

# **BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS**

**OPPORTUNUM IAM EXPECTATUMQUE**

**Pope John Paul II**

**PRAYER AND THE CHURCH IN ASIA**

**Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences**

**PRAYER AS WITNESS IN CHURCH EVANGELIZATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Leonardo Legaspi, D.D.**

**THE FEAST OF THE SANTO NIÑO  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.**

**THE FRANCISCANS — APOSTLES OF BICOL**

**Jose Calleja Reyes**

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## EDITORIAL

# RESURGENT ISLAM IN ASIA

We cannot help but share the thoughts of a writer in the Melbourne **Herald** who said: "If what takes over from the Shah in Iran is a straight-out or barely concealed Islamic theocracy, then anti-modernisation and regional insurrection movements in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines will receive a very big boost indeed. It may even be a material boost — with direct infusion of money and weapons — if these movements are able to build upon Libyan help already." He goes on to say that Muslim rebels and fanatics in South-East Asia will represent the happenings in Iran as "a new triumph for resurgent Islam in Asia, and it will be. Coming so soon after the drastic restrengthening of Islam in Pakistani society and politics, the encouragement will be vibrant."

"In Indonesia where most of the population is Muslim (but, in many cases, only nominally so), Islam-in-politics has been the main opposition to Soeharto-type government since the communists were crushed in 1965. Some liberal activity has temporarily joined this stream, too, but Western liberalism is certainly not the long-term aim. Islam extremism is also the activist element in some separatist movements."

"In Malaysia, Islam runs through almost every fibre of government. There, too, the moderate Muslim regime must contend continually with fanatical adherents in a political struggle which has obvious meaning for the condition of the large Chinese ethnic minority. In the Philippines, however just the local cause of the Khadafy-backed Muslim rebels in the South, they represent the main threat to national unity and stability."

Our concern, then, in the months and years to come, is to correct in our Philippine society oppressive situations which invite extremist reactions. The Iranian masses have rebelled against the

Shah because he was unwilling or unable to create a society where the country's wealth could be equitably distributed. The oppressed masses could not bear the burden any longer, and when a religious leader raised the rallying cry of reform and rebellion under the banner of Islam, they responded with irresistible force. If nothing is done to significantly alleviate the plight of our Muslim fellowmen in the south, they, too, will become willing followers of extremist leaders. It can be argued that in many cases, our Muslim brethren are not really being oppressed although they feel that they are; they see that in many ways there are disadvantaged, as compared to Christian citizens. Such a situation is almost as explosive as direct oppression. For the sake of peace and unity, it must be done away with.

We must redouble our efforts to cooperate with our Muslim brethren in total human development. We may not convert them to Christianity in the process, but at least we will help them shun political extremism and religious fanaticism. We will live in peace and unity with them. This, surely, will be a significant step in evangelization.

## In This Issue

Taking account of the **Fourth Centennary of the Manila Archdiocese**, Pope John Paul II has sent a letter to Cardinal Jaime L. Sin saying, "Your people will most surely experience the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ working in their midst, and we assure you of the hearty support of His Vicar for all the initiatives conducive to the worthy celebration of this centennary."

Meanwhile, at Calcutta, India, on November 19 to 25, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences held its four-yearly meeting and "Considering the many positive values of Asian contemplative forms of prayer for the enrichment of the life of prayer in the Church; considering further the need to provide prudent and solid theological basis for pastoral policies," it **recommended** that "steps should be taken to undertake in-depth studies of the sacred writing of other religions of the various Asian forms of prayer and meditation, and of the different authentic forms of popular piety." In their **State-**

ment the Bishops express their belief that "the Church in Asia must become a deeply praying community whose contemplation is inserted into the context of our time and the cultures of our people." They also observe that "Christian prayer is necessary for genuine human liberation and development, and to bring man to his full stature as a son of God. Prayer commits us to the true uplift of the poor and the powerless, the oppressed and marginalized. Prayer also brings us to understand how injustice is rooted in the sinfulness and selfishness of men's hearts."

Writing on prayer and looking at it **As Witness in Church Evangelization and Development**, Bishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., notes that Evangelization is effective when an interiorisation of the truths taught is achieved. This is done through "a prayer life whereby the individual is open to the movements of grace and seeks the divine presence through prayerful meditation and communication. Only from this interior life can we confidently expect the witness of an authentic Christian life."

Continuing his series on the **Magisterium**, Bishop Legaspi throws light on the ordinary and non-infallible magisterium of the individual bishop and most particularly of the Roman Pontiff.

Our reliable commentator on liturgical questions, Fr. Herman J. Graf, S.V.D., explains the **Feast of the Santo Niño in the Philippines**. He comments on the decisions on this matter made by the Bishops of the Philippines in 1971, 1975 and 1978, and helps our readers to fully appreciate the new Mass Formulary for the Feast.

Historian Jose Calleja Reyes gives us an article on the **Franciscans — Apostles of Bicol**. Of these missionaries, "Some are erudite, some are comical and tragic and others are plain and ordinary. However, they are now part of our great Bicol Christian tradition..."

# OPPORTUNUM IAM EXPECTATUMQUE

LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II  
to  
HIS EMINENCE JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN, ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA  
for the  
FOURTH CENTENNARY OF THE MANILA ARCHDIOCESE

To our Venerable Brother Jaime L. Sin  
Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church  
Archbishop of Manila

With great joy and loving affection We find the proper time has now come to give the answer, you, Our venerable brother, might have been expecting to the letter given to US last October, in fact only two days after We were called to take the helm of the universal Church of God as successor of the Blessed Apostle Peter.

From your letter, containing the report of what you have done and planned, We learned fully about the coming celebration for which you are preparing. Hence We in turn wish to send you today this personal letter to convey in advance Our fraternal greetings from afar, Our fervent exhortation and Our prayers. Thus We wish to express to you Our sentiments on the occasion of the solemn celebrations the whole Archdiocese of Manila will hold during this coming year.

In fact the coming month of February 1979 will mark the beginning of a series of heavenly blessings to be experienced all through the year. You will experience too a most fruitful renewal through a series of well-planned pastoral activities. Thus you will fittingly prepare the way to enter into the fifth century of Catholic faith and Christian life for the beloved People of God in the ecclesiastical territory of Manila, providentially established as a diocese by Our predecessor Gregory XIII.

The sixth of February will be a red-letter day for you, since it marks the four hundredth birthday of the first diocese established in the Philippines by the Church's Supreme Pastor — the diocese of Manila. This happy step was a manifestation and clear sign of the

maturity the Christian people in those islands had attained, a sign destined to be forever remembered. Moreover, with this step the Supreme Pastor was able to lay a firm foundation for the progress expected of the ecclesial community in the Philippines and ensure that it might flourish in the future. For, as you well point out in your letter, his decision to found a diocese was an act of wisdom which gave it a solid basis and auspicious beginnings, whose consequences have been seen in the course of centuries. Thus not only did the Catholic faith immediately begin to flower, but it has continued to grow and flourish the more throughout all that beloved island nation of yours even to the present day.

We ourselves have personally experienced the salutary effects of the celebration of the millenium of the Church in Our own country, Poland. Hence, in union with you, We feel an intense joy considering the remarkable opportunity the Archdiocese of Manila will have in the coming year for the renewal of her love for the faith that was entrusted to your ancestors and passed on for more than four centuries. Undoubtedly, this will also be an occasion for a deeper knowledge and love of Christ's Gospel, as well as of the role and responsibilities of Christians in today's society. Finally, it will foster favorable conditions for the adaptation of the structures and methods of apostolate in the whole local Church to the needs of modern times, in accordance with the demands of the Second Vatican Council.

It seems to Us that nothing will be more conducive for obtaining the future spiritual prosperity of the Archdiocese than the serious, devout and joyful recollection of the glorious examples left to you in the past by the early fervor of both missionaries and converts, the indefatigable activity of so many zealous pastors, the firmness and fidelity in the faith of so many Catholics for four long centuries, and the blossoming of religious customs and traditions. These, together with the principles of Christian life, have flourished not only within the Archdiocese itself but extensively also outside its boundaries.

During this centennial year, then, the glorious history of your Archdiocese and of the whole country will be frequently discussed and properly recalled. In doing so your attention and study should be particularly directed to the numerous questions dealing with parish life, the sacred liturgy, the family, and the adaptation of the faith to your own particular culture. These themes will each be studied and elaborated by the various groups and commissions entrusted with this task, but particularly by the great archdiocesan Synod which will open this coming October 21.



We are certain that all these excellent initiatives, We were so happy to learn of from your letter, will have as their aim, with the help and inspiration of the all-good God, the "deepening of the faith by knowing, witnessing, sharing" in each and every one of the members of the Manila Archdiocese, clergy, religious, and laity.

It is therefore for this reason that We send Our greetings to you, Our venerable brother, and likewise to the people entrusted to you and to your auxiliary bishops. At the same time We earnestly exhort you to use generously so many Heaven-sent graces and opportunities for the future dignity, glory and firmness in the faith of the Manila Archdiocese. It is with great joy that We are closely united with you in the intimate bonds of the Catholic faith and the love of Christ.

With you We also earnestly pray to God, author and source of all salvation and light, that whatever you may do during the whole year to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of your diocese, may be graciously transformed by Him into as many sources of new strength and spiritual gifts. All this redound to the further building up of the People of God in the Archdiocese.

We wish to end this letter by expressing Our most heartfelt congratulations to you and your people as you stand on the threshold of the fifth century of your life as People of God in the Archdiocese. Your people will most surely experience the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ working in their midst, and we assure you of the hearty support of His Vicar for all the initiatives conducive to the worthy celebration of this centennary. We graciously impart to all of you Our Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican on the twenty-third day of December of the year 1978, the first of our Pontificate.

(Sgd.) JOANNES PAULUS PP. II

# **FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

**November 19-25, 1978, Calcutta, India**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We wholeheartedly reaffirm the Resolutions of the Asian Bishops' Meeting, 1970, the Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of FABC, 1974, particularly those which touch on our sacred mission of evangelization.

Desirous to see a more dynamic and effective interiorisation of the fruits of evangelization in the hearts of our people in Asia through a renewal of the prayer life of the Church, we recommend to our member National Bishops Conferences that:

1. In recognition of the value of example in encouraging the faithful to a life of prayer, the bishops, priests and religious should give witness to their faith in prayer by being men and women of prayer.

2. Deeply aware of the importance and necessity of prayer and spirituality in the formation of our aspirants to the priesthood and religious life, in the selection of personnel of our seminaries and houses of formation, greater importance should be given to dedication to prayer life and to the ability to communicate this to others

3. a) In recognition of the vital role of prayer for the attainment of a total human development and for the renewal of Christian life among the people of God, establishment of contemplative communities and centres of prayer and spirituality suitable to our Asian context should be encouraged and promoted.

b) While deeply appreciating the invaluable service being rendered to the Church by existing contemplative communities, they should be encouraged to indigenise their forms of prayer and meditation, and thus add a new dimension of meaningful witness to the people in whose midst they live and pray.

4. a) Considering the many positive values of Asian contemplative forms of prayer for the enrichment of the life of prayer in

the Church; considering further the need to provide prudent and solid theological basis for pastoral policies, steps should be taken to undertake in-depth studies of the sacred writing of other religions, of the various Asian forms of prayer and meditation, and of the different authentic forms of popular piety.

b) Where such studies already exist, proper policy guidelines should be drawn up and appropriate catechesis should be given before introducing new forms of prayer and meditation.

5. Aware of the importance of spontaneity and sharing in prayer and promoting community spirit, forms of spontaneous prayer, such as prayer groups should be encouraged especially among the youth, who easily find their identity and security in groups, and among the sick and handicapped whose suffering in communion with Christ crucified is a very efficacious prayer.

6. Recognizing the essential role of prayer for the Christian formation of our students and of those charged to minister to them, programmes and activities conducive to the creation of a prayerful atmosphere within the academic community should be fostered in our Catholic educational institutions.

7. In order to comply with Recommendation No. 10. a) of the First Plenary Assembly on Mass Communications, the office of Social Communications should relate its activities to the promotion of prayer and the life of the spirit for a more effective evangelization in Asia.

# **PRAYER AND THE CHURCH IN ASIA**

## **FINAL STATEMENT OF FABC PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

**The Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), at its four-yearly meeting in Calcutta, issued a statement of which the following is the official abridged version**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In December 1970, we the Bishops of Asia gathered in Manila with our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, to address ourselves to the theme of the development of peoples in Asia.

In April 1974, at Taipei, we discussed our sacred mandate to proclaim the Gospel in the context of modern Asia.

From 19th to 25th November 1978 at Calcutta, India, we and our experts from 14 national episcopal conferences studied the theme "Prayer: the Life of the Church of Asia."

### **2. OUR THEME**

We chose the topic of prayer, not with the intention of withdrawing in any way from the urgent tasks that we took upon ourselves at Manila and Taipei but in the profound conviction that our minds and hearts have to turn today as always to that source from which light and energy from the Lord comes to us.

It is significant that our meeting was held in India, 'a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions,' as this has enabled us not only to study and pray much, but also to experience some Asian forms of prayer.

We offer these reflections to our brother Bishops in our regions to our clergy and religious, and to our Catholic communities, as a meditation on the role that prayer should have in the life of our Asian Churches.

### **3. THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF ASIA**

The people of Asia manifest a profound sense of spiritual values . . . the discipline of ascetics . . . a deep religious spirit . . . filial piety and attachment to the family . . . the unrelenting search for God and hunger for the supernatural . . . (Paul VI at Manila).

Yet atheism and agnosticism on the one hand, and materialism and secularism on the other threaten precisely those values which form our precious spiritual heritage. And so we notice in Asia today a tendency to forget God and to give up prayer and the things of the spirit.

We must safeguard the wealth of contemplation and interiority that has been ours so as to be able to "offer these values as precious gifts to the Church", for without contemplation and prayer, human society loses its way; and without contact with the living God, it is not even possible to safeguard man's humanity.

#### 4. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE: PRAYER

We believe that the Church in Asia must become a deeply praying community whose contemplation is inserted into the context of our time and the cultures of our people.

What is Christian prayer? It is our conscious **personal communion** with God our Father through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the insertion of our whole selves, of our life and action into the prayer of Jesus. We pray in the name of Jesus; we pray with Jesus. And this prayer is always a free gift of God.

Christian prayer is prayer **within the community** of those who have accepted the Gospel.

Christian prayer is centred around the **Eucharist**, source and summit of a worship that is uniquely "sacramental" and "ecclesial."

Christian prayer is prayer of **self-gift** to the brethren, for it creates the freedom of loving commitment. It enables us to find Christ in our brothers and sisters, especially the suffering, the poor and the powerless. It thus sends us into the world to transform it according to the designs of the Father.

This is the Church's gift of prayer to Asia!

#### 5. INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Christian prayer is necessary for genuine human liberation and development, and to bring man to his full stature as a son of God.

Prayer commits us to the true uplift of the poor and the powerless, the oppressed and marginalised. Prayer also brings us to understand how injustice is rooted in the sinfulness and selfishness of men's hearts.

It is prayer which calls on the Spirit to create within us both the courage and the love to bring about a conversion in men's hearts and the renewal of all structures of society.

## 6. CHRISTIAN FORMATION

A Catholic educational institution will fulfill its apostolic mission in the measure in which it is a school of prayer where the young are helped to see life with God's eyes and to love the world and their brothers and sisters with God's own heart. For this, prayer and formation in prayer are indispensable. Only if the young learn "to dialogue with God in the different situations of their personal lives" and to surrender themselves to God, can they grow into full human and Christian persons, striving to overcome all selfish individualism and to develop towards that freedom whereby they place their lives at the service of God and of their neighbour.

## 7. WITNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The Christian and the Christian community are made aware of God's presence in and through prayer and are thus enabled to respond to his Word in history, in "the signs of the times" and in the events and vicissitudes of everyday life.

Made aware of the importance of integrating Christian prayer into everyday life, we would like to emphasize that authentic prayer has to engender in Christians a clear witness of service and charity, leading to the total gift of self to others, even to the laying down of one's life for them. This self-gift will be our eloquent witness to the presence of God in the world and an indispensable means of collaborating with the Spirit in the mission of the Church. — The overflowing manifestation of a deep spirituality and prayer-life will itself have an evangelizing and witness value for others too.

## 8. INCULTURATION

The prayer life of our Churches should "take over the riches of our nations, which have been given to Christ as an inheritance", especially those ways of prayer which have been developed by the native genius of our people and have played an important and honoured role in shaping the traditions of our lands.

The Spirit is leading the Churches of Asia to integrate into the treasury of our Christian heritage all that is best in our traditional ways of prayer and worship.

Asia has much to give to authentic Christian spirituality a richly developed prayer of the whole person in unity of body-psyche-spirit; prayer of deep interiority and immanence; traditions of asceticism and renunciation; techniques of contemplation found in the ancient eastern religions; simplified prayer-forms and other popular expressions of faith and piety of those whose hearts and minds so readily turn to God in their daily lives. This is Asia's gift of prayer to the Church.

## 9. INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Sustained and reflective dialogue with those who belong to other religious traditions and joining with them in prayer will "teach us what we can receive from them", what the Holy Spirit has taught others to express in their religious books, in a marvellous variety of ways, different perhaps from our own, but through which we too may hear his voice, calling us to lift our hearts to the Father. At the same time we will find an opportunity to share with them the riches of our own Christian heritage.

We encourage this dialogue, undertaken in all seriousness, accompanied by discernment in the Spirit, fostered and safeguarded by those attitudes which lead to its deepening and patient, loving growth: openness and sensitivity, honesty and humility of spirit, a sincere disinterestedness and that fraternal love, which holds in reverence the feelings of the other and seeks to enter into his heart.

## 10. FORMATION IN PRAYER

Formation in prayer of aspirants to the priesthood and religious life is of vital importance for the Church in Asia. The Spirit of selfless commitment to the Lord, nourished by prayer and genuine contemplation; the interaction between prayer, theological reflection, and pastoral experience; and a life-style more in keeping with the spiritual traditions of Asia should be inculcated. The entire formation should be directed towards developing men and women of authentic holiness who will be both truly Christian and truly Asian, and towards enabling priests, religious and lay ministers to form others in the ways of prayer.

## II. CONCLUSION

It is the duty of a Bishop to confess and to give witness to his faith.

Our prayer is rooted in faith.

Our faith teaches us that ultimately the city of man can be saved only by the Passion and the Rising again of Christ entering our lives. The liberation of our peoples will not be wrought, nor the pain and injustice of the world removed, except through our sharing, by prayer and self-gift, in the mystery of the Cross.

That same faith tells us that it is the power of God's Spirit which will renew the world. That power is found especially in contemplative communities. Their vocation is precious to the Church. Their lives, lived in all fidelity, are fruitful beyond human reckoning! They give witness to the primacy of God in human history; their worship speaks to us of the God "who is not for the use of man", but on whose mercy and love all of human existence finally depend — the God who is on man's side, but the God who alone is truly God! We ask them to pray for the Church in Asia. We have confidence in the fruitfulness of their prayer.

We have confidence too in the prayer of the sick and the suffering, of those in pain and sorrow, of "the least ones" whom life seemingly has cast aside. "They are the strong ones" Pope John Paul II had said. We are glad to rest upon their strength!

Likewise, we appeal for prayers to the Churches of Asia whose representatives, for various reasons, have not been able to be with us at our II Plenary Assembly in Calcutta. Paradoxically, though absent, they have been more than ever present in our prayer, worship and discussion. We assure them of our fraternal solidarity!

## 12. PRAYER

Lord Jesus give to your Church in Asia the gift of prayer, which will draw us closer to you and to one another, "that we may be one... that the world may believe".

Mary, Mother of the Church, Morning Star, lead our people of Asia to the knowledge of your Son, Jesus Christ.

25th Nov. 1978

Vigil of the Solemnity of Christ the King  
Morning Star College  
Barrackpore, Calcutta



## PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **NESTORI CARINO**, e clero dioecesis Legazpiensis, electo Episcopo titulo Thibiucensi eidemque Auxiliari sacri Praesulis Legazpiensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui summa semper sollicitudine singulis dioecesibus providere curamus, cum omnes pariter Christus sanguine suo redemerit — cfr. Act. 20, 28, quotiens tamen de Ecclesiis Insularum Philippinarum agitur, gliscit, si fieri potest, cura Nostra illa ac diligentia, cum et mature christianam religionem exceperint et iam principes per totam Asiam faciem sanctissimae fidei nostrae tollant. Quam obrem, cum Venerabilis frater Theotimus Pacis, Episcopus Legazpiensis, ab hac Apostolica Sede Auxiliarem virum petierit, qui in laboribus fidelis adesset, bene fieri censuimus, si te ei assignaremus, qui, dives ingenii virtutibus episcopalibus nites, usur rerum non cares. Quae cum ita sint, consilio petito a Venerabili fratre Nostro S.R.E. Cardinali Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecto, te simul Episcopum nominamus et renuntiamus Sedis titulo **THIBIUCENSIS**, simul Auxiliarem eius sacri Antistitis, quem memoravimus, cum iuribus quae Litterae apostolicae — Ecclesiae sanctae die, sexto mensis Augusti datae, anno MDCCCCLXVI, definiunt. Ad consecrationem autem tuam quod attinet, potestatem facimus ut etiam extra urbem Roman eam excipere, possis, a quovis catholico Episcopo, cui assistant duo viri episcopali dignitate praediti, et ipsi consecratores, qui omnes sint cum hac beati Petri Sede fidei vinculo luncti. Non tamen in tui officii possessionem proficisci poteris, nisi fidei professione facta atque iure iurando dato fidelitatis erga Nos successoresque Nostros, teste aliquo Episcopo rectae fidei. Norum vero formulas rite subscriptas ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittes. Ceterum, dilecte fili, haec praeclara verba tecum meditare, quae in quodam beati Bernardi opere leguntur: — Totum obtineat Christus, qui totum creavit, totum redemit, totum et glorificabit — Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo octavo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto decimo.

✠ **JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
Secretarius Status

**EUGENIUS SERVI, Proton. Apost.**

**OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF "LA NAVAL"  
PATRONESS OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY**

**SACRA CONGREGATIO  
PRO SACRAMENTIS  
ET CULTU DIVINO**

**Prot. CD 2234/77**

**INSULARUM PHILIPPINARUM**

Beatam Mariam Virginem sub titulo "Our Lady of the Rosary of 'La Naval'" clerus et christifideles, illi praesertim qui in Insulis Philippinis ministerio nautico sunt addicti, iam ab antiquo peculiari cultu prosequantur.

Inde Excellentissimus Dominus Marianus Gaviola, Episcopus tit. Girbitanus, Vicarius Castrensis, communia vota excipiens, atque Coetu Episcoporum ad consilium accedente, electionem Beatae Mariae Virginis sub titulo "Our Lady of the Rosary of 'La Naval'" in Patronam apud Deum militum nauticorum in Insulis Philippinis rite approbavit. Idem vero, litteris die 2 novembris 1977 datis, enixe rogat ut electio et approbatio huiusmodi ad normam "Instructionis de Calendariis particularibus atque Officiorum et Missarum Propriis recognoscendis", n. 30, confirmentur.

Sacra porro Congregatio pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino, vigore facultatum sibi a Summo Pontifice PAULO VI tributarum, attentis expositis, cum electionem et approbationem ad iuris praescriptum peractas esse constet, precibus annuit atque BEATAM MARIAM VIRGINEM sub titulo "OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF 'LA NAVAL'" PATRONAM apud Deum militum nauticorum in Insulis Philippinis confirmat, omnibus cum iuribus et liturgicis privilegiis iuxta rubricas consequentibus, per Apostolicas Litteras in forma Brevis expendiendas.

Contra illiis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Sacrae Congregationis pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino, die 11 maii 1978.

**(Sgd.) IACOBUS R. CARD. KNOX**  
**Praefectus**

**(Sgd.) VERGILIUS NOE**  
**a Secretis a.**

**OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY OF "LA NAVAL"  
PATRONESS OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY**

**PAULUS PP. VI**

**AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.**

Priscis iam inde ab annis christianae Insularum Philippianarum aetatis honor ac publicus cultus Beatissimae Jesu Christi Matris non sine causa arcte cohaeret ipsis cum eventibus et fortunis maritimis eiusdem insulanae gentis. Etenim non minus quinque navales victoriae — periculorum extrinsecus impendentium expultrices — saeculo decimo septimo valentioribus longe de hostibus praeter expectationem reportatae etiam nunc peculiari intercursui Virginis Mariae a Rosario adsignantur quae nimirum sub nomine Dominae Nostrae a Rosario, addita appellatione "La Naval", maxima solemnitate quotannis concelebratur manifestaque praedicatorum fidelium pietate. Huic proin memorabili quondam tutelae et saeculari interim venerationi consentaneam rem suscepit nuper Venerabilis Frater Marianus Gaviola Episcopus titulo Girbitanus et Vicarius Castrensis in Philippinorum natione cum, adsentiente prorsus ipso Episcoporum ibi Coetu, persuasit ut eodem titulo diu invocata Genitrix Dei Maria eligeretur et institueretur iure superna Patrona classicorum militum in Philippianis Insulis quippe cum tales olim nautae prodigiosis victoriis istis paene omnes immaturo ex interitu essent incolumes crepti. Nos autem plurimum sane tribuentes efficacitati eius, modi patronatus caelestis pro singulis qui eo addiuntur et praevidentes iam salutares fructus illius Liturgicae dignitatis tum inter nauticos ipsos milites tum inter ceterorum Catholicorum communitates perlibenter sancimus id omne quod petenti memorato Castrensi Vicario prius concessit Sacra Congregatio pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino atque certa scientia et matura deliberatione Nostra deque Apostolicae potestatis plenitudine, harum Litterarum vi ac perpetuum in modum, Beatissimam Virginem Mariam sub appellatione Dominae Nostrae a Rosario "La Naval" praecipuam apud Deum Patronam universorum militum classicorum in Philippianis Insulis confirmamus seu iterum constituimus ac renuntiamus, cunctis additis simul honoribus et privilegiis quae praecipuis huius generis Patronis legitime conveniunt. Contrariis quibusvis haudquaquam obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, sub anulo Piscatoris, die XIX mensis Maii anno MCMLXXVIII, Pontificatus Nostri XV.

**✠ JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
**Secretarius Status**

## **SPIRITUALITY**

# **PRAYER AS WITNESS IN CHURCH EVANGELIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The Church, in its mission of evangelization in the modern world, finds itself confronted with unique challenges. The mission, the commitment to proclaim the Good News to peoples, is the same as it was centuries ago. But the conditions of society give a new dimension to the task of reaching into the hearts of people with the Word of love and hope.

Ours is an era of searching and questioning. An era in which the people seek in the Gospels a reality they can understand and which can give meaning to their lives.

Evangelization in modern times faces the challenge of adhering to a two-fold fidelity: fidelity to the message and fidelity to the people of our time.

Fidelity to the message implies keeping it intact in its purity — retaining the substance and truth of the message as it was given by Christ. Fidelity to the people calls for the searching for methods and techniques which will make this message — which is truly valid for all time — understandable and persuasive to the man of today.

It is the successful attainment of these two goals that challenges the evangelizing Church today: to change nothing of the Gospel but to make it as fresh and real today for the man who lives here and now. Pope Paul recognized this challenge when he addressed the Sacred College of Cardinals on June 22, 1973, with the words:

“The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us, therefore, to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man. For it is only in the Christian message that modern man can find the answer to his questions and the energy for his commitment to human solidarity.”

The Church's mission of evangelization derives its origin from Christ's own self-appointed mission. Of himself, this greatest evangelizer has said, "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God. This is what I was sent to do." (Luke 4:43).

This evangelizing mission began by Christ continues today. The same Christian message must be made living and real in the lives of men through the Church.

The task is not light. For although it is the same Word that has been proclaimed since the time of Christ — the Good News of salvation — the world and man have gone through such progress and change that a new dimension emerges in the task of evangelization: not so much how to make the Good News real and valid for here and now — for indeed it is — but how to make the people perceive this truth.

That the Church today realizes this unique challenge it faces is evidenced by the three burning questions that were constantly in the mind of the 1974 Synod:

What has happened in our day to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience?

In what way and to what extent is that evangelizing force capable of really transforming the people of this century?

What methods should be followed so that the power of the Gospel may have its effects?

The Vatican Council II has marked a turning point in the history of the Church — it has been the proof that the Church is living and dynamic, attuned to the times and moving with it. But the crucial question which we must examine is this: Can we say that the Church is now better equipped to proclaim the Gospel and to put it in people's hearts with conviction, freedom of spirit, and effectiveness?

To answer these questions, it is necessary first of all to establish how the task of reaching the hearts of all people with the Good News has been passed on from Christ to today's Christian. For the Christian who has been touched by the message received from Christ is duty-bound to be himself an evangelizer, carrying the Good News he has received into the world around him.

Jesus Christ was the first and greatest evangelizer. His entire life on earth was a proclamation of the Kingdom — the Kingdom that is to come and the Kingdom that exists in the human being,

"within you". The core of the Good News which Christ brought to man is salvation, which is primarily liberation from sin and the evil one, as well as everything that oppresses man. This salvation is objectively and definitively by the paschal mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.

This Kingdom and salvation of which He speaks are available to every human being as grace and mercy. But they are achieved through self-abnegation and metanoia — a radical conversion of the individual.

Christ evangelized. He preached and proclaimed this Good News. And he gave the mandate to his apostles to continue to preach the Gospel to all nations. The mission to evangelize began in the early days of the Church, born of the preaching of Christ and extended by the preaching of the Twelve.

In rapid succession, Christian communities — local churches — sprang up all over the civilized world. They gathered around the Eucharistic table with the bishop as their leader and pastor. But they were never closed in on themselves; they in turn evangelized others.

All who hear and accept the word of Christ form a community which must be itself evangelizing. The people of God must be a missionary and evangelizing people.

Thus, the Fathers of the 1974 Synod declared: "We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church."

The Holy Father, Pope Paul VI has stated too, "Above all, the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness... All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers..."

But what really is it to be evangelized and to evangelize? What should characterize the life and existence of the human being who has received in his heart the Good News? And what is required of Him who is given the task of proclaiming what he himself has known?

The Holy Father again gives us the answer: "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. 'Now I am making the whole of creation new'. (rev. 21:5). But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel. The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed

in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert... both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieux which are theirs."

Evangelization is meant to bring persons to a new life, and indeed life in the Christian community. This involves adherence to the Church, as well as reception of the sacraments that support this adherence through the grace they confer.

And this really should be the fruit of evangelization — the Christian witnessing that can only come from a conversion of the spirit, when the individual, touched by the Word, is renewed and strengthened and begins a life committed to spreading the same Good News he has received.

True evangelization is traced to the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, working through Jesus Christ first, and through his evangelized and evangelizing Church later, who carries the fervour of the faith to the individual. The Holy Spirit is the animator of the evangelizers.

In Section VII (?), the Holy Father speaks of "The Spirit of Evangelization" and lists the fundamental conditions that will make evangelization fruitful.

"Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism in the Jordan; Jesus was led by the Spirit to His prayer-experience in the desert; it was by the power of the Spirit that he began his public preaching ministry. And, to those He sends forth as evangelizers, He says, "Receive the Holy Spirit..."

The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. The most eloquent preaching would be sterile without the gentle action of the Holy Spirit on the listeners.

Here we come to the heart of the matter — all evangelization is under the power and impulse of the Holy Spirit, and all conversion to faith on the part of the recipients is through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We are touching on the dynamic effect of evangelization so far as it touches the hearts and minds of individual persons. It is essentially an "interiorization" of the truths taught, and it consists in what we would call an interior life, or a prayer life whereby the individual is open to the movements of grace and seeks the divine presence through prayerful meditation and communication. Only from this interior life can we confidently expect the witness of an authentic Christian life.

The goal of the evangelizer is the same as that of the apostles sent forth by Christ — to preach the Gospel unto faith and baptism and to form the Christian community, the holy People of God. Holiness is demanded both of the preachers and the converted or evangelized.

"Our evangelizing zeal must spring from true holiness of life and, as the Second Vatican Council suggests, preaching must in its turn make the preacher grow in holiness, which is nourished by PRAYER and above all by LOVE FOR THE EUCHARIST... The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our world will have difficulty in touching the heart of the modern man."

Evangelization, for the Church of today, begins with preaching. But the fruits to be reaped after the word is sown is the example of lives and the witness of the word. It is the task to which the Christian is called.

The directive is found in the Degree on the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes): "All Christians, wherever they live, are bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of the word, that new man put on at baptism and that power of the Holy Spirit by which they have been strengthened at confirmation." (n. 11)

The Decree also calls for implanting the contemplative life, which is a life of PRAYER and PENANCE, in the young, new local churches.

We know that the strength and success of evangelization lies in HOLINESS. "Let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life." (n. 36).

The key to his holiness is prayer and penance. Calling for people who will be formed for prayer and penance, the decree continues: "All bishops, as members of the body of bishops succeeding to the College of Apostles, are consecrated not just for some one diocese, but for the salvation of the entire world... It will be the bishop's task to raise up from among his own people some souls to offer prayers and penance to God with a wide-open heart for the evangelization of the world." (n. 37)



To speak of holiness is to speak of the interior life of charity as love of God and of neighbor, and the language of our love of God is the practice of prayer. Thus, we must form, through our evangelization, "praying communities" or parishes.

There is no overstating the power of prayer. Prayer is the bond between man and his God. And this is verified in the study of the psychology of religion and in the study of comparative religions. Wherever there is a "religious" man or a "religious" people, there is worship and prayer as the keynote of their relationship to the transcendent Being in whom they believe.

Prayer is what gives the Church purpose, reason and dynamism. The Church does not exist for himself, to preserve herself, but for her members. And the finality of the Church is, and must be, the union of her members with the Trinity — ultimately in the beatific vision. The bond of her unity is the prayer that flows from charity and the fraternal charity among her members.

Prayer proceeds from evangelization and at the same time, prayer advances the evangelizing efforts of the Church. The question has been asked of us, "What does the Church do?"

Pope Paul VI himself replies, "The first answer... is a splendid one, but as vast as an ocean: the Church prays! Her first task, her first duty, her first purpose, is prayer. Everyone know it. But just try to define this act, specifically peculiar to the Church, and you will see what immensity, what depth, what beauty, prayer brings with it. It is the first operational *raison d'être* of the Church. Its very name defines Church, for is not the word "church" (ecclesia) derived from that of a praying assembly? And is it not confused with the word that describes the building where the faithful gather to pray? And is not the Church a religious society, the *raison d'être* of which lies in the worship of God?" (cf. *Summa Theol.*, II-II, 81).

The answer has been given — the Church prays. Simple though it sounds, there is a world of power and almost unimaginable potential in this one action of the Church.

But, still, other questions are raised in the restless human mind today: We have been asked: Of what use is praying? What does praying mean and what can it do?

Pope Paul answers decisively, "The man who prays does not harm anyone, not does he check or hinder man's mental or physical

work. On the contrary, we could recall what fruitfulness human activity has taken on and enjoyed from a formula, still operative within and alongside the Church, which has united and almost interpenetrated the two characteristic and supreme moments of human activity: to pray and to work: "ora et labora". This is a formula which St. Benedict taught his disciples."

To try to fully comprehend the magnitude of the power of prayer would be to attempt to cross the threshold of the infinite. For it has been said, "Prayer cancels the infinite distance between the two disproportionate and incomparable terms — the infinite God and the microbe man."

For us who are the Church and who are concerned with evangelizing, prayer is the channel through which the Holy Spirit may pass in order to work the changes in the interior life of the individual reached by the Good News. The ground that best receives the seeds of evangelization is the ground made rich by prayer.

We speak of evangelization — proclaiming the Christian message, the Good News that will fill the hearts of men today with the promise new life and fulfilled hope. The man evangelized and the man who will evangelize marks himself as a Christian by witnessing the Word.

We are the evangelizing Church. And what does the Church do? Let us never forget! The Church — and we are the Church — **PRAYS.**

## **THEOLOGY: MAGISTERIUM**

**Fourth of a series**

# **EXERCISE OF THE MAGISTERIUM**

**By**

**Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., D.D.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Nexus with the third lecture**

In the previous lecture, we said that there are two fundamental functions of the Magisterium, namely proposition and protection of the Revelation.

To preserve the burden of divine revelation intact among men, and authoritatively to make clear its contents as the passage of time may require is the primary mission of the doctrinal authority of the Church. But the responsibility of manifesting the very source of evangelical grace and truth implies, on the one hand, taking all the measures which will give Christians secure access to the divine sources of grace and truth, and, on the other, insuring that the living water reaches down into their daily lives.

In other words, feeding the sheep of Christ is not simply to have authority to open the divine pastures for them; it is also to have authority to ward off the dangers that threaten them, and direct their steps, that is to say, their interior and exterior actions in these pastures.

Accordingly, while there are two fundamental functions, there are three concrete acts involved, namely: 1) **teaching**, that is, presenting the truth of Revelation through simple preaching and documents which explain doctrines; 2) **interpreting** ambiguous or less clear expressions, and 3) **judging**, even condemning errors.

You will remember that we also took up more extensively the third act of the Magisterium, not because we considered it as the most important aspect of the Church's doctrinal authority, but because it seems to be the most misunderstood today.

### Topic of the Fourth Lecture

For this afternoon's lecture, I wish to address myself to the various ways or modes of exercising the Magisterium. We have discussed already the nature and properties, then the functions of the Magisterium. This time, it is on the manner of exercising the Magisterium.

There has been a great deal of confusion about the ordinary and non-infallible magisterium of the individual bishop and most particularly of the Roman Pontiff. This is especially true during the last ten years or so, especially occasioned by the encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25, 1968).

For this reason, we shall dedicate more time to this particular mode of the exercise of the magisterium.

### Exercise of the Magisterium

Guarding and explaining the faith can be done in two ways: the First Vatican Council defined that "...everything must be believed... that is proposed by the Church as a divinely revealed object of belief, either in a solemn decree or in her ordinary universal teaching". (DS 3011).

On this basis, theologians distinguish three modes of exercising the Magisterium, namely: 1) extraordinary and infallible; 2) ordinary and infallible; and 3) ordinary and non-infallible or merely authentic magisterium. Let us consider these modes individually.

#### 1) Extraordinary and infallible

The Church's teaching of the faith can take the form of a solemn judgment pronouncing definitively and infallibly on the object of faith. But solemn definitions are rare statements of exceptional clarity and force. They are meant to check an error, to cut short a controversy, remove all doubt about an accepted truth by declaring it a dogma of the faith. Each of these proclamations carries its own absolute guarantee of immunity from all error. However, in a solemn statement of faith only what is defined or taught is infallible, and normally not the arguments from Scripture, tradition, reason, etc., that may illustrate, confirm or support the teaching.

The extraordinary and infallible magisterium of the Church is activated in two ways:

a. "when gathered together in an ecumenical council (the bishops with the popes) are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church. Their definitions must be adhered to with the submission of faith." (L. G. 25), and

b. when the Roman Pontiff defines *ex cathedra* some points concerning faith or morals to be held by the universal Church. Such pronouncement is infallible and irreformable of itself and so does not need the subsequent juridical assent of the other bishops, nor does it allow an appeal to any other judgment (DS 3063). The condition mentioned during the discussion of this matter in the First Vatican Council was that the pope should make certain of the continuity of the magisterium on a doctrine, and not the need of consultation with other bishops. *Lumen Gentium* (n. 22) later on explained in the Prefatory Note of Explanation, nn. 3,4, is even clearer when it explicitly teaches that collegiality does not restrict the full, supreme, direct and personal power of the pope to be expressed freely, personally or collegially, as he chooses.

The basis for discerning when the pope is speaking infallibly is that he must be speaking *ex cathedra* in the sense defined by Vatican I and explained by Vatican II (DS 3074; L. G. n. 25). Three conditions are thus required: a) the pope must be speaking in the performance of his office as supreme pastor and teacher of all Christians, b) he must act in the fullness of his Apostolic authority, and c) he must clearly show that he means to impose on the universal Church a doctrine of faith or of morals.

Therefore an *ex cathedra* pronouncement is always an infallible pronouncement and, as noted, it does not depend on the previous or subsequent approval or acceptance of it by the episcopate or the faithful. Furthermore, if the above conditions are not fulfilled, there can be no question of a definition nor can the papal judgment be considered of itself irreformable.

However, in speaking *ex cathedra*, the pope may employ any vehicle for the dissemination of truth that he chooses, any particular type of documentation or form of address. The popes at different periods in the history of the Church, have been inclined to employ one or another form. If the pope should make clear his intention to speak *ex cathedra*, for example, in an encyclical, which is the common vehicle for ordinary papal teaching, then the papal statement enjoys infallible status. The same infallible character attaches to his statements when he affirms that his teaching is already the teaching of the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church.

## 2) Ordinary and infallible

Vatican I teaches: "By divine and catholic faith everything must be believed that is contained in the written word of God or in tradition, and that is proposed by the Church as a divinely revealed object either by a solemn decree or in her ordinary, universal teaching." (DS 3011). Faith therefore is handed on also by the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church.

Solemn definitions, we said, are rare statement of exceptional clarity and force. The ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church, on the other hand, is just that: ordinary, usual, everyday teaching function of the Church. It consists of many pronouncements by Catholic bishops the world over. Their individual pronouncements however, when taken singly, cannot give infallible certitude. It is only the whole, the series of affirmations and explanations converging into a single teaching, that does give such certitude. The exercise of this magisterium does not normally take place in one isolated act but rather in a whole series which concur in communicating a teaching. When the bishops united with the Pope exercise this magisterium, it is immune from all error. "Although the individual bishops do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility, they can nevertheless proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly. This is so, even when they are dispersed around the world, provided that while maintaining the bond of unity among themselves and with Peter's successor, and while teaching authentically on a matter of faith or morals, they concur in a single viewpoint as the one which must be held definitely and absolutely." (L. G. 25).

This convergence into a teaching between the bishops dispersed around the world and the Roman Pontiff can be established in various ways. Communication of letters between the Pope and the bishops, synodal letters when local or regional synods convene and relay their decisions for ratification by the rest of the Church, investigation of documents of the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops in their ordinary manner, v. gr. papal encyclicals, decrees of the Roman Congregations, etc. These are only some ways of ascertaining the convergence in a teaching. One very common way is through the answers of the individual bishops to questions directed by the Pope for the bishop's consideration, c. gr. such was the case previous to the definition of the Assumption of Mary.

## 3) Merely authentic ordinary magisterium

The faith of the Church is communicated infallibly to the faithful by both the extraordinary and by the ordinary and universal magisterium of the Church. However, Christian truth is also con-

veyed in the Church by the merely authentic ordinary magisterium which resides individually in the bishops of the Church and individually in the teaching of the Supreme Pontiff.

**Lumen Gentium**, in this connection, says: "Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*. That is, it must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*. That is, it must be shown in such a way that this supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known chiefly either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking" (n. 25).

Accordingly, the merely authentic ordinary magisterium is exercised at two levels: in the level of an individual bishop, and in the level of the Roman Pontiff.

### **The Magisterium of the Individual Bishop**

Let us consider the individual bishop first. By individual bishop I am referring here to the residential bishop.

The first thing that should be said regarding the magisterium of the bishop is that his teaching duty is one of the fruits of his sacramental ordination. **Lumen Gentium** says in this regard: "From the tradition, which is expressed especially in liturgical rites and in the practice of both the Church of the East and of the West, it is clear that, by means of the imposition of hands and the words of consecration, the grace of the Holy Spirit is conferred and the sacred character impressed, in such a way that bishops in an eminent and visible way sustain the role of Christ himself as teacher, shepherd and high priest, and that they act in his person..." (n. 21).

The II Vatican Council also insists that his work as teacher, to a degree which affects the validity and credibility of his teaching, depends on hierarchical union with the college of bishops and with the Roman See. "...Hence, a man is constituted a member of the episcopal body in virtue of sacramental consecration and hierarchical communion with the head and members" (ibid. 22).

For this very reason, the teaching office of the individual bishop, together with his entire ministry is one of ministry for the service of his people and the building up of the universal Church. He should not consider the exercise of the office, nor view his own episcopal office, as separated from the episcopal college, the universal Church, the peculiar bond that ties him to those committed to his personal care, and above all, the union which keeps him in hierarchical communion with the Roman Pontiff. Nor may his work as teacher be thought of out of the context of the whole Church of Christ in its mystery as sacrament of Christ and mystical Body of the Saviour.

In such a context, his work is definite: to teach, to preach the gospel, the truth of Christ. And when he does, his is the voice of the shepherd having his mandate from Christ. This is why the Council is able to say that "as vicar and ambassador of Christ, he governs the particular Church entrusted to him". And the Council lists the way he works: "by counsel, exhortation, example... by authority and sacred power". It is a power he should use only to build up his flock, but not in his own name, but in the name of Christ.

He is therefore, in his own diocese, not just like any other teacher; he is the official, the authentic teacher of faith. All others are, by his delegation. Valuable helps can be provided for by theologians and scholars, but he should not thereby neglect to study himself for it is his office to minister to others.

As the official teacher, it is his lasting duty to give the people the word of God in all its fulness. He is expected to stand firm and unmoved, on the ground of tradition and the sacred scriptures in order to give the whole people of God food which is the word of God. This he must do without interruption, teaching unceasingly, teaching truth, striving to help it grow among men. He must give truth without adulteration, always with great charity. For it is given to him by imposition of hands to preserve the faith pure and entire. People have a right to hear the word of God in its entirety. The subject therefore of his teaching must be, by a sacred duty, the faith of the Church, not his own opinion. When he thinks it serves the common good then, in justice, he should make it clear that he speaks an opinion, not authentic doctrine.

Like all his brother bishops, singly or collectively, he has that grave duty of being loyal to the teaching given by the Word of God, both oral and written, and he must ever regard himself as the servant of the deposit of faith, of tradition, of the scriptures —



in no way the master. By the same token, he is bound to cherish and preserve unsullied and undiminished the entire deposit of faith within his diocese. For he is not only the official teacher; he is also the official guardian, interpreter and defender of faith.

It is for him therefore to condemn error, when it become necessary to properly pasture the faithful. And there will be times when, as a good father of faith, he would have to warn those toying with dangerous novelties, to correct misunderstandings of Catholic teaching, to reprove the presumptuous and foolhardy, and with great prudence and only after exhausting all other remedies, to punish those who offend especially if their offence happens to be in teaching.

The bishop speaks by virtue of an office received from Christ. But, by himself, that office does not include infallibility. His words and his actions will be subject also to correction by the general teaching and practice of his brother bishops. And above all else, they will be subject to correction by the successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff. This should not be viewed as something of a dead weight, an obstacle in the performance of his duty. Rather this is important for the credibility of his teaching office. His people, knowing he acts and speaks within the limits of his authentic role, can know and see that he is in harmony, first of all with the Roman Pontiff, and also with the other bishops of the region and of the world.

In this way, his prophetic ministry becomes, as it should be, a ministry of building up the Body of Christ in charity.

## **THE FEAST OF THE SANTO NIÑO IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**By**

**Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.**

### **1. Historical Data**

The story of the Santo Niño devotion in the Philippines starts with the very beginning of Christianity in these islands. When the queen of the place that is now Cebu City had been baptized (April 1521), she asked the Spaniards to give her the statue of the Child Jesus which had been shown to her before her baptism.<sup>1</sup>

When an image of the Holy Child Jesus was discovered in the same place by one of Legazpi's soldiers in April 1565, it could be safely assumed that it was the same image of the Santo Niño that had been left there by the fleet of Ferdinand Magellan. This was the beginning of the Santo Niño devotion in Cebu.

Some years before the finding of the statue of the Santo Niño by Legazpi's men, another statue of the Holy Infant Jesus had been brought from Spain abroad, this time to Bohemia (1556). This statue is said to have been carved by a Carmelite brother. Later it was given to Isabella de Bresagno, wife of Garcia Manriquez de Lara, who in turn handed it on to her daughter Maria at the occasion of the latter's wedding to Vratislav of Pernstyn in Bohemia. One of her daughters, Polyxena, presented this statue of the Holy Infant to the friars of the Carmel of Prague in 1627. There it has a place of honor in the Church of Our Lady of Victory. Since that time the statue is known as that of the Holy Infant of Prague.

Subsequently, the Carmelites spread the devotion wherever they came. In the course of time the devotion to the Santo Niño of Cebu and of Prague was gradually merged in the Philippines, so that the image of the Holy Child of Prague is sometimes mistakenly identified with the Santo Niño of Cebu. The truth is that both statues

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<sup>1</sup> R.C.P. Tenazas, *The Santo Niño of Cebu*. San Carlos Publications. Series A: Humanities. Number Four. Manila 1965, p. 21 f.

originated from Spain,<sup>2</sup> where, — so goes the story — it was St. Teresa of Avila who first conceived the idea of dressing the infant as a king,<sup>3</sup> so that the people of Cebu call the Holy Child "Señor Santo Niño."<sup>4</sup>

The particular calendar of the Philippines contains very few proper celebrations. The most significant of them is the feast of the Santo Niño. As a liturgical celebration it is a very recent one for the country. In their meeting of February 15-19, 1971, held in Baguio, the Bishops' Conference decided to place the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (Santo Niño) in the national calendar and to have it celebrated on the third Sunday of January, since the first Sunday of the month is usually the solemnity of the Epiphany and the second the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. According to the bishops the Mass formulary of this day was to be that of the votive Mass of the Holy Name of Jesus in the new Roman Missal.

From ancient times there had been a certain affinity of the devotion of the Holy Name of Jesus (propagated especially by the Franciscans)<sup>5</sup> and that of the Santo Niño. Right from the beginning at the place where the statue of the "Señor Santo Niño" was kept, a confraternity of the Most Holy Name of Jesus was established, and Legazpi had wanted that the Church to be built as shrine for the Santo Niño should be called Santísimo Nombre de Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship confirmed the decision of the Bishops' Conference, but set the celebration on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, which is usually the fourth Sunday of January (Prot. n. 670/71, March 16, 1971).

Four years later our bishops took some new steps concerning this feast. First, they changed its name from "Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (Santo Niño)" to "Feast of Santo Niño." Secondly, the day of celebration was transferred to the third Sunday of January, as originally intended. These decisions, made in July 1975 got the Roman confirmation a few weeks later on August 20 (Prot. n. CD 59/75).

<sup>2</sup> It seems that the Santo Niño of Cebu is of Flemish workmanship. In this case the statue was exported to Spain.

<sup>3</sup> R.C.P. Tenazas, *The Santo Niño of Cebu*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> L. Quisumbing, *Religious Experience in the Señor Santo Niño Devotion in Cebu*, in: L.N. Mercado (ed.), *Filipino Religious Psychology*. Tacloban City 1977, p. 61. — See also: R.J. Villote "Jesus Christ Today for the Filipino Christian", *Philippine Priests' Forum* 10 (1978) fasc. 2, 13-27, esp. 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> Beginning with St. Bernardin of Siena and St. John of Capestrano.

<sup>6</sup> R.C.P. Tenazas, *The Santo Niño of Cebu*, p. 29.

Unfortunately, there existed only a Mass formulary for the celebration of the feast of the Santo Niño, and priests had to say the Office of the respective Sunday. To remedy this situation archbishop Mariano Madriaga, former head of the archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan presented the Bishops' Conference with a draft of an Office for the feast of the Santo Niño. The bishops referred this draft to the National Liturgical Commission (July 1977) which recommended only minor changes.

At the same time it was thought necessary to replace the Mass of the Holy Name of Jesus with a proper Mass of the Santo Niño. It was decided to take, as far as the euchological texts were concerned, the votive Mass of the Holy Infant Jesus, proper to the Carmelites (Discalced) which had — among other texts — been presented by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship to the National Liturgical Commission. For the readings — in a three years' reading system — new biblical texts had to be provided.

In July 1978 our bishops approved in their meeting both the Mass and the Office for the feast of the Santo Niño (in English) and sent the texts to Rome for confirmation.<sup>7</sup> Rome confirmed them on October 20, 1978 (Prot. n. CD 1068/78).

## 2. The New Mass Formulary

In the earliest times of the Church the attraction of the faithful was focused on the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Therefore, from the beginning of the Church Christians celebrated every eighth day the paschal mystery, so that Sunday is "the original feast day."<sup>8</sup>

But soon the insight grew that also the previous earthly life of our Lord contributed to our salvation. Therefore, gradually the Church broke up the mystery of Christ into several events and phases. This was the beginning of the liturgical year in which the Church unfolds "the whole mystery of Christ"<sup>9</sup> from his incarnation (March 25), his birth (Dec. 25), his circumcision and name-giving (January 1), and presentation in the temple (February 2), to his ascension, his sending of the Holy Spirit from the Father (Pentecost) and even to the expectation of the second coming (end of the ecclesiastical year and first part of Advent). The fundamental

<sup>7</sup> On these data see *The Liturgical Information Bulletin* 12 (1977) 134-162, passim.

<sup>8</sup> Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 106.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 102.

condition for the individual celebration of these mysteries is that all be seen and considered in their connection with the paschal mystery. Therefore, on all these feasts we cry out at the very heart of the Mass: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!"

Among the saving mysteries of the life of Jesus are also those of his holy infancy. These are the ones we celebrate cumulatively on the feast of the Santo Niño. Christmas season being over we summarize once again all that the Lord has done for us by becoming a child, by assuming the form of a slave (Phil. 2:7). He was the heir (Mk. 12:7 par; cf. Hebr. 1:2) and therefore the owner of all. But since he had become a child he was "no better than a slave" (Gal. 4:1). The Son of God became a son of man in order to make us children of the heavenly Father who are entitled to call him "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:4) since the Spirit of sonship lives in us. But Christ did not only live a human childhood; in his words he also taught us how sons and daughters of God have to live: "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3). "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it (Mk. 10:15).

Jesus' childhood is to be for us a model and an inspiration to follow him in his attitude of filial devotion and dedication to his heavenly Father. In its mysteries Jesus' infancy brought us salvation. Recalling these mysteries in the liturgy on the feast of the Santo Niño, the Lord's powers and merits, acquired for us in these sacred events "are in some way made present" when we celebrate them; they become then accessible to us.

In view of this we can understand that we have here a celebration of truly "overriding importance" which justifies the replacement of the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, in line with article 106 of the Constitution of the Liturgy.

### Entrance Antiphon

*Puer natus est nobis, et filius  
datus est nobis, cuius imperium  
super humerum eius, et vocabitur  
nomen eius magni consilii Angelus*  
(Is. 9:6).

*A child is born for us, a son is  
given to us; dominion is laid on  
his shoulder, and he shall be  
called Wonderful-Counsellor.*

The entrance antiphon takes us back to the third Mass of Christmas. At the same time it is a very fitting opening song for the feast of the "Señor Santo Niño", the Holy Child dressed as a king. We are reminded of the Child's kingship: dominion is laid

on his shoulder. He comes from the royal stock of David. "He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:25).

Unfortunately, the official English translation does not render the original Latin of the Vulgate "*magni consilii Angelus*". Christ is the Father's messenger, sent to announce and to execute the divine plan of salvation. From him all messengers of God and the Church have the same task "to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God... that through the Church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known" (Eph. 3:8-10).

Lastly this text from Isaiah refers, though in a more hidden way, to the priestly office of this Holy Child. God the Father loved us so much that "he gave" his only Son (Jn. 3:16). "To give" is here a technical term, meaning "to give in sacrifice." He gave him into death; "he gave him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32), as "the expiation for our sins" (Jn. 4:10).

In a few words this prophetic text explains the role which this Child is to take upon himself as king, as prophet, and as priest. Here we are told in other words what the Creed solemnly states: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven... and became man." Here is no sentimentality of the child in the manger, of the "Holy Infant so tender and mild" sleeping in heavenly peace (cf. Silent Nigth). There is more of the shadow of the cross looming in the background. The very beginning of Christ's earthly life is determined by the paschal mystery.

### Opening Prayer

Fac nos, Domine,  
Unigeniti tui divinitatem in humilitate  
carnis agnoscere  
et omnipotentiam in fragilitate infantiae  
venerari,  
ut illi simplicitate spiritus adhaerentes,  
et regnum tuum parvulorum animo  
recipiamus,  
et promissa humilibus praemia  
consequamur.  
Per Dominum.

Father in heaven,  
May we recognize your only Son  
as God even in the lowliness  
of his human nature  
and adore Him as our mighty Lord  
even in the frailty of his childhood.  
May we follow him with sincere heart.  
Help us to welcome his kingdom  
among us with the eagerness  
of a child and to receive the  
reward promised to the humble.  
We ask this through our Lord...

Looking at a statue of the Santo Niño we see a human infant dressed in regal attire. There seems to be an opposition between the weakness of an infant and the power of a king. This leads us to ask the heavenly Father to open our eyes to see through the

lowliness of the holy Child's humanity and recognize in him the eternal, only-begotten Son of God, who became, through his death and resurrection, the king of the universe.

A merely correct, theoretical belief (ortho-dox) in God's revelation is not enough. Not he who says "Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will" of the Father (Mt. 7:21). Therefore, the opening prayer asks for the strength and grace to become imitators of Christ. "Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:5) and child.

Christ's fundamental message was the nearness of the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:15) that had come in his very person. Jesus also laid down the conditions for entering this kingdom: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like (a) child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3f). On the feast of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, a Carmelite nun, the Church prayed in the former Missal: "Lord, you said: 'Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven;' grant us so to follow the footsteps of the blessed virgin Teresa, in humility and simplicity of heart, that we may obtain eternal rewards." What are these rewards promised to the humble? God "gives grace to the humble" (1 Pt. 5:5; Jas. 4:6), i.e., his own life. He puts down the mighty from their thrones and exalts the humble (cf. Lk. 1:52).

### Prayer over the Gifts

Haec oblatio, qua divini cultus  
nobis est indita plenitudo.  
sit tibi, Domine, perfecta placatio,  
ut sacrosancta Incarnationis Filii  
tui mysteria  
et exsultantibus animis celebremus  
et fidei devotione sectemur.

Per Christum

God our Father  
with joyful hearts and living faith  
we celebrate today the mysteries  
of the childhood of your Son,  
who became one of us.  
May this sacrifice  
by which we can give you proper  
worship, fully reconcile us to you.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus...

As many other prayers over the gifts found in the Roman Missal also this one considers bread and wine by anticipation as that which they are to become by consecration, the body and blood of Christ offered to the Father as sacrament of the sacrifice on the cross. On the feast of the Santo Niño we commemorate not only the paschal mystery at Mass, but together with it the mysteries of

the childhood of Jesus from his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary to the hidden years in Nazareth when he was obedient to Mary and Joseph, when he "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk. 2:52).

In this sacramental sacrifice we have been given the means to render God perfect worship. So we ask that it may profit us by fully reconciling us to God. Here the prayer over the gifts of the feast of the Holy Child returns as second Mass text to the third Mass formulary of Christmas from whose prayer over the gifts it borrows heavily. It may also be that the composers of this prayer formulary were influenced by article five of the constitution on the Liturgy which considers the human life and nature of Jesus, united with the Person of the Divine Word as the instrument of our salvation. It continues, quoting the new prayer over the gifts of the third Christmas Mass, which in turn was taken from the so-called Leonine Sacramentary: "Therefore, 'in Christ the perfect achievement of our reconciliation came forth, and the fulness of divine worship was given to us.'"<sup>10</sup>

As preface the new Mass formulary offers alternatives: either the second preface of Christmas, or the seventh preface for Sundays in Ordinary Time which extols the love of the Father by sending his Son as one of us into the world and restoring us through the obedience of his Son.

To show explicitly that the mystery of the twelve year old Jesus in the temple and the subsequent silent years of Nazareth still belong to the mystery of the holy childhood the **communion antiphon** refers to Lk. 2:51: "Jesus went down with Mary and Joseph and came to Nazareth and he was obedient to them." The same is also proved by the

### Prayer after Communion

Sacro munere satiatis, concede, Domine,  
cum Filio, tuo, de Virgine nato,  
in his quae tui sunt perpetuo manere,  
ut, aetate, sapientia et gratia crescentes,  
in nobis te complacitum sentire mereamur.

Per Christum.

God, our Father,  
in this eucharist you have satisfied  
our hunger.  
With your Son, born of the Virgin Mary,  
may we always seek your will,  
grow in age, wisdom and grace,  
and be aware that we are pleasing to you.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

As fruit of holy communion and of the celebration of the feast of the Santo Niño we ask that, like Christ in his infancy and in his

<sup>10</sup> Sacramentarium Veronense (ed. L.C. Mohlberg, e.a.) Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Series maior. Fontes I (Rome 1956) p. 162, n. 1265.



infancy and in his adult life, we may always seek to do the will of the Father. The prayer after communion alludes to the words of the twelve year old Jesus to his mother: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" A better translation in this context seems to be that of the Jerusalem Bible: "Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" (*Nesciebatis quia in his, quae patris mei sunt, oportet me esse?*). As fruit of this concern about the Father's will we ask for ourselves that we may grow in age, wisdom and grace (cf. Lk. 2:52). Then we will become aware, as Jesus did, — when he was baptized in the river Jordan and, according to the gospels of Luke and Mark, the voice of the Father addressed him, — that God the Father is pleased with us. The last line of the original version of this prayer after communion is certainly inspired by Lk. 3:22: "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" (*in te complacui mihi*). Here is a reference to the first song of the Servant of Yahweh (Is. 42:1) so that in this concluding prayer of the Mass we have another hint that these mysteries of the infancy of Jesus are to be seen in connection with his task as the Servant of God who had come "not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45).

## **HISTORY**

# **THE FRANCISCANS - APOSTLES OF BICOL**

**By**

**Jose Calleja Reyes**

Last year, while the Bicol people commemorated the 400th year of their christianization (1578-1978), the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) or the Franciscans also celebrated the quadri-centennial of their spiritual ministry in the Philippines.

Four hundred years is a good number of years. To go back into Philippine History which these Franciscans have so shaped substantially may be worth our while.

However, we do not propose to do this in this paper. The works of the Franciscan Order in God's ministry in the Philippines during all these centuries are still very visible not only in the Bicol landscape but also in the other areas of the islands which had been under their mission jurisdiction.

What we propose to write about are the men who brought the light of the gospel to Bicol — the varied facts of life, so to speak, which these Apostles of Bicolandia have gone through in their work of evangelization and which are little known up to now.

At the present, it may be asked — Is it not odd that after 400 years we should go through the exercise of trying to get acquainted with men who are just biographical sketches in chronicle accounts mostly unread in some dusty tomes of colonial manuscript?

Yes, it is indeed odd.

But the gift of christianity that we now hold as one of Bicol's most precious heritage cannot be fully appreciated unless we spare a moment of recollection on those intrepid men who crossed oceans, continents and mountains to come to our Bicol land and whose lives, works and sacrifices are the roots of Bicol christianity.

The early Franciscan chronicles say that the very first Franciscans to set foot on Bicol soil were Fray Bartolome Ruiz and

Fray Pablo de Jesus. They were amongst the 21 friars of the Mission primera of the Franciscans to arrive in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> Their coming to these islands was indeed providential. For this first mission group headed by Fray Antonio de San Gregorio had for its original destination not the Philippines but the Solomon Islands. While the group was waiting embarkation in Sevilla, Spain, King Philip II ordered them to cancel their trip and wait until the following year and sail, not for the Solomon Islands, but rather, for the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

When all arrangements were completed, this mission group set sail for Mexico on June 24, 1577, arriving there in September of the same year. They stayed in Mexico until March 7, 1578, From there they sailed for Manila and landed on Philippine soil on July 2, 1578.<sup>3</sup>

Once settled in Manila, in the same year of their arrival, this small group of 21 friars began to scatter themselves in pairs of two to various places. Fray Bartolome Ruiz and Fray Pablo de Jesus were to find their way into the province of Camarines (Bicol region). It must have been an arduous trip from Manila to the land of the Bikols. It was barely five (5) years that the Maestre de Campo Juan de Salcedo had embarked on his expedition of discovery and conquest of the Bicol area. All that had been accomplished in that short span of time was the foundation of Villa Santiago de Libon by Juan de Salcedo himself in 1573 and sometime later the foundation upstream of the Bicol River of the City of Nueva Caceres by Pedro de Chavez, the loyal captain of Salcedo who was left with seventy soldiers to garrison the area when Salcedo returned to Manila. The work of conquest and pacification must have been still going on. Against these background, Fray Bartolome Ruiz and Fray Pablo de Jesus arrived on Bicol soil presumably between September and October of 1578 and immediately commenced the foundation of the missions of Naga, Nabua, Libon, Quipayo and Minalabag.<sup>4</sup> It is, therefore, to the credit of these two friars that the evangelization of Bicol was formally launched. The chronicles, however, do not state how they went about in the setting up the mission foundations of Naga, Nabua, Libon, Quipayo and Minalabag, except to attribute these foundations to them. The chronicles also show that these two friars did not stay long in the Bicol area. In 1585 Fray Bartolome Ruiz was to embark on the Indochina mission whereas Fray Pablo de Jesus was re-assigned in 1579 to the evangelization of Bataan and the west coast of Luzon. However, it is noteworthy to mention that Fray Pablo de Jesus, one of the first Franciscan Apostles of Bicol, became the first provincial of the Apostolic Province of Saint Gregory the Great to

which the Philippine Franciscans were to ecclesiastically belong during the entire period of Spanish rule in the Philippines. It was written in the chronicles that Fray Bartolome Ruiz was a native of Cabra, Spain and Fray Pablo de Jesus was born in Cataluña, Spain of noble parents.<sup>5</sup>

The first stone in the building of God's edifice in Bicol having been made, so to speak, other members of the Order of Friars Minor followed the footsteps of Fray Bartolome Ruiz and Fray Pablo de Jesus.

For the next three hundred twenty years, the Franciscans, in small but steady streams kept coming. In the early days of Bicol evangelization most of the mission churches were simple bamboo-nipa and wooden structures. The construction of stone or brick churches began much later. After the first seven decades of evangelization work in Bicol, the only stone or brick churches erected during that period were those of Naga, Quipayo, Libon, Polangui, Oas, Albay and Cagsawa.<sup>6</sup> The greater part of the stone and brick churches in Bicol were built in the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries.

The chronicles also say that since nothing could be done in the ministry if the religious do not learn the language of the natives, the Franciscans in the Bicol area occupied themselves in learning the language since they were not concerned with the mundane affairs of lands and commerce.<sup>7</sup> The Franciscans had to adapt themselves to the Bicol environment. While their work was essentially spiritual which involved great labor and sacrifice, sometimes at the cost of life itself, many amongst them who were naturally gifted employed their talents in meeting the challenges posed by their new ministry. Many Franciscans studied assiduously the Bicol language and vocabulary. Those that were musically gifted taught the natives the art and rudiments of western music. Others wrote travelogs describing the natural beauty, flora and fauna of the region. Some have even written on such secular subjects as the folklore and folk-beliefs of the pre-Christian Bikols.

We shall write about a few of those intrepid Franciscan Apostles of Bicol that reveal the many interesting but unknown facets of their mission work. Some are erudite, some are comical and tragic and the others are plain and ordinary. However, they are now part of our great Bicol Christian tradition — a part of our Bicol heritage.

**MARCOS DE LISBOA, OFM<sup>8</sup>**

Arrived in the Philippines in 1583. Administered in Polangui and Oas. Was minister of Nabua in 1605. Founded the mission of Ituy, the towns of Iquey, Calaguimi, San Diego de Ibalon and Casiguran de Camarines. The first three towns are now inexistent. He was the first to study and teach the Bicol language but because of the lack of printing facilities, the writing of Fray Marcos de Lisboa on the Bicol language was first printed only 1754. The work was entitled "Vocabulario de la Lengua Bicol". There is no known extant copy of this book. The 2nd edition of the Vocabulario was printed in 1865 on the initiative of Bishop Francisco Gainza to better propagate the gospel and the word of God amongst the Bikols. This 2nd edition is one of the rare books still extant on the Bicol language.<sup>9</sup>

**GERONIMO DE AGUILAR, OFM<sup>10</sup>**

Arrived in Camarines in 1586 as guardian of the new community of Naga. Founded the town of Oas. Was a good musician and was the first to teach the Bicol natives this art. He left several composition called "Lamentaciones" which was one of the most renowned of the Franciscan doxologies. Unfortunately there is no known extant copy of the "Lamentaciones". The strains of Bicol indigenous music at the early stage of Bicol christianity must have somewhat seeped into the "Lamentaciones". Fray Geronimo de Aguilar was a devotee of the Passion of Christ. He was born on Good Friday, took his habit and professed on a Good Friday and died on a Good Friday in the convent in Manila while the choir was singing the Magnificat.

**SAN PEDRO BAUTISTA, OFM<sup>11</sup>**

Born of the family of de los Condes de Añoves in San Esteban of the Diocese of Avila in Spain. He was born with the sign of the Cross on his forehead. Fray San Pedro de Bautista founded the mission of Cagsawa in 1591. He was martyred in Nagasaki, Japan in 1627. After his martyrdom a Royal Decree was received in Manila naming him Bishop of Nueva Caceres. Fray San Pedro Bautista was beatified by Pope VII on September 14, 1627 and canonized by Pope Pius IX on June 8, 1862. The relics of this Franciscan saint who had trodden on Bikol soil consisting of his skull is kept and venerated in San Esteban, Avila, Spain up to these days.

**PEDRO FERRER, OFM<sup>12</sup>**

Born of noble parentage in Valladolid, Spain. A graduate of the militia in Manila, he was assigned in the pacification of Camarines. Later he became a Franciscan and returned to Camarines whose language he knew and worked for the conversion of the natives. He was the first who attempted to climb Mayon but was not able to reach the crater. He brought down large quantities of sulphur which was used in the province. He had revelation that he would die on August 2, 1592 and he in fact died on said date

**ESTEBAN SOLIS, OFM<sup>13</sup>**

Born in Caceres in Extremadura, Spain. He was a soldier who came to the Philippines with a relative, Governor Francisco de Sande in 1575. He was sent for the pacification of Camarines. He became a priest in 1585. Fray Esteban Solis was the first to climb and reach the crater of Mayon in 1591 to combat the superstitions of the indios. He discovered three mouths or vents in the crater. As a result of the ascent and the difference in temperature to which he was exposed, he fell ill and died in Manila in 1592.

**FR. GONZALO DEL CASTILLO, OFM<sup>14</sup>**

A Doctor of laws, Fray del Castillo was born in Burgos, Spain. He was assigned for the conversion of Camarines in 1599. In the trip from Mauban to Libmanan with Fr. Domingo de Santojo, the boat on which he was sailing sunk and he drowned.

**DOMINGO DE LOS MARTIRES, OFM<sup>15</sup>**

Chaplain of the astillero de Bagatao (dry docks of the Manila Galleon in the Embocadero de San Bernardino) in 1616. In October 18 of that year, the moro pirates attacked Bagatao. Fr. Domingo was wounded and captured by the moros. He was taken captive to Mindanao where he suffered much for 2-1/2 years until he was able to escape. He returned to Camarines where he administered in Iriga in 1621.

**DIONISIO SAN MARTIN, OFM<sup>16</sup>**

Born in San Martin de Valdeiglesias, Spain. He was named Presidente of Buhi upon his arrival in 1609. Administered in Libong in 1609, in Iriga 1611, again in Buhi 1616, in Bula in 1619 and

Minalabag in 1622, returning to Bula in 1626. In 1630 while swimming in the Bicol River, he was attacked by a crocodile and his legs were severed — the rest of the body floating in the river. The natives rescued his cadaver and was taken in a solemn funeral procession to Naga where he was buried in the Franciscan church. The chroniclers have said that this priest was very saintly and that his death was miraculous because before taking a bath in the river, he already knew that he would be killed by a crocodile so that he solemnly delivered the keys of the church to his servants.

#### ANDRES DEL SACRAMENTO, OFM<sup>17</sup>

Administered in Libmanan in 1611; in Minalabag in 1624. In 1628 he was elected Ministro Provincial until 1652 during which time he planned together with the religious of Camarines to open a navigable canal from Nueva Caceres to Pasacao, which project was started but discontinued. He also administered in Iriga, Polangui and Buhi.

#### JUAN DE CERVERA, OFM<sup>18</sup>

Assigned in the Naga infirmary. In October 1636 Camarines was attacked by the Moros. Fr. Cervera with five others religious and the Alcalde Mayor were severely wounded in the encounter. He died in Camalig on November 4, 1636.

#### ANDRES DE SAN AGUSTIN, OFM<sup>19</sup>

Named President of the Convent of Bacon in 1626. Administered later the towns of Indang, Bula, Quipayo, Daet, Naga, Oas and Minalabag. Wrote the *Arte del Idioma Bicol* which was printed in 1647; wrote the "*Explicacion de la Doctrina Cristiana*" in Bicol and printed in Manila also in 1647; wrote one volume of Sermons in Bicol which was printed in 1647; wrote a translation in Bicol of the Christian Doctrine by Cardinal Belarmino which was printed in 1647.

#### JUAN DE LA CRUZ, OFM<sup>20</sup>

Born in Avila, Spain of noble parentage. He was named minister in Naga 1656. Administered later in Daet, Oas, Bula, Cagsawa, Nabua, Iriga, again in Nabua, Polangui, Libong, Camalig, and lastly in Minalabag in 1678. He was a very fat person such that whenever

he went up the huts of the natives the stairs could not carry his weight and would invariably break down. So he had his own stairs made and brought by his sacristans wherever he went. This he would use in going up the houses of the natives. Despite his weight he was agile and could celebrate three masses in three different places during Palm Sunday.

**PEDRO DE AVILA, OFM<sup>21</sup>**

Born in Avila, Spain. Administered in Minalabag in 1667, later in Quipayo and Iriga. Wrote in Bicol one volume of "Sermones Panegiricos"; 1 volume of "Sermones Morales" and one book entitled "Camino del Cielo".

**FRANCISCO DE SAN EVANGELISTA, OFM<sup>22</sup>**

Born in Burgos, Spain. Administered in Libmanan in 1673. Named minister in Iriga in December 1679, minister in Naga in 1684. Wrote in Bicol "Una Explicacion de la Doctrina Cristiana".

**DOMINGO MARTINES, OFM<sup>23</sup>**

Administered in Camarines in the towns of Quipayo in 1702. Wrote in Bicol "Exposicion de la Doctrina Cristiana".

**JOSE DE LA VIRGEN, OFM<sup>24</sup>**

Born in Segovia, Spain. Administered in Camarines, the towns of Camalig, Polangu, Bula, Canaman, Milaor, Buhi, Naga in 1739. Wrote the "Arte de Canto Gregoriano" in Bicol which was printed in Manila in 1727. There is no known extant copy of this book of Fray Jose de la Virgen.

**SANTIAGO DE JESUS, OFM<sup>25</sup>**

Born in Coladilla, Leon, Spain. He was named minister in Bula in 1732. Administered in Iriga, Polangui and Minalabag and while minister in the latter went for his usual medication to Naga and died on the way on June 30, 1742.

**FR. MANUEL DE JESUS, OFM<sup>26</sup>**

Born in Aldeapente, Lomego, Portugal. Assigned in Camarines in the town of Canaman. Went to Quipayo for a visit. In the



evening he retired to bed in good health and was found dead in his bed the following day without his room companion noticing any extraordinary thing during the night.

#### ESTEBAN JOSE DE GASCUNA, OFM<sup>27</sup>

Assigned in Camarines. Administered the missions of Himoragat in Mt. Isarog. Wrote "El Año Serafico", 12 volumes in 1775, a work which has not been published and is in the Franciscan convent in Manila.

#### JUAN DUAREZ, OFM<sup>28</sup>

Born in Granada, Spain. He was assigned to the mission in Manguiren in 1770; administered in Tigaon to replace Fr. Juan de Silva who was assassinated by heathens; administered in Libong in 1774 later in Cagsawa, Naga and Polangui. Named Procurator in the Court of Madrid and Rome in 1782. While residing in Madrid he wrote "Carta ingenua y religiosa", printed in Madrid in 1786. It was a reply directed to a religious asking: "Es verdad que el infierno esta mas cerca de Filipinas que de qualquier otra parte del mundo? (Is it true that hell is nearest to the Philippines than any in other place in the world?)

#### SR. D. FR. ANTONIO JOSE ALVAREZ DE LUNA, OFM<sup>29</sup>

Born in Marchena, within the archbishopric of Segovia, Spain. Arrived in the Philippines in 1753, administered in Los Baños, San Francisco del Monte and Pagsanjan. In 1762 he was appointed Guardian of the San Francisco Church in Manila and while in this position saw the invasion and occupation of Manila by the British in 1762. Many of the inhabitants in Manila deposited with him in the San Francisco Church their precious objects and jewelries to prevent the British from sacking them. And in order to put himself in the good graces of the occupation forces, he ordered prepared on the day of the invasion a sumptuous banquet for the officers of the British army which was accepted heartily. Because of this show of hospitality, the British respected the convent of San Francisco and the monastery of Santa Clara, granting to both edifices special guards. After the British occupation terminated, the same inhabitants who owed him the conservation of their wealth, filed a case of high treason before the Spanish authorities which caused Fr. Luna to escape and hide in the mountain

fastness of Baler where he suffered for 2 years all kinds of privations. His case was submitted to the Spanish Cortes and the King declared him innocent and because of his extraordinary merit the King rewarded him with the miter of Nueva Caceres. The local authorities in Manila then organized a commission to bring him the good news in his place of refuge. He was consecrated bishop and assumed authority of the bishopric of Nueva Caceres on February 28, 1768.

#### FR. JUAN DE LOS HOYOS, OFM<sup>30</sup>

Was born in los Hoyos diocese of Coria, Spain on October 15, 1762. Administered in Camarines in the mission of Manquiren for 12 years, and the towns of Donsol and Oas. While in Oas he became sick and left for the infirmary in Naga taking a small baroto (banca) thru the Quinale river towards lake Bato, thence thru the Bicol River but unfortunately he died in the banca before reaching Naga.

#### FR. FRANCISCO ARAGONESES, OFM<sup>31</sup>

Born in Mariyan, Diocese of Segovia, Spain. Administered in the town of Bula, later in Budiao, in the higher slopes of Mayon Volcano. While parish priest in Budiao, he was witness to the eruption of Mayon Volcano in February 1, 1814, which caused the destruction of the Budiao church by an avalanche of molten lava and rocks. In his report, Fr. Aragonese relates:

"Full of anguish and consternation, we ran away, looking for higher places. Our panic increased as the horizon darkened. The explosion became stronger and darkness thickened as we continued our flight in order to save our lives. But our haste could not protect us from the downpour of boulders that, in only a matter of seconds, could kill many of those fleeing. We took shelter under houses, but these caught fire and soon became mounds of ashes . . . To get out to the open was no less dangerous for the boulders were enormous and the downpour was thick as rain. We must protect ourselves if we want to save our lives.

Some covered themselves with cow and carabao skins, others with tables and chairs, others with pieces of boards and trays. Many took shelter in trunks of trees, other in bamboo grooves and among bushes, some hid in a mountain cave. Only those of us who were fortunate enough to protect ourselves survived. Those caught in the open fields perished or were hurt . .

"At ten o'clock in the morning the downpour of boulders stopped, but none of us ventured to go out; we expected

the downpour of sand to stop, or the catastrophe would kill us all. We remained in our respective places until one o'clock in the afternoon when the explosion subsided and the horizon cleared up a little, bringing back to life our hope which was, by then almost dead. At about two o'clock in the afternoon the horizon cleared completely. It was only then that we were able to see the frightening situation of the town and the devastation wrought by the volcano which darkness had, until that time, hidden from our eyes.

"The earth was literally covered with dead bodies. Some had been struck by stones and boulders, others had been consumed by fire. Of these, 200 perished inside the church of Budiao, and 30 in a private house of the same town. At this very moment, many felt both the greatest joy and the deepest sorrow. It is true that they could be numbered among the few fortunate survivors, but alas! their joy was soon turned into sorrow when they realized that their parents, their friends and their acquaintances were no more. A father came upon his dead children; a husband came upon his dead wife; and many wives found themselves without husbands."<sup>32</sup>

#### FR. FRANCISCO DE LOS SANTOS, OFM<sup>33</sup>

Born in the Province of San Gabriel, Spain. Administered in Camarines in the town of Naga for 8 years; in 1847 he was transferred to Milaor where he died a victim of his love and care for his parishioners in the manner following: On Good Wednesday, he was informed that a man from that town was intending to kill his father and a sister. Against the entreaties of the people, he immediately went up the house of these persons and placed himself between the killer and the victim exhorting the killer to lay down his arms, but instead the aggressor attacked the priest with his *Kampilan*<sup>34</sup> hitting him mortally in the head and causing the priest to fall unconscious in the stairway of the house. From there Fr. de los Santos was brought to the parochial house, where after receiving the last rites of the church he expired.

#### BERNARDINO MELENDRERAS, OFM<sup>35</sup>

Fray Bernardino Melendreras was born in the City of Gijon, Spain on September 3, 1815. At the age of seventeen he entered the Franciscan Order and was invested the Franciscan habit on August 8, 1832 in the Covent of San Jose de Salamanca belonging to the Discalced Province of San Pablo. In his investiture he used the surname "de la Santisima Trinidad". On August 8, 1833

he took his religious vows. His studies was interrupted by the "Exclaustracion in 1835" which made him return to his native home in Gijon. Then he decided to join the mission to the Philippines arriving in Manila on February 11, 1839. He continued his theological studies in Manila, was later ordained to the priesthood and sent to the province of Camarines. He administered in Quipayo in 1841; in 1844 he was transferred to Bonbon and in 1845 to Libmanan but was returned to Bonbon the following year as Presidente. In 1847 he was named Presidente of Libmanan where he administered for quite some time. During his ministry in Libmanan, the famous German naturalist Fedor Jagor stayed with Fr. Melendreras while making studies of that area of Bicol. In Guinobatan he fell gravely ill and decided to leave for Manila for treatment arriving in the city on October 6, 1867. The following day, October 7, 1867 Fr. Melendreras died at the age of 52. This venerable Franciscan was noted for his poetical works on the Bicol Region, covering a wide range of subjects including folklore, legends, fables, natural calamities, flora and fauna volcanoes and many other varied subjects. Some scholars<sup>36</sup> ascribe to him the authorship of a "manuscript fragment" reproduced and published by another Franciscan, Fray Jose Castaño, in the latter's treatise "Breve Noticia Acerca del Origin, religion, creencias y supersticiones de los Antiguos Indios del Bicol" which appeared in Retana's *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*, Vol. I in the year 1896. The author in a recent trip to Spain was fortunate to receive from another Franciscan confrere, Fr. Apolinar Pastrana Rioi, OFM, a transcript copy of 53 poems of Fr. Melendreras' "Antologia Poetica Sobre la Region Bicolana de Filipinas", to translate in Bikol language and further enrich the cultural heritage of the Bikols.<sup>37</sup>

#### MANUEL CRESPO, OFM<sup>38</sup>

Born in Corella, diocese of Tarazona, Spain on September 15, 1839. Was assigned in Camarines and appointed minister of Pilar in the province of Albay in 1862; transferred to Buhi in 1865; then to Polangui in 1867. In 1870 he accompanied Bishop Francisco Gainza to Rome in his adlimina visit to the Pope. He returned to the Philippines in 1872 and was assigned to the hospital in Palestina. In 1876 he was named minister in Ligao, in the province of Albay. Fr. Crespo was a bosom friend of Fr. Bernardino Melendreras. He is well known for his writings among which is the "Gramatica del idioma Bicol". He has also translated into Bicol many devotional booklets.

JOSE CASTAÑO, OFM<sup>39</sup>

Born in Hiniesta, Zamora, Spain on December 28, 1854. He professed his Franciscan vows on May 2, 1874. Administered for a short time in Camalig and in 1878 was named minister of the of the town of Lupi in the province of Camarines. Fray Jose Castaño while serving as Rector of the Colegio de Almagro in Spain wrote expressly for Wenceslao Retana's *Archiivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*, Vol. I, 1896 a very interesting treatise about the ancient Bikols entitled "Breve Noticia acerca del orogin, religion, creencias y supersticiones de los antiquos Indios del Bicol". In this work Fr. Castaño reproduced the 60 quatrain fragment of an unpublished manuscript in verse which he claims to have chanced upon while in Bicol. This fragment was the subject of the author's intensive study which led to the discovery of Bikol's ancient epic literature.<sup>40</sup>

Aside from the epic material in Fray Castaño's "Breve Noticia", the pre-christian cults and rituals of the ancient Bikols are likewise extensively treated.<sup>41</sup>

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# HOMILETICS

## BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES FOR MARCH

by

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (March 4, 1979)

**First Reading:** Genesis 9:8-15. A passage from the Priestly Code, one of the sources of the Pentateuch. In this document, the covenant plays a major role. God earnestly desires to lead all men to a life of communion with himself (this ultimately is salvation). Covenant theology dominates all religious thought in the Old Testament and climaxes in the intimate union of all men in Christ in the New Covenant in his Blood. In this passage, God's covenant with Noah embraces not only Noah and his descendants but the whole of creation. The omnipotent God who punished his creatures by a disastrous flood is also a merciful Savior, leading mankind to new life and hope. Mankind is assured of God's continued favor. A reminder of the divine promise is the rainbow which "God sets up in the clouds" (the idea is probably taken from mythology but given a theological meaning by the author). The rainbow marks the end of storms and the break-through of sunshine.

**Second Reading:** First Peter 3:18-22. In offering a word of consolation to those who are suffering and being persecuted, Peter presents the paschal mystery of Christ, touching on his vicarious death for sinners, his glorious resurrection, ascension and exaltation to the Father's right, as the acknowledged Lord of the world. Likewise the consequences of this salvific work: man is reconciled to God, victory is proclaimed to the disobedient and rebellious spirits, and new life in the spirit is communicated to believers through baptism. Thus the paschal mystery of Jesus is offered as a strong motivation of encouragement for those who suffer like the Master. Baptism is aptly compared with the flood, for both wipe away all that is evil, and both save through the saving wood (the ark; the Cross). The effects of baptism are internal, wrought by the power of the Risen Christ.

Of minor importance is the controverted question to which disobedient spirits is Peter referring? Is it Christ's descent to Hades to announce deliverance to those who were once disbelieving in the days of the flood? Unless Peter has in mind some event known from Jewish tradition, it is not clear why he would inject this thought at this juncture. More probably Christ is proclaiming his victory over the evil spirits (thought to be imprisoned until the day of judgment as in Jude v. 6). St. Paul has a strikingly similar thought in Col. 2:15: "God disarmed the principalities and powers. He made a public show of them and leading them off captive, triumphed in the person of Christ".

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 1:12-15. Mark's description of the temptation-scene is brief but powerful. Impelled by the Spirit of God, the beloved Son of the Father and Servant of Yahweh (v. 11) goes forth to meet the enemy of God and man. The holy war is on: On the one side Christ, assisted by his angels, against Satan with all his wiles. Mention of wild beasts is either to intensify the desert scene, considered the abode of evil spirits, or to describe the victory of the Messiah by alluding to the messianic peace described in Is. 11:6. As God's champion, Jesus begins at once to inaugurate the reign of God by proclaiming the Good News. There are two requisites if it is to be accomplished in man: metanoia, an interior change of heart, and acceptance of the Good News by living it. These words are now said to each of the faithful as ashes are placed on his head on Ash Wednesday: Repent and believe the Good News.

#### **Outline for Homily: Christ our Champion in Battle**

**Introduction:** Nations prepare for battle in order to win a victory: men are trained, arms manufactured, hospital units made ready, plans scrutinized, discussion and consultation prolonged. Lent is the signal for Christian battle. There is an enemy that must be gained, for not only this life but one's entire eternity depends on it. Our Commander-in-Chief has gone on ahead to lead us to battle and to victory.

1. The Spirit drove Christ to the challenge. St. John tells us that "it was to undo all that the devil had done that the Son of God appeared" (1 Jn. 1:8), and that "no one should lead us astray: to live a holy life is to be holy just as Jesus is holy, but to lead a sinful life is to belong to the devil (v. 7). All through life there is this intense struggle in man, his evil inclinations pulling one way, and the Spirit of God within him on to do what is pleasing to the



Father. Well did St. Paul describe this inward struggle in Romans 7:18-22. He even cries out: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death?" (v. 24). But Christ is our ray of hope.

2. Christ accepted the challenge. He began his public ministry by a longer period of fasting and prayer. That strengthened him to face up to every type of temptation of the Evil One both during this initial period and in his entire public life. Thus the Holy spirit tells us: "We have a high priest who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin" (H. 4:15). And "because he has himself been through temptation, he is able to help others who are tempted" (2:18). Therefore he is compassionate and sympathetic for he knows our weakness, in spite of one's endeavor to fight the good fight. So St. John assures us: "If anyone should sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ who is just" (1 Jn. 2:13). Thanks to God, Christ himself will deliver us from Satan and sin (Rom. 7:24).

3. All of God's children, even his favorites, have been subject to temptation. Elijah was discouraged and ready to give up (1 Kgs. 19:4). But after fasting and prayer he journeyed even to Mt. Horeb and renewed the covenant of his People with Yahweh. Moses himself was filled with bitterness at the misery of his people and asked the Lord to take his life (Num. 11:15). Jeremiah came near to despair because instead of being a fortified city and a pillar of iron as Yahweh had promised (1:18), he had to constantly face opposition, hatred and persecution (20:7-10). The story is also told that St. Peter was tempted to flee his responsibility by leaving Rome in face of mounting persecution, and the Lord met him at the gate with the memorable words: Quo Vadis, Petre? "Where are you going, Peter? I have laid down my life for my flock". And Peter turned back. St. Catherine of Sienna complained bitterly that she had to suffer such violent temptations against chastity, and asked the Lord where was he while she was thus tempted. The Lord answered: "Right in the depth of your heart, Catherine, and I was immeasurably pleased that you fought so valiantly. You have not failed in the least. Without my presence you would not have been victorious."

**Conclusion:** The goal to be obtained is precious beyond all calculation. It will incite the fierce jealousy of the Evil One, but it is worth every struggle. Our Champion leads the way. With our eyes on him, and relying on the strength of his Spirit from within, the victory will also be ours. But not without prayer and self-denial.

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT (March 11, 1979)

**First Reading:** Genesis 22:1-2.9a.10-13, 15-18. The story of Abraham sacrificing a ram instead of his son Isaac may have had originally its own peculiar significance, such as a polemic against human sacrifice, but the meaning it took on in its redaction as part of the inspired Scripture, but the meaning it took on in its redaction as part of the inspired Scriptures is undoubtedly that of the severe test that Abraham underwent at the hands of Yahweh (v. 1) and the reward for his total obedience to God's will (v. 17). Obedient to God's call, Abraham had left all (Gen. 12:1ff) and took up his abode in an entirely unknown land. Then, after long years without an heir, he is promised one, despite his age and his wife's sterility. He believes God's word and this makes him most pleasing to God (15:6). Now, after his beloved son Isaac had grown up, Abraham is bidden to sacrifice the very heir on whom the promises rested. But God knew his man and tested him like gold in the fire. The complete commitment of Abraham to the will of God in the obedience of faith makes him a model for all generations.

The narrative is outstanding in its depth of pathos and appealing presentation. Countless progeny as many as the stars and grains of sand are hyperbole indicating an indefinitely large number. In Christ, true off-spring of Abraham, the entire world would find itself blessed. Isaac has often been considered by the Church Fathers as a type of Jesus carrying his own cross to the place of immolation, but there the tables are turned. It is Christ who vicariously substitutes for all his brothers.

**Second Reading:** Romans 8:31b-34. Overwhelmed by the mighty power of God's love, Paul asks rhetorically: what stands in the way of man's fulfillment (salvation)? Surely not God whose love manifested itself to the extreme by not sparing his only Son, a possible allusion to Abraham's whole-hearted sacrifice, and handing him over to death (alluding to Jesus being handed over) so that man might be totally renewed. Surely not Christ who carried out every detail of the Paschal Mystery for our sake, and continually intercedes for us with the Father. In and with Christ, man can overcome all obstacles and trials.

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 9:1-9 (Greek 9:2-10). In this section of his Gospel, Mark begins to unfold more at length the mystery of Christ. Between two foretellings of the death and resurrection (8:31 and

9:31) he places a deeply mystical experience given to the three chosen disciples, the same who witnessed the daughter of Jairus brought back to life and who would be with him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Its purpose was to bolster up the courage of the disciples in face of those foreboding prophecies. Jesus for a fleeting moment is completely transformed, the sight of which enraptures them, while they are given a deeper understanding of his person.

A mystical experience, though factual and real, is very difficult to describe. To do so, the author compares it to the theophany on Mt. Sinai of which the transfiguration is a counterpart. Six days would allude to the six days in which Mt. Sinai was not visible on account of clouds, but on the seventh day Yahweh spoke to Moses from out of the clouds (Ex. 24:16). Moses and Elijah are both connected with Mt. Sinai (resp. Horeb). They bear witness to the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah). Both cede to Jesus in whom both Law and prophets are brought to highest perfection. In the Tabernacle, built on Sinai, God was with his People manifesting his presence by the overshadowing cloud (Ex. 40:35). But here is the living Tabernacle of God, Christ in human flesh, full of the Glory of God (Jn. 1:14). No longer does God speak to his people merely in the Law but in the very Person of his Son. Him they must now heed. Entering into the overshadowing cloud spells close involvement with the mystery that is Christ, which still remains unintelligible in its full import, for the disciples ponder over his words "to rise from the dead". This mystical experience made a deep impression on the apostles (cf. 2 Pet. 1:17f).

### **Outline for Homily: The Way to Glory**

**Introduction.:** A scientist may work a long time on an invention before he makes a break-through. Suddenly he has a light. He then sees clearly what steps must be taken if his invention is to become reality. He is overjoyed at the glimpse of success he has just had. But there is still a long way to go. Much time, labor and expense will be required before the invention can go on the market. Yet the light that gave him the needed insight fills him with enthusiasm because it was the answer to his dreams.

1. Peter was overwhelmed. He fell flat on his face, so great was the experience he had just had. Jesus, with whom he had daily walked side by side and trudged the dusty roads of Galilee, had suddenly lifted the veil for just a moment, and the effect had been overwhelming. Yes, Peter would build a dwelling-place at once for him, to keep him in this wonderful appearance always

with them. But just then the voice spoke: "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him." And suddenly they were alone again, with Jesus, just plain Jesus. What did it all mean? Why had he mentioned his rising from the dead? Would they ever understand the Master?

2. Christ's way to glory was the Cross. This he had to make clear to the disciples over and over again. The transfiguration was not the final lap of the journey. It was only a passing glimpse of what was to come. But first there would be suffering, rejection and death. He would take upon himself all the sins of mankind, and atone for them by offering himself as a holocaust to the Father. Thus he would manifest the immense love of the Father who gave him up to death for the sake of his brothers. He would willingly run the gauntlet of suffering from Gethsemane to the last hour on the hill of Golgotha. This sacrifice of his would be celebrated and proclaimed on thousands of altars the world over even to the end of time. Glory and splendor would come, but the way to glory was the Cross.

3. The way to glory and to utter happiness that lasts forever is the way the Lord took. We are to listen to him and to take up our cross in order to follow him. The quick trips to happiness of the drug addicts or the pleasure-minded Epicureans do not lead to the bliss of heaven nor to a paradise on earth but to utter and eternal frustration. Only those who willingly listen to the voice of the Son whom the Father sent to be our Savior, and Teacher, will arrive at the joy and bliss of the heavenly dwelling place. There all the blessed will possess God forever and be completely fulfilled. Unless they had taken up their cross daily and followed Jesus on the narrow way of faithfully doing the Father's will, they would never have reached the goal for which the human heart inevitably longs.

**Conclusion:** If the grand promise made to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations was first severely tried (as we have seen in the first reading) and only then amply rewarded, so will every follower of Christ be tested and tried by the fire of trial and suffering before he obtains the promises made by Jesus to his followers, that theirs would be the kingdom of God for all eternity. But that goal is worth every bit of effort and trouble to reach.

### THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT (March 18th, 1979)

**First Reading:** Exodus 20; 1-17 (or: 1-3-7-8-12-17). The "decálogue" (ten words) serves to reveal God's loving will for his People so that they become what he himself is: holy. In time it will become the

foundation of morals for all God's People, also those in Christian times, Israel was firmly convinced that the decalogue was delivered by Yahweh to Moses on the mount (Ex. 34:27f). Originally, all ten "words" were brief; the Priestly Code and Deuteronomy (5:6-21) have elaborated them in line with their purposes. In the texts there is no enumeration of commandments, so various divisions are possible. Catholic usage follows that of Deuteronomy, while Jewish and Protestant usage prefers that of Exodus 20. In the first three, God shows how he wants to be worshipped, in the last seven he teaches man to be concerned about his fellowmen. Modern man may not be inclined to worship wood or stone, but he can become so engrossed in any man-made activity or object that it becomes his god. And if he would observe the commandments earnestly, there would be peace among men. Law is guide-post to the thoughts of God, yet it does not confer the power to observe that which is commanded. Man obtains this from God through prayer and worship. The purpose of Law was never the extreme legalism practiced by the Pharisees, but rather it meant to attune man to respond openly to God's revealing word. Jesus summed up the entire Law in the twofold commandment of love of God and neighbor (Mt. 22:37f), for he who truly loves God and his fellowman will observe all the commandments without fail.

**Second Reading:** First Corinthians 1:22-25. The Jewish world awaited a powerful Savior who would inaugurate the Kingdom of God with great divine interventions (signs), raising Israel above all the nations. The Greek (Gentile) world sought for a system of philosophy (wisdom) that would satisfy all their intellectual queries. God made use of neither. Salvation was to come purely through the salvific act of a Crucified-Savior and the acceptance of his Person and Message (in faith). This was something revolting to the Jew and sheer folly to the Gentile. Yet to those who did accept the Crucified, he became the very Power of God and the immense Wisdom of God, for his apparent weakness brought them strength, and his death of folly brought them the marvel of God's love and eternal life.

**Gospel Reading:** John 2:13-25. The Jewish feast of Passover commemorated the event in Exodus where Yahweh passed over the Israelites sparing them (Ex. 12:27) and also how the Israelites passed through the sea out of Egyptian bondage toward the goal of the promised land (15:16). It was an annual feast in which the paschal lamb was slaughtered, roasted by fire and eaten with unleavened bread. By doing so, Israel each year meant to re-live with her ancestors the mighty act of Yahweh, delivering her from the enemy.

In the Temple at Jerusalem, the House of God, there were several large courtyards where the people gathered to pray and worship. Traffic of buying and selling those things intended for the sacrifices had encroached on one of these courtyards, with the people noisily bartering and exchanging Roman coins for the Jewish half-shekel. Jesus is appalled at the desecration in his Father's house, which was only intended for sacred purposes. As Son, coming into his own, he is filled with holy indignation and drives out whatever does not belong there. It was necessary to manifest righteous anger to drive home his point. But there is nothing in the text that speaks of any violence to any man. Jesus laid hands on no one, nor harmed anyone. Cattle is easily found by their owners, and the greedy money-changers would surely scramble for ill-gotten gain.

Jesus then prophecies concerning his resurrection but the adversaries understand him to mean the material temple. Even the disciples would understand him correctly only in the light of the resurrection. In the theology of the Fourth Gospel, there is a contrast between the material temple of the Old Covenant and the Person of Jesus who is the Living Temple of the New. His action symbolizes what he came to effect: cleansing and renewal. He cleanses and renews the ordinances of the Old Covenant, bringing them to perfection in himself (Mt. 5:17). He renews human nature by his own death and resurrection, which in turn will renew all mankind in the final resurrection.

#### **Outline for Homily: Form a New Heart within US**

**Introduction:** For the occasion of a Golden Wedding Anniversary of their parents, devoted sons and daughters had the entire house renovated, enlarged and remodeled, so that it appeared to be a completely new house, all in readiness for the grand celebration. All were of the opinion that the house was completely transformed to everyone's admiration.

1. Jerusalem was the Holy City and the Temple was God's dwelling place. It was meant to be a house of worship, a house of fervent communal and personal prayer. But greedy men had made it instead a center of commerce. Selling and buying, noise and dirt of cattle and birds, bartering and juggling prices all went to make the sacred precinct of the Temple into a business transaction for many. Jesus on seeing it is filled with righteous indignation and holy anger at such desecration of his Father's House and God's Holy Temple. He undertook to thoroughly cleanse it of everything that disgraced God's Dwelling. He purified the sacred precincts,

and transformed in again into a place of reverent worship and devout prayer, worthy of the Lord. His zeal astonished the disciples. If necessary, Jesus could act firmly.

2. The heart of every Christian is a Temple of God. The Most Blessed Trinity dwells in his inmost depth. God desires to receive prayerful homage and loving worship from the heart of man whom he created and loves so intensely. Yet how often that heart is clogged by evil habits and sin, or cluttered up with all kinds of unworthy desires and worldly projects that are pagan rather than Christian. There is oppression of the poor, dishonesty in business, greed of gain, shady dealings with the unscrupulous, cold treatment of neighbors, servants and relatives, not to mention the evil that passion brings with it. The heart of man needs a cleansing, a healing, a renovation. It needs to be transformed into the image of God as it is destined to be. But only Christ can do that by the power of his Spirit. His mighty presence drives away all that is displeasing to the Father and brings order and beauty into man's inmost being so that God is again properly enthroned there. Then the heart of man can give proper love and worship to God, and can enjoy once more quiet, peace, and happiness.

3. There is need on the part of every follower of Christ to acknowledge personal guilt, carelessness, neglect. False gods have been set up, and the first commandment has been set aside if not intentionally nevertheless in reality. There is need to curb the evil tendencies that go against the guide-lines given by the other commandments of God. There is need of self-denial, prayer and works of mercy, to obtain the renewal and needed transformation. Let the Savior come and not spare us now, so that we might be spared hereafter. We welcome this purification of heart during the Lenten period so that Christ is again truly enthroned in it, and all evil thrown out. In the atmosphere of prayer and quiet, the peace of God is again experienced.

**Conclusion:** Let us ask the Father to form a new heart within us, to heal the wounds our sins and selfishness bring upon us, for he is the God of compassion and the Father of all goodness (alternate prayer of this Sunday).

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT** **(March 25, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Second Chronicles 36:14-16.19-23. The Chronicler, who repeats the facts of the book of Kings but from a religious and inspirational angle, sums up in brief the continued downward trend

of the Southern Kingdom (the tribe of Judah making up the bulk of the people). Both priests and people showed an appalling neglect of their covenant-relations to Yahweh, violating his sabbath rests and desecrating his Temple. The previous destruction of the Northern Kingdom (722 B.C.) ought to have been a stern warning but it went unheeded, and so did the oft-repeated warnings and pleading of the prophets which the all-merciful God has sent his people. So the Chaldeans from the East with Nebuchadnezzar their prince became Yahweh's instrument of punishment, destroying both Temple and city, with large numbers carried off to Babylonian captivity (587 B.C.). Thus the land of Judah had enforced sabbath-rests! God's people were chastened through punishment. Only with the coming of the Persian was a ray of hope given to Judah, with the decree of Cyrus to return to the homeland and rebuild Temple and city (538 B.C.).

**Second Reading:** Ephesians 2:4-10. Paul envisions regenerated man as incorporated into Christ and one with him. Four times in this passage he depicts the Christian as most intimately sharing all things with Christ. He is given new life in Christ and thus experiences a spiritual resurrection. He shares heavenly glory in and with Christ in a spiritual exaltation and enthronement in the heavens. In Christ Jesus he is recipient of God's abundant favors in a pentecostal outpouring of God's love. All this is not recompense for man's labor but sheer gift of God's undeserving love. Man's role is acceptance in deep and grateful faith. In this new creation of God, it is not so man who is at work (a possible allusion to Gen. 1:28) but God himself working through Christ in every member of Christ. The entire passage reflects the "realized eschatology" of John's Gospel. But Paul is also aware of a final eschatology as in 1 Cor. 15:28.

**Gospel Reading:** John 3:14-21. The evangelist has added theological reflections to the words of Jesus which apparently end with v 15. A comparison with the brazen serpent of Num. 21:4-9 brings out the fact that both were raised up for all to see, both are objects of revulsion, and yet through faith, both become means of salvation, but in the case of the Crucified, it is not only for temporal healing but above all for life unending. The "lifting up" of the Son of man is an ambivalent term in John's Gospel, referring both to his death on the cross and to his resurrection-exaltation as source of life (as also in 8:28 and 12:32). In v 16, the role of the Father comes to the fore: his immense love spent itself, so to say, in his total gift of his Son to us. "Give" is also ambivalent, having the added meaning of giving him up to death, to be the source of life for



all men. One could call v. 16 the quintessence of the Christian religion: God's love wants all men to share his divine life through acceptance of his Son.

The mission of the Son was to be the Savior of the world, not its Judge (v. 17). He came as the Light to enlighten everyone (1:9), but if man wilfully remains in his sin he will not share this Light. He is enveloped in total darkness and stands self-condemned, for the Light of the world is inescapable. To "act in truth" is a Johannine expression meaning to follow the Light that is Christ (as in 1 Jn. 1:6 and 3 Jn. 3).

### Outline for Homily: An Object of Revulsion

**Introduction:** We read in the Book of Samuel (1 Sam. 17:41ff) that when young David came against Goliath, the giant scorned and cursed him, saying: "Am I a dog for you to come against me with sticks?!". Yet it was not Goliath with his mighty sword that won the victory, but David with his sling, who cried: "I come against you in the name of the God of the armies of Israel". David and his sling were despicable in the eyes of the giant, yet it was David by means of his sling who won the victory, relying on the Lord.

1. When the Israelites were bitten by deadly serpents in the desert (Nun. 21:4-9), with the result that many were on the verge of death, did anyone of them imagine that God would have Moses set up the very image of the repulsive serpents, on which they were to gaze in order to be restored to health? Perhaps in no better way could God bring home to them that it was not the object of revulsion that would give them life but accepting his word on faith that brought healing.

Did any of the crowd standing around Jesus crucified that awful day (apart from a few faithful followers) still presume to think that this repulsive figure on the cross was the means God had determined to save all from death provided they accepted on faith Jesus as Savior?

Did it enter into the mind of many of the pagan Romans when they crucified a donkey, nailing it to a cross in sheer mockery of the Christian belief, that one day the Crucified Christ would conquer the great Roman Empire and that its very emperors would kneel in adoration before him?

And who ever imagined that the sign of the Crucified, which up to then was an object of revulsion, would in time be spread all

over the world, in churches and schools, in hospitals and homes, to offer consolation to the sick and to the dying, strength to the tempted and new energy to those who needed it? Yet it was that object of revulsion, the Crucified, that conquered the world of man.

2. No wonder St. Paul cried out: "Do you see now how God has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom? If it was God's wisdom that human wisdom would fail to come to the knowledge of God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message we preach. And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here we are preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews a stumbling block and to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:21-24). In this Lenten period, let the heart of man return to the lesson of the Crucified. It is the mystery of God's wisdom, the mystery of the deep thoughts of the Most High.

**Conclusion:** Who can fathom God's ways? He had to show man that man could not bring himself to salvation and fulfillment by any of his own devices. The unthinkable way of a Crucified Savior was God's way to offer man salvation. But it was at the same time the proof of God's immense love for little man.

## BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES FOR APRIL

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (April 1, 1979)

**First Reading:** Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jeremiah in intense persecution and suffering eminently prefigures Christ, the Suffering Savior. It was fitting that from this prophet's lips should come the remarkable oracle concerning the "New Covenant", a term found nowhere else in the Old Testament. Quoted in full in Hebr. 8:8-12, it is adequately realized only in the Blood of Jesus (Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25), the God-Man uniting his People with his Father and with one another in the most intimate union of his Body-Person. It will endure for all eternity. In contrast to the Law written on stone tablets, (Ex. 31:18) or in a book (Ex. 24:7), the new Law of Love will

be imprinted in the heart, that is, in the inner spirit of man. This can only be accomplished by the Spirit of God himself. Intimacy of each individual with God in Christ, and deep loving knowledge of God imparted by the inner Spirit will characterize the New People of God. Covenantal love (in the Spirit) insures the blotting out of all sin and its remembrance.

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 5:7-9. A different glimpse of Gethsemane with deep theological overtones. Having become man, the Son of God willed to experience all the weakness and temptations of man, as well as the fear and anxiety before impending death. The submission he had shown to the Father all his life now becomes difficult in the extreme. His loud cries and tears take the form of an agonizing prayer mentioned in Mk. 13:45f. His prayer for himself and for mankind was heard, for, once the ordeal was undergone, he became not only Conqueror of death in his Resurrection unto life indestructible, but the source of eternal life and full salvation to all who in turn obey him. That was his prayer all along and he overcame his natural instincts in favor of it.

**Gospel Reading:** John 12:20-33. The Greeks (Gentiles) seek an audience with Jesus by approaching Philip, who together with Andrew bore a Greek name and very likely spoke also the *koiné* Greek language. Jesus did not grant the audience at that time, for his mission was to the House of Israel (Mt. 15:24). Instead, he speaks of his "hour" of coming glorification. In John's writings, both the death and the resurrection of Jesus comprise his glory. Jesus illustrates his point with a grain of wheat which has great potential, but remains alone by itself unless planted, that is, subjected to "death and burial" in the earth. On rising from the earth, the grain brings forth abundant fruit. Jesus is thinking first of all of himself: by his death and resurrection, he becomes the source of life for all who accept him (regardless of what nation).

But the image is immediately applied to all the followers of Christ. Man's higher and supernatural goals must always be preferred to mere human and worldly interests. Christ leads the way: first to death of all selfish interests, and then on to glory and reward. The distress of soul and humble submission of Jesus to the Father's will (v. 27) remind us of the Gethsemane scene in the first three gospels. Strengthened by the Father's assurance of continued approval, Jesus confidently declares that his oblation and glorification will bring about Satan's downfall, and inaugurate a new era for the world in which Jesus, as its center, would draw all to himself. "Lifted up" is ambivalent: lifted up on the Cross, and lifted up in glory and exaltation.

**Outline for Homily: The Grain that is Broken, Buried and Rises Again.**

**Introduction:** What an apt comparison that the Lord chose in the figure of the grain to illustrate his own passion, death and resurrection! If the grain is not planted in the earth, it remains a single grain, though with great potential. Only if it is buried in the earth and breaks up into plant life, will the new stalk rise out of the earth. Grain existence must be sacrificed if plant-life is to ensue. Only if it lets itself be used up completely, will the new stalk be multiplied immeasurably. Once it rises as plant-life, it has totally different qualities than it had as grain, yet it is identical with the grain that was planted, broken up and buried.

1. This is truly a striking image of the Savior, broken for our sins, buried in the earth and risen again in the newness of the transformed life of glory. Just as the grain becomes entirely different once it has been buried and rises to new life. So Christ would first undergo death and burial, and only then be transformed into the glorious Risen Lord, identical with the Jesus who died on the cross. Just as the single grain now manifests its potential by bringing forth much fruit, so the Risen Lord is the source of new life for countless others, for the pagans too who had asked Philip to speak to the Master. He did not grant their wish at that time, but he would be their very Life after his resurrection. For just as the many grains on the new stalk derive their life-substance from the main plant, so do all the members of Christ, who accept him in faith and are incorporated into him in Baptism, derive their life and vigor from the Risen Lord.

2. But the lesson of the grain that is broken, buried and rises again is immediately applied by the Savior himself to all his followers. The law of self-sacrifice holds good for all. If one prefers his present life (with its comforts and satisfactions), he will not gain new (eternal) life, and will even lose the present one. But if he does not prefer it (this is the meaning of the Semitic expression "hate"), and sacrifices it for the sake of the higher and eternal Life, he makes the best possible use of this life, for such action brings him Life Eternal, and an abundant harvest besides. Therefore the Christian striving to conquer himself and to deny himself is very meaningful. These are the values that have lasting results.

3. We sow (sacrifice) the earthly to obtain the heavenly; the temporal to obtain the eternal; the natural for the supernatural; the human for the divine. One may sacrifice intelligence, by working for the ignorant or handicapped; the will, by obedience to lawful superiors; affections and health, by hard labor, toil and service in

difficult climates; pleasures and comforts, by caring for the minority groups; and one may even sacrifice spiritual consolation, if God wills it so. All of this brings forth an abundant harvest.

**Conclusion:** As the Savior's love led him to accept the suffering of the cross that his brothers might glory in new life, so may he change our selfishness into self-giving, that we may transform the darkness of the world's pain into the life and joy of Easter (Alternate prayer of the Mass).

## **PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION**

### **(April 8, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 50:4-7. This is the third of the servant songs in Deutero-Isaiah, which the Christian Church has seen fully realized only in Christ. It first depicts the power of his preaching in his ministry of mercy. The sharp sword and sharpened arrow of the second song (49:2) are now clearly the power of speech. His vocation as servant of Yahweh is fraught with difficulty, since it calls for continual submission in face of insults and persecution. This recurs more at length in the fourth song (53:3ff). Persevering in humble obedience, his total trust is in God, confident that he will come out victorious.

**Second Reading:** Philippinians 2:6-11. A magnificent hymn on the "kenosis" or self-emptying and humiliation of the God-Man and his subsequent exaltation. Either composed by Paul himself at an earlier date or taken from an early Christian repertoire, it is inserted here by Paul as a trump-card to bring home his point of self-effacement mentioned in vv. 3-4, the motivation of which is none other than the stupendous example of the Son of God in his grandiose act of self-abasement as Servant of Yahweh.

The hymn consists of two strophes, vv.6-8 giving the downward movement from the heights of divinity to the humiliation of death on the cross. Vv.9-11 give the upward movement from the depths of the cross to the heights of the divinity, with the Sacred Humanity now included. Inescapable is the symmetry. It is also a good example of "inclusion" with v. 6 and v. 11 as the two similar end-terms.

In becoming man, Jesus did not grasp at or insist on his being equal to God. He "emptied" himself of the divine honors and protocol which were his by right. The Greek word "kenoo" is always used by Paul in the figurative sense of making no account of one-

self, foregoing something which one could claim. On account of this willing obedience during his entire life and total "kenosis" (emptying oneself) even unto death on the cross, God exalts him on high as Lord of the universe. (Very meaningful is the causal phrase "therefore" or "because of this" since the exaltation is the reward. Regretfully it is missing in the Jerusalem Bible). The exaltation includes the homage and adoration of the entire universe (symbolized by the bending of the knee), and the universal acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord (Yahweh), entering into that glory which was his by right and is now his by conquest.

**Gospel Reading:** The Passion according to Mark 14:1 to 15:47 Though innocent, Jesus submitted to all manner of insult and torture, being condemned to death by the malice of the rulers of Israel, who brought pressure to bear on the Roman governor. But in death, even the pagan Roman centurion acknowledged him to be the Son of God (14:39) which Mark presents in its full meaning as the profession of the Gentile Church.

**Homily:** The Passion is read (preferably by several in a sort of dramatization) in place of a homily. The above remarks on the Gospel can be a suggestion for opening introductory words.

## HOLY THURSDAY (April 12, 1979)

**First Reading:** Exodus 12:1-8.11-14. The Paschal Lamb was both sacrifice (12:17) and sacrificial meal. It eminently prefigured Christ, our true Paschal Lamb who has been sacrificed (1 Cor. 5:7), innocent and without blemish, immolated in the evening, its flesh eaten, its blood communicated to the dwelling places as a sign of salvation and well-being. St. Justin also mentions that the paschal lamb was placed on two spits in the form of a cross before it was immolated, as was Christ on the Cross.

The actions and gestures accompanying the paschal meal as it was celebrated year after year were to remind God's People of their passing out of slavery to the freedom of the promised land. The word "pass-over" was given a popular etymology taken from the Hebrew "pesach" (Aramaic pascha), meaning to pass through and to pass over. Both meanings were applied by the sacred writer to the situation at hand. God passed over Israel sparing her, and Israel passed through the sea to freedom.

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Together with 10:21, this is the earliest witness to the Eucharist (written about 56 A.D.). Paul

either received the tradition from the Lord himself or from his Apostles. It contains clear statements about the nature of the Eucharist:

1) The Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. The words are crystal clear, as is the inference from v. 29. In the original Greek it is simply stated: "This is my Body which is for you", "body" meaning meaning himself totally, a life for others, now a sacrifice for them. In the second part, "this cup is the new covenant in my Blood", two figures of speech are employed: the container (cup) stands for what is contained in it, and the effect (covenant) for the cause (the Blood, that is, the redemptive death). Christ's sacrifice of himself brought about the permanent covenant between God and man.

2) The Eucharist is a true sacrifice: The Body and Blood are mentioned separately as a sign of sacrifice, the same reference to sacrifice as in 10:21. Moreover, there is an inescapable allusion to the sacrifice on Mt. Sinai when the Old Covenant was sealed by the pouring out of the blood of the animal sacrifices with the words: This is the blood of the covenant (Ex. 24:8).

3) The Eucharistic sacrifice is one with that on Golgotha, for as often as it is celebrated, it proclaims the death of the Lord (v. 26) by re-enacting it, making it known and effective for all who participate.

4) The Apostles are empowered to perpetuate the very act which Christ performed: "Do this in remembrance of me". This power passes on to their successors, because it must be enacted "until he comes" (which is the Coming in glory).

**Gospel Reading:** John 13:1-15. In this passage, two trends of thought are presented:

1) The stupendous example of humble service, given by him "who was fully aware that he came from God" (v. 3); by an action usually performed by slaves, to summarize and climax an entire life of total service to others in this supreme symbol of service.

2) The emphasis on cleansing by means of Christ's salvific work realized through his "self-emptying", as well as the necessity of accepting Christ's viewpoint on the matter, in order to have any fellowship with him. The "washing" and "cleansing" conjure up the sacrament of initiation into Christ: baptism.

But the passage is also replete with other considerations: 1) it is the first time John mentions that the real motive behind the passion and death is Christ's extreme love (v. 1), an important factor in understanding the mystery of the Cross.

3) Behind the scenes invisible forces are at work to undo the work of Christ: a personal archenemy working through one of the closest companions of Jesus, the disciple who turned traitor.

4) Finally, there is Christ's command to live a similar life of service as given by him in the example of the washing of the disciples' feet (v. 14f).

### **Outline for Homily: I have Given you an Example.**

**Introduction:** With this evening's eucharistic sacrifice we begin the solemn paschal triduum which climaxes in the paschal vigil of Easter and ends with Vespers on the afternoon of Easter Sunday. This solemn paschal triduum of the passion and resurrection of the Lord is the highlight of the entire liturgical year and is intended to make a lasting impression on our Christian outlook. At the threshold of the triduum, we celebrate the memorial of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and from here we proceed to go with Christ through his passion and death even to rising with him in the newness of life on Easter morning. With millions of Christians all over the world we begin the triduum.

1. Could the Lord have given us a more striking example of what he wanted of us than by washing the very feet of his disciples? That was the task of the slaves or servants of the house. What master exchanges places with his servants? But Jesus did. He actually got on his knees and literally washed their feet. But after that, he told them that they were to follow his example. Not washing people's feet, but what that action symbolized: gladly and humbly serving one another in menial tasks, in common ordinary duties of the day. All can do this in the spirit of Christ, the professionals in their line of work, the office people in theirs, farmers and fishermen in theirs, jeepney and bus drivers in theirs. Instead of merely working for material advancement and pay, they all can serve Christ in their brothers and sisters by doing their respective jobs conscientiously and well. This is what the Master asks us to do.

2. But Jesus went further. He wanted even to be the Food of his disciples. So he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, emptying himself in utter self-abasement, thus giving another proof of his immense love for us. Men will provide a banquet for relatives and friends, they may even cook it and in special cases they might deign to serve it themselves, but Jesus goes far beyond that: **he himself is the very Food he serves his beloved ones:** "Take and eat; this is my Body." What unheard goodness of God! This is the marvel of the Eucharist, which enraptures the angels, and fills the



saints with joy and gratitude. All who have the gifts of deep faith appreciate more and more this treasure which Jesus promised to leave with us till the end of time. Do we appreciate his loving presence day and night with us in the Eucharist?

3. But the Eucharist is not only our Food. It is also our Sacrifice. From earliest times man offered sacrifice to God. All through the Old Covenant. Israel offered countless animals and fruits in sacrifice to the Lord. But the Father was pleased with only one grand sacrifice, that of his Son who climaxed his whole life of self-abasement in the total gift of himself on Golgotha, and crystallizing that gift of himself in the eucharistic sacrifice on our altars. Did he not say at the Last Supper: "This is the Blood of the Covenant which is poured out for many!" Jesus has poured himself out in sacrifice for our sakes. And it is this gift of himself that we daily offer to the Father for all mankind.

4. But the Lord does not do things by halves. He wanted men of all times and ages to benefit from this sacrificial gift of himself. So at the Last Supper he also instituted the priesthood of the New Covenant when he said to his disciples: "Do this as a memorial of me". By these words he empowered them to offer the self-same sacrifice he was offering at that moment, which is none other than himself. The Christian world has responded to this love by celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the memorial of his entire Paschal Mystery, in every church and chapel, day after day, year after year. From all sides they come, rich and poor alike, learned and unlettered, to participate in the offering of Jesus to the Father and offer themselves with him, with and through the priests who are empowered to do so.

**Conclusion:** Only when we endeavor to realize what a tremendous mystery takes place on our altars will we appreciate the Mass, and make every endeavor to attend regularly, participate actively, and contribute in as far as in us lies to this grand celebration of Christ's Paschal Mystery. Above all, let us do so today.

## **EASTER VIGIL**

### **(April 15, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Romans 6:3-11. Paul's deeply mystical explanation of Christian baptism is very fitting for Easter, the climax of the Paschal Mystery, for it depicts the Christian's renewal in the Risen Christ. This is especially meaningful for the catechumens newly baptized in the vigil ceremonies. In baptism, the Christian enters

into the closest union with Christ in his redemptive acts of death, burial and resurrection. With Christ he dies to sin and sinful habits, his old self is buried with Christ, and he rises in Christ to a new life for God. The homiletic value of this passage is evident. Moreover, this spiritual renewal in the Risen Christ is an anticipation and prelude of his final resurrection and enjoyment of eternal life in God. If the early Christians received baptism through total immersion, the lesson became all the more striking through the clear symbolism of immersion and rising from the grave of "death" unto new life. Now identified with Christ, the Christian must put off sin for good, identify himself with the Christ-life and endeavor to please God in all things.

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 24:1-12. The resurrection "apparitions" are intended by the sacred writers as theological presentations of **the fact that Jesus was truly risen**. This is brought home in various ways. In this passage it is the clear communication of heaven in vv. 5-6, and it was duly prophesied by Jesus before his death. It is beside the point to endeavor to "harmonize" the apparitions, since their literary form differs from the rest of the Gospel. Emphasis is here given to the skepticism of the Eleven toward the message that Christ was risen from the dead. This is a clear indication that the resurrection was not their pre-conceived concoction. Peter verifies for himself the account of the women, and, full of wonder, is this prepared for the personal encounter with the Risen One mentioned later in v. 34.

## EASTER DAY (April 15, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 10:34a,37-43. A resumé of the chief content of the oral kerygma (which kept developing until it formed the material for the written gospels). God's plan of salvation for mankind concentrated in Jesus of Nazareth, climaxing Israel's salvation history. Peter proclaims the Good News in its chief points:

- 1) The divine mission of Jesus, anointed by the Spirit, witnessed by way.
- 2) His death on the cross, also witnessed by many.
- 3) His being raised to life again and seen by the Apostles.
- 4) His command to proclaim the Good News of salvation.
- 5) His glorious Coming as Judge of all.
- 6) Forgiveness of sin for all who accept him in faith.

**Second Reading:** Colossians 3:1-4. The Risen Christ is the source of new life for every Christian who also has risen spiritually (or in spirit) to new life in Christ. Since Christ is enthroned at the Father's right hand, let the Christian pursue the aims of Christ, and not merely material aims. Even though his work be in the things of earth, his aims must be to further the work of Christ who as head of the universe builds through his members the world to come. In baptism, the Christian has died to all that displeases God. His new life, though lived in the midst of the world, is interior, hidden in Christ, living the Christ-life to the full, which means doing good to his fellowmen. When Christ comes in glory, the faithful Christian will openly share his glory.

**Gospel Reading:** John 20:1-9 Though no one was present to witness the resurrection itself, all the Apostles bore witness to the fact that Jesus had risen, and was alive in their midst. They had never understood his prophecy about rising from the dead, so it is no wonder that only now even John came to believe it. Although the Apostles that same day were all given to see the Risen Christ (except Thomas), yet already now the very fact that the tomb was empty with the linens retaining the same position of the body laid in the tomb (and not thrown into a heap) convinced John of what had happened. The recent controversy whether the dead body of Jesus might still be found (since his glorified body is a totally transformed one) is pointless, for the enemies could so easily have removed the stone and made a laughing-stock of the Apostles' testimony. The ridiculous story of the Apostles' stealing away the body needs no comment, for the entire tenor of the Gospel narrative argues against it. Only the Risen Christ could have made the Apostles the staunch witnesses they proved to be, and only then, when he first gave them his Spirit. The fact of the resurrection, preached far and wide by the Apostles made such an impression on contemporaries, that the Early Church increased by leaps and bounds. Christ had died, but Christ is risen and is in our midst. And he will come again in glory.

### **Outline for Homily: Life Transformed**

**Introduction:** What a transformation takes place in the life of a large caterpillar! It is rather formidable looking with prickles on its back and a horned tail. It moves very slowly, confined to a branch, eating voraciously and stripping the branch bare. Yet all the while it is building up new organs that will enable it to be a totally transformed creature. Once its work is finished, it comes forth from its cocoon-prison, beautiful to behold, a winged moth,

no longer confined to a branch but flying where it will, no longer eating leaves but enjoying the nectar of flowers. The moth is the same one-time caterpillar, but the change is beyond all comparison.

1. Our Risen Lord is the same Jesus hanging crucified on Golgotha, as the Apostles clearly testify. But what a transformation has taken place! Now he is glorified, shining in splendor and brilliance. His life of obedience, suffering and pain is over, and he now receives as reward all the riches of the Godhead. Once considered stricken by God, a man of sorrows, now he is acclaimed by the entire universe as Messiah and Lord. Every lip acclaim him as Yahweh to the glory of the Father. He lives now forever, never to die again. He goes where he wants to be, at will. No walls or doors can stop him from passing through. He appears and disappears as he sees fit. Not only is he himself transformed but he is the source of eternal life for all his followers. In blinding light he appears to Saul at Damascus and transforms him from a persecutor to an ardent apostle!

2. What a miracle of divine power is the glorified body! This is the destiny that awaits all the faithful followers of Jesus. Christ is the first-fruits who has risen from the dead, but all who are with him in faith and love will likewise be transformed into a glorious state with no suffering or death anymore. He has promised life immortal to those who accept him. He said they would shine like the sun in the kingdom of his Father. "They will never hunger or thirst again...because the Lamb who is at the throne will be their shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:16f). Well could St. Paul cry out that the sufferings of this life can never be compared to the glory as yet unrevealed which is waiting for us (Rom. 8:18).

3. Some of God's friends have at times been given a glimpse of the life beyond. When the Blessed Mother appeared to Bernadette at Lourdes, the very sight of her so enraptured the child that she immediately went into ecstasy. The child could scarcely describe the beauty of Mary. When God allowed his saints to appear to anyone on earth, the apparition is always accompanied by great light and joy. Don Bosco was so taken in by the light that surrounded his young companion Dominic Savio that he confused it with the light of the Godhead. "Oh no!" Dominic told him. "This is merely created light. Wait till you see God!" Our Easter joy and exultation is already an anticipation of the heavenly bliss that awaits those who have gone with Christ to the heights of Golgotha. Then there will be an eternal alleluia!

**Conclusion:** Heaven is a reality. We see now with the eyes of faith, but then we shall see God face to face. Then we shall know as fully as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12). God is never outdone in generosity. If we have suffered with his Beloved Son, we shall also share his immense glory.

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

### **(April 22, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Acts 4:32-35. A glimpse into the early believing community. Stress is on community: 1) they are one in mind and heart, which only the Spirit could have accomplished, for he is the Bond of Love uniting all in one. 2) They share their material goods, so that no one is in want. It was not required for membership to give over all their possessions as is clear from 5:4. Sharing with others remains the hallmark of Christian charity, but practical situations in larger communities as time went on demanded proper application, and not identical copying of the Early Church's idealism.

Both in word and deed the Apostles bore witness to the Lord's resurrection. In word, by proclaiming boldly that they had seen the Risen Christ with their own eyes, even when this testimony brought them ridicule and persecution. In deed, by their lives, molded more and more on Christ and his Good News. Their example bore out their preaching.

**Second Reading:** First John 5:1-6. The theme begins with faith in Jesus as the Christ, passes over to love of God and fellowmen, and ends with faith in Jesus as Son of God. A typical case of "inclusion". Faith is the foundation of all true love. If one loves the Father, one will want to love all his children. But love must be shown by deeds, as Jesus commanded: Love one another as I have loved you. Faith in Christ's divinity is the rock-bottom of our religion, and love of God's children (all our fellowmen) is the proper blossoming of that faith. This attitude of faith and love conquers all the wiles of the adverse powers.

**Gospel Reading:** John 20:19-31. This is the climax and closing of John's gospel (ch. 21 is a later inspired addition). Jesus now imparts the fruits of his salvific work: (1) Twice he wishes the disciples the Easter message of "Shalom-Peace", promised in the farewell discourses (14:27). It contains the fulness of messianic blessings. 2) He shares with them his divine sending, the identical mission he received from the Father, whereby they become "apostles" or

"those who are sent" (from the Greek word: *apostello*, to send). 3) He imparts to them the Holy Spirit, the first-fruit of his passion-death-resurrection-salvation. We are reminded that in the beginning God breathed on man to make him truly human (Gen. 2:7). Now by the gift of the Spirit, they become sons of God (cf. Gal. 4:6). Luke describes the outpouring of the same gift in Acts ch. 2 from his own liturgical standpoint. Chronology is not in question. 4) Jesus truly imparts to his apostles the power to forgive sins. It is exercised in the sacrament of penance (Council of Trent). That the power did not die with them but was passed on to those who represent them as long as the Church exists on earth, is the only reasonable conclusion.

The doubt of Thomas and his subsequent profession of faith only serve to confirm the reader that the Apostles are proclaiming the truth about the Risen Christ. On the lips of Thomas is the faith of the entire believing community. John follows this up with the double aim of his gospel-writing: to deepen the faith in Jesus as Messiah-King (Christ) and Son of God, and to share by means of this living faith the divine life which he imparts. This twofold purpose runs through the entire gospel of John and lights up each chapter.

#### **Outline for Homily: Peace be with You.**

**Introduction:** "Peace" is the English translation of the Hebrew "shalom", and is a word rich in content. It is the usual greeting in both Old and New Testaments, but it is replete with sacred overtones. Like the many faces of a jewel it has a variety of related meanings, but in the fullest sense it designates that state of perfect well-being which God himself possesses. He who possesses his peace is in communion with God. Jesus brought about this precious gift through his Paschal Mystery, and it contains the sum-total of messianic blessings.

1. Peace was the heavenly message announced to the shepherds when the Child Jesus was born: "Peace on earth to those on whom God's favor rests" (Lk. 2:14). Jesus before his Passion promised this peace to his disciples, telling them that no one in the world, not even the great ones, could bring it about, for he alone could do so: "Peace I bequeathe to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you" (Jn. 14:27). Despite all trials and persecutions, they would find peace in Jesus (Jn. 16:33). Indeed the peace that Christ imparts is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and it is beyond all understanding (Phil. 4:7). In order to impart this gift to his loved ones, the Savior was willing to go through the excruciating sufferings of his passion and death.

2. How eager the Risen Savior breaks in upon the disciples gathered in the upper room. It seems he can hardly wait till they are all together and comes to them even though Thomas is not yet there. "Peace be with you" he says to them and repeats it, showing them simultaneously the price of that peace, his wounded hands and side. His sudden appearance in their midst though the doors were locked does not frighten them in the least but fills them all with joy. "The Lord is truly risen" they keep telling each other as they gaze upon him, speechless with wonder. Jesus knew well the importance of that hour. He had accomplished their reconciliation and that of all mankind with the Father. The peace announced by the angels in Bethlehem is now a reality. What he promised in the upper room he will now impart. Man can live now in communion with his God, for he has regained his friendship through Jesus his Son. What a cause for joy and gratitude!

3. Now the gigantic task of bringing all men to God can begin. It will be the work of Christ's disciples. He extends to them his own divine mission, the very mission which the Father had given him. He sends them forth to the uttermost parts of the world to bring the Glad Tidings of man's reconciliation with God, and the precious gift of peace that surpasses all understanding. But in order that they can accomplish that herculean task, he invests them with his own Holy Spirit of power, empowering them to be his instruments in reconciling man to God. They will actually forgive men's sins: "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven" (Jn. 20:23). These are the Lord's apostles and emissaries, invested with tremendous powers, and their word has gone forth to all the world. We are the recipients of these benefits, and we enjoy that peace which brings us into close friendship with God through Jesus his Son.

**Conclusion:** The treasure of our faith ought not be buried within, but eagerly shared with others. What can we do by word or deed, by writing or any of the mass media to make known the Paschal Mystery of Christ and all its benefits for man? Will we daily be all taken up with passing events, or give time and attention also to those of eternal value? Will our living faith make itself felt by others?

### THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (April 29, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 3:13-15, 17-19. After curing the cripple in the temple, Peter presents a summary of the kerygma or proclamation of the Good News. It comprises a brief but vivid account of the

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

**Second Reading:** First John 2:1-5a. The Beloved Disciple designates his readers as "little ones" (teknia: 7 times in this letter and Jn. 13:13), in view of the spiritual childhood inculcated by the Master (Mt. 18:3), and also to express the paternal love of the aged apostle. The ideal to be striven for is sinlessness like the Master's, but no one need lose hope if one has been weak. Jesus Christ is the Father's gift to us, and he, the All-Holy One, acts as our intercessor in the Father's presence (Paraclete, advocate in Greek). By reason of the sacrifice of himself he is also the atonement (propitiation) of any one's sins, the world over.

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

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 24:35-48. What Jesus is driving home is the reality of his resurrection. All eleven of the chosen band are now witnesses of the identical reality. And as if the senses of sight, hearing and touch of so many individuals were not enough, Jesus offers further proof by eating something before their very eyes. That they were "incredulous for sheer joy" simply means they were overjoyed and couldn't believe their eyes. Now they are forced to hold that Israel's Messiah is a suffering Messiah, something that had always remained unintelligible and unacceptable. The Risen Savior presents a completely new phenomenon in their experience, but Jesus emphasizes that it had been foretold by the prophets. It took a special charism to see that: he opened their eyes.

The scene ends with the universal commission to preach repentance in his name, in view of forgiveness of sin to all nations,



starting from Jerusalem. Metanoia ought to be translated as repentance, an inner change of heart. Penance is an inadequate translation. Jesus promises them the Spirit as the Father's Gift, in order to enable them to bear witness to the reality of the Risen Christ.

### **Outline for Homily: He Opened their Minds**

**Introduction:** Many people read the Bible. Many more listen to it being read Sunday after Sunday. But often it leaves little impression on their minds, and brings about little or no effect in their hearts. Something more is needed than the mere reading of the word of God or listening to it. Something from the Lord is needed, a light from above, a gift of the Holy Spirit, the charism to grasp the value of that particular reading for one's life. Only God can give this gift.

1. How often Jesus had foretold to the chosen twelve that he would die and rise again! When he drove out the buyers and sellers from the Temple, he told them the cryptic words: "Destroy this sanctuary and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19). He was referring to himself, the true Temple of the Lord. After the Transfiguration, he told the three companions to say nothing of the vision till the Son of man was risen from the dead (Mt. 17:9). In three consecutive instances he gave them a clear prophecy of his death and resurrection (Mt. 16:21; 17:22; 20:17), but in each case it is mentioned that they either resisted his words or did not understand what he meant. Resurrection from the dead was something totally unheard of, so new as to be unbelievable. Their minds were dull.

2. Now the disciples are forced to admit the reality of his resurrection. He stands before them. He bids them come near and touch him. They feel his wounded hands and side. He even ate as he did before. He gave them all the proofs available for a reasonable man to accept the fact that he was truly alive again, although he had beyond a doubt died on the cross and was buried. They still did not know what to make of it, so he turned to their sacred books, especially the psalms and the prophets, and "opened their minds". Their minds had been closed. They needed light to see the meaning of the inspired word of God. He pointed out the many passages in their sacred books which spoke of him, and also of his death and exaltation after death, especially Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. In the light of that charism all became clear. Peter in the early chapters of Acts show how well he now understood the meaning of many passages which he quotes so often.

3. It is a fact that today the Bible is coming again into its own. Many more people are reading the word of God than before, and many are listening attentively to the readings of the new liturgy in the eucharistic celebrations. Yet, what is needed is the light from above, the charism to grasp the significance for one's personal life and needs or for those in one's care. The word of God is a living word. As the document on revelation of Vatican II tell us: "In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them" (21). And again it is said that these sacred books "make the voice of the Holy Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and apostles". Thus "the force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the food of the soul, the pure and lasting source of the spiritual life" (21). But we must beg the Lord to open our minds so that we understand. It is the light from above that is needed. For this we must pray.

**Conclusion:** Daily to read some part of the word of God is highly recommendable. But first of all we ought to beg the Lord to grant us the charism of understanding and applying well what we read. If he promised to hear every prayer that is according to his will, certainly this prayer for light to understand his sacred word is according to his will. Let the seeking heart continue to say: "Lord that I may see!" "Lord disclose to me the seeking heart continue to say: "Lord that I may see!" "Lord disclose to me the hidden manna" "Lord, open my mind!" In past centuries, the renewal of the Christian life has often come about by a deeper love and appreciation of the word of God.

## TO ALL GOOD NEWS SUBSCRIBERS:

Good News started publication (as a monthly bulletin) in December 1972. We had to stop issuing it in August 1976 because we found it too difficult to come out in time to be of up-to-date service to our subscribers. We really thought that was the end of "Good News". But many people urged us to resume our work. In particular, Bishop Leonardo Legaspi assured us of his patronage. So we published "Good News" again, this time as a quarterly bulletin, hoping that the materials for Bible Study will reach you in time. As you all know, we have been unable to get the copies off the press before the beginning of each quarter. Hence we are again tempted to stop publication.

But again our friends tell us to go on. We will. But first, may we count on a little understanding on your part? All the material except the Gospel Readings in Good News is prepared by only one man who is very busy with many other duties. In spite of all his intentions, pressing matters have forced him to interrupt his work time and again. So please excuse us for not having been punctual this year.

**Next year, to assure better punctuality, we will publish "Good News" semi-annually: January to June and July to December. And perhaps in 1980 we will come out with one issue for the whole year, with Bible Study material for every Sunday.**

Bishop Legaspi has been a great help on the financial side. But we cannot go on unless you support us with your subscription. Perhaps you can do a little more by recruiting new subscribers for us

Due to increase in printing costs, we have to raise the subscription price of Good News to ₱15.00 for the year 1979.

Sincerely,

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