not have a decent meal today even though it is the Birthday of Jesus, Christmas Day. In our very city there are many homes where Christmas is scarcely different from any other day, because poverty stalks the door, with father out of work or mother sick abed, unable to care for the children. And even among us there is no one who is entirely without some problem or cross, some obstacle to complete happiness.

This is where the playlet mentioned at the outset takes on meaning. If we open wide our hearts and give room to Christ, who alone brings peace and happiness, we have found true peace and deep spiritual joy. He can take our labors and weariness and pains and make it one with his own. He can show us that as Savior of men he did not come to give us at once a paradise on earth, but to teach us how to face our problems as he did, to willingly embrace our pains and unavoidable privations together with him, even misunderstandings and setbacks which he also suffered, for by these very means he brought salvation to mankind. He came as Savior, but only by entering into all the vicissitudes of our human life did he win salvation for us, and obtain for each of us eternal

and lasting happiness. Now by means of our uniting with him in our labors and sufferings, he once more brings salvation to the world we live in, and makes us participate in that salvation for ourselves and for those near and dear to us.

Christmas then becomes truly a rebirth in the real Christ, the Savior who become one of us to let us share his divine life and eternal happiness. He shouldered all our burdens while on earth, from Crib to Cross. His toil and suffering sanctified our toils and suffering, and now if we give room to him to labor and suffer in us, he transforms us into himself in a truly Christian life of love.

This is a far cry from the tinsel and colored lights of the only Christmas known to many. It is also a far cry from the plastic Jesus as represented in so many statues. Instead, it is a genuine renewal in the real Christ, as the mind of the Church always intended Christmas to be. Such a rebirth probes the depths of the heart and has lasting effects. It will let us see the sufferings of the world as well as our own sufferings and those of our dear ones in the light of Christ's salvific sufferings, and it will make us realize that salvation and happiness is the end to be gained by much effort, pain and suffering. But it will definitely have a blessed end for it will usher in an eternity of light and bliss, the reward of having welcomed Christ and accepted him for what he really stood for. We opened our hearts and gave him room. Then he will open the gates of eternity and give us perfect bliss.

THE HAPPINESS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

December 30, 1978: Feast of the Holy Family.

In his inaugural address, Pope John Paul I stated: "The danger of modern man is that he would reduce earth to a desert, the person to an automaton, and brotherly love to planned collectivization. The Church, admiring such so-called achievements, intends rather **to safeguard the world that thirst for a life of love from the dangers that would attack it.**"

One of the greatest dangers for the happiness of man today is the breakdown of family life. The Creator himself intended family life as the solid foundation of humanity, and instituted marriage as something sacred and permanent. Today, free love is rapidly replacing marriage, divorce in being advocated even where that

growing cancer had long been resisted, trial marriages and teenage hasty unions frequently end up in frustration. Young people live together as they please, and separate when they please. Broken homes are more frequent each succeeding year.

Against this dark picture of neo-paganism stands the bright light of the Holy Family. What a breath of pure and fresh air we experience as we gaze upon Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their simple but holy life at Nazareth. Theirs was **that life of love which the world thirsts for**. Nothing sensational happened in their midst year after year. They were not out for the novel or the spectacular. There was not the rush-rush of our big cities. There were none of the modern means of transportation, convenience or entertainment. Yet peace, deep peace reigned in this household, the peace of God and the love of the Spirit, which bound them together in closest union, affording them true happiness. This is the model for every Christian family.

It is not the things of earth that make a man happy: neither money nor power nor possessions can really satisfy the human heart. Happiness is found in interpersonal relations and ultimately in our relation with God. Jesus was happy in the companionship of Mary and Joseph in whose presence he was totally at ease, for they mirrored forth so perfectly the ideal of marriage that God intended from the beginning. He was happy to lead the hidden life of work and prayer in the obscure town of Nazareth as long as the Father willed it so. He was content to work as the carpenter's son and earn a living from the labor of his hands. An old Welsh ballad has three troubadours coming across a man and a youth making wooden yokes to be drawn by oxen. Said the first: That boy is God's Son. Said the second: No! It can't be! Said the third: Would God's Son make yokes for oxen all day? How well the ballad shows that at Nazareth there is mystery, the mystery of Christ, who though he was by nature God, emptied himself and took the nature of a slave (Phil. 2:6f).

Mary and Joseph on their part were happy in the companionship of Jesus. If it is the joy and pride of every parent to watch the physical and the spiritual deepening of their child, how much more so did Mary and Joseph experience joy on observing how the Child grew into the Boy and then into the Teen-Ager and on into manhood. St. Luke states: "He grew in size and strength, filled with wisdom, and God's favor rested on him" (Lk. 2:40). Mary and Joseph's happiness was not in possessing goods but in possessing

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SWORN STATEMENT
(Required by Act 2580)

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

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

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 6th day of October, 1978, at Manila, the affiant exhibiting his Residence Certificate No A-23457 issued at Manila, on January 11, 1978.

(Sgd.) N. V. RAMOS
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