

# **BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS**

**"WE BELIEVE IN THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE"**

**Editorial**

**CELEBRATION OF A DIOCESAN SYNOD IN LUCENA**

**Bishop Jose T. Sanchez, D.D.**

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BISHOP TODAY?**

**Bishop Teotimo Pacis, D.D.**

**GRAVE MATTER IN SIMPLE THEFT**

**Ben Vargas, O.P.**

**OBLIGATION OF PASTORS OF SAYING  
THE MISSA PRO POPULO**

**Florencio Testera, O.P.**

**REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION ON  
THE LITURGY**

**ICEL**

**COMMUNICATION ON THE PHILIPPINE  
BIBLE SOCIETY**

**Ricardo B. Jumawan**

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

EDITOR	EFREN RIVERA, O.P.
ASSOCIATE EDITORS	PEDRO LUIS GONZALEZ, O.P. JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	FRANCISCO DEL RIO, O.P. JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P. BONIFACIO SOLIS, O.P.
PUBLICATION ASSISTANT	AMELITA M. HERRERA

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

Subscription Rates (Effective January, 1979). Yearly subscription in the Philippines.:

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Newsprint	P35	P65	P98
Bookpaper	P40	P75	P110

Price per copy: Newsprint — P6.00. Bookpaper — P8.00. Back issue, P6.00. Abroad, \$20.00 per year. Back issue, \$5.00. Subscriptions are paid in advance.

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

Address all communication to:

**BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS**

Fathers' Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
Manila, Philippines

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**


---

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	194	"WE BELIEVE IN THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE"
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	196	IN THIS ISSUE
• Paul VI	197	TO GENEROSO CAMIÑA, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF DAVAO
• Paul VI	198	TO OSCAR CRUZ, ARCHBISHOP OF SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA
• Sacred Congregation for Bishops	199	PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE MANILA SYNOD
• Apostolic Nunciature	200	REV. THOMAS WOODS REPLACES REV. CLAUDIO MARIA CELLI
• Bishop Jose Sanchez	204	PASTORAL LETTER ANNOUNCING THE CELEBRATION OF A DIOCESAN SYNOD IN LUCENA
<b>FEATURES</b>		
• Bishop Teotimo Pacis	207	WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BISHOP TODAY
• Ben Vargas, O.P.	212	THE GRAVE MATTER IN SIMPLE THEFT
• Florencio Testera, O.P.	223	THE OBLIGATION OF PASTORS OF SAYING THE MISSA PRO POPULO
• International Commission on English in the Liturgy	227	REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION ON THE LITURGY
<b>LITURGY</b>		
• Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.	234	BOWING OR GENUFLECTING
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	238	ON THE PHILIPPINE BIBLE SOCIETY
<b>HISTORY</b>		
• Jose Calleja Reyes	241	BICOL'S LADY OF PEÑAFRANCIA
<b>HOMILETICS</b>		
• Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.	252	BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES (MAY-JUNE 1979)
<b>BOOKS</b>	272	NOTICE ON BOOKS

---

## EDITORIAL

# "We Believe in the Civilization of Love"

At Puebla, the Latin American Bishops reflected on the present and the future of evangelization in Latin America (and, to some extent, in the Philippines and other Third World countries), and the commitment they spelled out most emphatically is their belief "in the civilization of love".

This must have come as a big surprise to many Puebla-watchers who predicted that the Conference will come out with a valiant denunciation of human rights violations; an unwavering commitment to the Latin American poor, who comprise two-thirds of the region's 320 million population; a denunciation of capitalism, militarism and Marxism; and a rejection of violence whatever its origins, of the left or right.

True, the Conference lived up to this billing. But by infusing into all these concerns a commitment to the Gospel of Love as preached and practiced by Jesus Christ the Latin American Bishops jolted the dreamers who wanted them to be nothing else but leaders of the poor-who-want-to-be-rich.

The Bishops did not see themselves as the ones mainly responsible in declaring a war against poverty, or as the ones who should be first to militate against the violations of human and political rights. They declared: "In dealing with social, economic and political problems we do not intend to do so as teachers on the matter, but as interpreters of our peoples, aware of their aspirations, particularly those of the most humble, who are the great majority of Latin-American society." Later, they added: "Our pastoral pre-occupations for the humblest members of the social body... do not intend to exclude from our concern and from our hearts the

other representatives of the social framework in which we live. On the contrary, they constitute serious and opportune warnings in order that gaps may not increase, sins may not multiply, and the spirit of God not depart from the Latin American family."

Their true pastoral task, they averred, consisted in following the advice of Pope John Paul II when he began his pontificate: To open wide the door to Christ. "To his saving power open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization and development."

"What interests us as pastors," they said, evidently moved by the words of Pope John Paul II when he opened the meeting, "is the complete proclamation of the truth about Jesus Christ the mission of the Church, and the nature, dignity, and ultimate purpose of man."

The Bishops committed themselves to three pastoral priorities in the internal life of the Church: strengthening the family; inviting the youth to put an end to the time of protest and realize that "the time has come for reflection and full acceptance of the challenge to live fully the essential values of true and complete humanism"; and increasing effort for the apostolate of vocations.

However, the "Puebla Message" will go down in history for the invitation "to all men of goodwill, all those who are engaged in tasks and missions in the most varied fields of culture, science, politics, education, work, the media of social communication, art."

To all these, the Bishops say: "be generous constructors of the civilization of love." Spelling out the meaning of the civilization of love, they say that it "rejects violence, waste, exploitation, and moral disorders... (it) proposes to all the evangelical riches of national and international reconciliation... (it) condemns absolute divisions and psychological walls which violently separates men, institutions, and national communities... (it) rejects subjection and dependence detrimental to the dignity of Latin America..."

Elaborating on this last aspect, the Latin American pastors say: "we do not accept being a satellite of any country in the world, far less of its ideologies. We wish to live on brotherly terms with everyone, because we reject narrow and inflexible nationalisms. It is time for Latin America to tell developed countries not to keep

us at a standstill, not to hinder our progress, not to exploit us; on the contrary, to help us generously to overcome the barriers of our underdevelopment, respecting our culture, our principles, our sovereignty, our identity, our natural resources. In this spirit we will grow united, like brothers, members of the same universal family."

The historic ties binding Christianity in the Philippines to Christianity in Latin America, particularly in Mexico, invites us to echo the final word at Puebla: "we believe in the civilization of love."

## In This Issue

A Synod Movement seems to have been started in the Philippines. The *Diocese of Lucena* will take the honor of being the first, after Vatican II, to celebrate such an important event in the life of the local Church on April 24 to 27, ahead of the Archdiocese of Manila by six months.

Synods do not diminish a *Bishop's responsibilities*, which are explained in contemporary context by Bishop Teotimo Pacis, of the Diocese of Legaspi.

Synods, too, do not abolish obligations legislated by the Holy See. Hence, Fr. Florencio Testera's article on "The Obligation of Pastors of Saying the Missa Pro Populo" is very timely.

This Issue also offers our readers food for thought on Liturgy with the help of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and Fr. H.J. Graf; on "The Grave Matter in Simple Theft" with the help of Fr. Ben Vargas; and on "Bicol's Lady of Peñafrancia" with the help of Jose Calleja Reyes.

## **PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI**

Dilecto filio **GENEROSO CAMINA**, e Societate vulgo Missions Etrangeres de la Province de Quebec electo Auxiliari sacri Praesulis Davaënsis atque Episcopo titulo Pauzerensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Augescentibus cotidie Episcoporum negotiis, atque idcirco etiam eorum laboribus, quos regendo populo suscipere debent, oportet saepe socios operis iisdem assignare; qui profecto tum sacris illis Praesulibus, qui egeant, grato levamini sint, tum fructus augeant in Ecclesiae agris coligendos: stat enim ibi, ubi vires abundant, messem etiam fieri uberiores bonorum. Quare, cum Venerabilis frater Antonius Mabutas et Lloren, Archiepiscopus Davaënsis, ea sit condicione, ut viro laboris particeps egeat, bene fieri censuimus, si te eidem assignaremus, qui ingenio praestas, pictate nites, usu rerum abundas, ea nempe spe ut munus hoc praeclarum diligenter impleas. Consilio ergo petito a Venerabili fratre Nostro S.R.E. Cardinali Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecto, Nostra apostolica auctoritate Te simul Auxiliarem nominamus Venerabilis Praesulis quem modo memoravimus, simul Episcopum creamus Sedis titulo **PAUZERENSIS**, cum iuribus et oneribus iustis. Ad tuam episcopalem consecrationem quod attinet, sinimus ut eam ubivis terrarum excipias, a quolibet catholico Episcopo cum hac Petri Sede Sede sincera fide coniuncto, dubus assistentibus viris episcopali praeditis dignitate. Neque tamen haec fieri porterunt antequam sive fidei professionem feceris, sive ius iurandum dederis fidelitatis erga Nos successoresque Nostros; quorum formulas recte subscriptas ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittes, Ceterum, dilecte fili, Deum precamur ut fidem, spem, caritatem tibi augeat, quo praesidio munitus officium tuum sancte tuearis. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo octavo, Pontificatus Nostri oecimo quinto.

✠ **JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
Secretarius Status

**EUGENIUS SERVI, Proton. Apost.**

## PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Venerabili Fratri **ANSGARIO CRUZ**, usque ad praesens Episcopo titulo Marturanensi et Auxiliari Manilensi, electo Archiepiscopo Ecclesiae Sancti Ferdinandi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum metropolitana Sedes Sancti Ferdinandi, cuius postremus sacer Praesul bo. me, at Deum ablit, adhuc vacaret, ad eius provisionem intendentes censuimus te, Venerabilis frater, animi et ingenii dotibus rerumque pastoralium usu ornatum, admodum idoneum esse ad eam regendam et gubernandam. Ratam igitur habentes sententiam Venerabilis Fratrics Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Praelectri Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, vi et potestate Nostra Apostolica te a vinculo titularis Ecclesiae Marturanensis absolvimus et ad memoratam metropolitanam Ecclesiam **SANCTI FERDINANDI** electum transferimus eique Archiepiscopum ac Pastorem praeficimus, iuribus tibi traditis officiisque impositis, quae tuae dignitatis et muneris sunt propria. Exemptus guidem a professione fidei iteranda, iusiurandum tamen fidelitatis coram aliquo rectae fidei Episcopo rite iterum dabis, eiusdemque formulam, translaticio more signatam et sigillo impressam, tuum erit quam primum ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis transmittere. Mandamus autem ut die aliquo festo de praecepto in cathedrali archidioecesis tuae templo hae Litterae Nostrae clero et populo legantur; quos dilectos filios hortamur ut libentes te suscipiant, patrem et pastorem populo isti datum atque pro eis constitutum Christianae doctrinae magistrum atque praeconem. Tibi denique, Venerabilis Frater, amanter suademus ut, graviore perpenso munere tibi explendo, haec quoque consideres sacris Pastoribus statuta eademque serves: — In exercendo suo munere patris ac pastoris, sint Episcopi in medio suorum sicut qui ministrant, boni pastores qui cognoscunt suas oves quosque et ipsae cognoscunt, veri patres qui spiritu dilectionis et sollicitudinis erga omnes praestant, quorumque auctoritati divinitus quidem collatae omnes grato animo sese subiciunt — Chr.Dom., 16. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die altero et vicesimo mensis Maii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo octavo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto decimo.

✠ **JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**  
Secretarius Status

**EUGENIUS SERVI**, Proton. Apost.



# PROPOSED CANON 273 DE POPULO DEI TO PREVAIL OVER CANON 273 ON THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LAITY IN THE MANILA SYNOD

## SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO EPISCOPIS

Romae, die 18 Septembris 1978

Prot. N. 620/78

(In responsione hic numerus referatur)

Em.me as Rev.me Domine,

Honori mihi duco Tecum Em.me Domine communicare, Summum Pontificem porrectis a Te precibus, litteris die 5 septembris datis, benigne annuendum censuisse.

Quapropter Eminentia Tua poterit Synodum Archidioecesis Manilensis moderari proposito Canone 273 De Populo Dei loco Canonis 358 vigentis Codicis Iuris Canonici circa personas quae ad Synodum dioecesanam convocari debeant et quae invitari possint, duobus tamen condicionibus, nempe:

- 1) laici, religiosi non sacerdotio aucti et religiosae, sive in commissionibus sive in plenariis acroasibus convocati, sacerdotum numerum ne excedant;
- 2) Episcopus facultatem habeat sive acceptandi sive non acceptandi candidatos electos a Consiliis vel coetibus similiaribus, ita ut membra ipsius Synodi melius seligantur.

His pro munere significatis, ex corde omnino synodalia consilia et incepta, omnium fidelium coetibus cooperantibus, finem a Tua pastorali navitate propositum, fore consecutura.

Interim cum observantis mei animi sensu permaneo.

Amplitudinis Tuae addictissimus

✠ ERNESTUS CIVARDI  
Secretarius

Em.mo ac Rev.mo Domino  
D.NO JACOBO S.R.E. Cardinali SIN  
Archiepiscopo Manilensi

# **COMMUNICATION**

## **REV. THOMAS WOODS REPLACES REV. CLAUDIO MARIA CELLI**

**APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE  
Manila, Philippines**

N. 1063

28 February 1979

Your Excellency:

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that, on the conclusion of his tour of duty in the Philippines, the Very Reverend Monsignor Claudio Maria Celli will leave Manila in March 5, 1979, for his new assignment in Argentina; that the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Thomas Woods who is arriving today, 28th February, 1979, will assume the post to Counsellor of this Representation.

With renewed assurances of my prayerful best wishes and highest esteem, I remain

Fraternally yours,

(Sgd.) BRUNO TORPIGLIANI  
Apostolic Nuncio

**CIRCULAR TO ALL BISHOPS  
OF THE PHILIPPINES**

## **PASTORAL LETTER ANNOUNCING THE CELEBRATION OF A DIOCESAN SYNOD IN LUCENA**

*To our Beloved Pastoral Cooperators; Our Priests, our Religious and Members of the Apostolate of the Laity, Peace and Grace from our Lord Jesus Christ:*

The apostolic zeal that we all share for the sustained growth of Christian Life in our beloved Diocese impels me as your diocesan pastor to address myself to you through this Pastoral Letter. Like any diocesan pastor, next to God's grace, I trust in our interior communion as the source of pastoral strength. This unity for which our Lord Himself prayed fervently to prevail among His apostolates and those who through their words will believe in Him (Jn. 17,20-21) retains its validity more than ever during these times of transition. We all know, however, that this interior communion must be expressed in actions that derive from, and strengthen that interior communion. In this context I have the pleasure to invite you to study, examine and analyze with your diocesan pastor the present situation in our diocese in order to formulate programs and guidelines that will be incorporated into a Pastoral Document that will guide our pastoral efforts.

While it is true that Vatican II has given that Universal Church general guidelines for the work of the Church in the world today, the same Vatican II declares that these guidelines must be adapted to the different local conditions. "Hence we entertain the hope that many of our proposals will be able to bring substantial benefit to everyone, especially after they have been adapted to individual nations and mentalities by the faithful, under the guidance of their pastors (The Church Today, 91). It is fitting that we harness all available talents from the Diocesan Clergy, the Religious and the Laity to adapt the guidelines of Vatican II to our local situation and to strengthen our christian life and our unity with the Universal Church. "In this way, all undertakings and organizations, whether catechetical, missionary, charitable, social, family, educational, or any other program serving a pastoral goal will be brought into harmonious action. At the same time the unity of the diocese will thereby be made more evident" (Bishops, 17).

After praying for divine guidance, and having had consultations with our diocesan clergy, some members of our religious communities and leaders of the Laity, we have decided to hold a Diocesan Synod this year 1977\* with the final sessions to be held in Lucena City during Advent this year. It is my fervent hope and prayer that we shall have one heart and one mind in celebrating this Synod, so that 12 years after the close of Vatican II we may be able to formulate a Synodal Document that will constitute our Pastoral Program for our beloved Diocese. In order to be assured of God's blessing for this undertaking we have requested our Diocesan Commission on Sacred Liturgy to prepare an appropriate prayer to be recited in all parishes for the fruitful celebration of our Synod.

With the Decrees of Vatican Council II serving as our general guidelines and the subsequent Instructions emanating from the different Pontifical Commissions, Encyclicals specially those issued after Vatican Council II and other Pontifical Documents as specific norms, we shall study, examine and analyze the local situation. The role of the Bishop and the Diocesan Structures; the Presbyteral Community ranging from the promotion of vocation to the Priesthood, the seminary training and formation, down to the life of priests and their relationship with the Bishop, among themselves and with people; the role of the Laity both as individual and as organized groups, the joint apostolate of the Clergy, the Religious and the Laity in the Ministry of the World, Ministry of Worship and the Ministry of Love and Service, will be the subject of our study and prayerful reflection in order to arrive hopefully at a definite Diocesan Program or Pastoral Manual for our diocese.

To accomplish this task we need time and zealous dedication from those who will prepare the "Scheme" for the Synodal deliberations and decisions. For this reason we have created a Diocesan Steering Committee. Together with this Steering Committee we shall create Sub-Committee whose members will undertake the study of topics assigned to them by the Steering Committee. In fact, the greater portion of the work of our Synod will be accomplished in the different Sub-Committees. We hope those who will be given special assignments to discharge their tasks with prayerful dedication in the awareness that they are rendering to their Diocese a service others may never have the chance to render.

---

\* Postponed to April 24-27, 1979.

## DIOCESAN SYNOD IN LUCENA 203

The Steering Committee that will draft with us the Preparatory Scheme for the Synod and follow through until the final phase of the Synod will be composed by the following;

Msgr. Generoso Marasigan, V.G.	Msgr. Simeon Racelis
Msgr. Gregorio Salvatus	Msgr. Espiridion Magundayao
Fr. Antonio Rañola	Fr. Fidel de Ramos
Fr. Angel Lagdameo	Fr. Expedito Joano
Fr. German Avilla	Fr. Ruben Profugo
Fr. Luis Balquiedra	Fr. Rolando Oliverio
Mother Mercy Medenilla	Mr. Mariano Melicia
Sis. Prisca Rabuy	Sis. Paz Marfori
Atty. Deogracias Lirio	Mrs. Prudencia Villaseñor
Dr. Jose Ocampo	Mrs. Lilia Flores
Dr. Cesar Villariba	Dr. Carmelita Deveza

We are happy to issue this Pastoral Letter on the Second Sunday of Lent when we commemorate the Transfiguration of our Lord, for we all humbly aim to make our local Church of this twentieth century fitted for proclaiming the Good News to our people of this twentieth century (E.N., 2). We aim to bring the light of the Gospel into all the strata of our diocesan community, and through its influence transform this community from within and make it new (E.N., 18). So, with God's help and guidance, we can confidently chart the course of our diocese and feel that we are contributing our share to God's work of "making the whole creation new" (Rev. 21,5).

*Devotedly yours in our Lord Jesus,*

† JOSE T. SANCHEZ, D.D.  
Bishop of Lucena

Diocesan Chancery  
Lucena City, 6 March, 1977

# **DIOCESE OF LUCENA**

## **Lucena City**

### **CIRCULAR**

**No. 7, S. 1977**

**Structural and Procedural Norms for the Parish Synodal Committees**

*To our Venerable Clergy, Religious and Lay Leaders:*

With the help of God and the dedication of the members of the Preparatory Commission for our Diocesan Synod, we have made substantial progress in our synodal work. The drafts of the six pastoral areas to which the Synod will address itself are almost ready for final printing. As soon as they are printed copies of these shall be sent to the parishes for these to study them and return to the Preparatory Commission for evaluation and second drafting. This second draft will constitute the Schema that will be studied by the Diocesan Synodal Assembly that will be convoked in due time. The Delegates to this Diocesan Synodal Assembly that will meet here in Lucena will be chosen according to the Norms and Procedures that are being readied for printing. Copies of these "General Principles, Norm and Procedures of the Lucena Diocesan Synod" will be sent to every parish.

In our desire to forge a unity and solidarity within the diocesan local church, we have deemed it wise to involve the whole diocesan community in the celebration of this Synod. This diocesan participation in the Synod will be reflected not only in the diocesan representation in the Synodal Assembly where the Delegates will come from every parish and where all sectors of the diocesan population will be represented, but also in the preparatory studies of the topics to be taken up in the Synodal Assembly. For this purpose we are urging every parish priest to organize a Synodal Committee in his respective parish that will be formed and will proceed according to the following "structural and procedural norms":

#### **I — STRUCTURE**

- a. **MEMBERS OF THE PARISH SYNODAL COMMITTEE;** The members of the Parish Pastoral Council may constitute the Parish Synodal Committee or its nucleus only.

- b. If there are Religious in the parish these or their representatives should be invited to join the Parish Synodal Committee.
- c. The parish priest may also invite other parishioners whose interest, experience and dedication for the Apostolate would make him an asset to the Parish Synodal Committee.
- d. The Parish Priest is the ex officio Chairman of the Parish Synodal Committee.
- e. If there are residents of the parish who are holding vicarial or diocesan offices in the Apostolate of the Laity, they should also be invited.
- f. Upon mutual consultation, the Parish Priest and the Parish Synodal Committee shall designate the Executive Secretary of the Parish Synodal Committee.
- g. The composition of the Parish Synodal Assembly should be reported to the Diocesan Secretariat of the Synod.

## II — PROCEDURES

- a) Once constituted, the Parish Synodal Assembly, upon receipt of the Study Drafts from the Diocesan Secretariat of the Synod, will convene at the instance of the parish priest to study the drafts as a group.
- b) Once an "overview" of the work that they are requested to do is taken by the Committee, they can decide whether:
  - 1) Their group can reflect the thinking of the parish, or
  - 2) They should invite other representatives of different sectors of the parish.
- c) Answers to the Study Drafts must be decided by votes of the members of the Parish Synodal Committee so that both the majority and minority opinions could be reflected in the official report of the Parish Synodal Committee to the preparatory commissions.
- d) If the opinion of other parishioners non-members of the synodal committee is sought, this must be included in the parish report.
- e) Questions or surveys addressed exclusively either to the priest, the religious or the lay, should be included in the parish report.

- f) It is requested that, if possible, all copies of the Draft Studies be returned to the Diocesan Secretariat.
- g) At least two (2) copies of the official report or answer of the Parish Synodal Committee, authenticated by the Parish Priest and by the Executive Secretary of the Parish Synodal Committee must be sent to the Diocesan Secretariat within two (2) months after receipt of the Study Drafts.
- h) It is of utmost importance that a prayerful atmosphere prevail in the deliberations of the Parish Synodal Assembly.

We hope that the foregoing Norms are sufficient to guide our Synodal Committees in the work that we are recommending to their zeal. We urge that the formation of the Parish Synodal Assemblies be done without delay. Should there be doubts and difficulties, we shall be most happy to hear them. Also, mobile teams composed of members of the Preparatory Commissions will be fielded to help the Parish Synodal Committees.

Allow me again to invite you all to pray to the Holy Spirit that He may guide and help us in this work that we are undertaking for His greater glory and our sanctification.

† JOSE T. SANCHEZ, D.D.  
Bishop of Lucena

Diocesan Chancery  
Lucena City, 7 Sept. 1977.



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A BISHOP TODAY

*Preached by Bishop PACIS on Bishop CARIÑO's Episcopal Ordination, Cathedral of St. Gregory the Great, 31, May 1978*

## Introduction

### I

With the episcopal ordination we are witnessing today, we shall be three Bishops in the Diocese of Legaspi: retired 70-year old Bishop Ariola, retirable 65-year old Bishop Pacis (myself) and a new one in the full vigor of manhood, 40-year old Msgr. Nestor C. Cariño now being ordained.

Bishop Ariola began, Archbishop Alberto interluded and I continued what they had done. Faithful co-worker with us three was the then Chancellor-Secretary, Very Rev. Nestor C. Cariño, whom we have today the privilege and pleasure of ordaining into the episcopate, to the titular Episcopal See of ~~Tibiuca~~ **Tibiuca** and at once Auxiliary Bishop of Legaspi: the 19th Bicolano Bishop, the 4th from Albay and the 92nd in the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

### II

#### A Bishop Today

Now, what does it mean to be a Bishop here and now in the 13th year of Vatican II, in the Philippines under Martial Law, in Albay on the eve of revolutionary changes, and in this year of the Quadri-centennial of our Evangelization?

#### (a)

**What is the image of a Vatican II Bishop?**

- a man attuned to the world of today and steeped in theologies of liberation?
- open to the winds of renewal and reform blowing in all directions?
- sensitive to justice and to all violation of human rights?
- in dialogue of life with the poor, the weak, the oppressed and the downtrodden?

In short, a man pastorally minded and pastorally oriented; a man of God who is at once a man for the People of God?

(b)

**What does it mean to be a Bishop today under Martial Law?**

- a prophet of restlessness and hope in restless and difficult times?
- a prophet who is happy and honored to be numbered among the **subversives** in the name of God and the Gospel? Subversives in defense of truth, freedom and human rights?
- a prophet who is in touch with the hopes and fears, agonies and anxieties of the people?
- a prophet with the charism of apostolic courage and evangelical straightforwardness?
- a prophet ready to suffer and to lay down his life in the face of persecution?

I am not giving answers. I am only throwing questions: questions for each Bishop to answer ... for each one to think over.

(c)

**What does it mean to be a Bishop today in Albay on the eve of revolutionary changes?**

Albay, which comprises the whole diocese of Legazpi, is a burgeoning diocese of over 700,000 people.

We have in Mayon volcano the central attraction of Tourism. We have in Legazpi City the crown-center of Region V. We have in Tiwi the source that generates geothermal power: the power that will unleash the forces of modernization, development and industrialization in the whole province, and in the region at large. This reality the Bishop of Legazpi cannot afford to ignore, for it will affect his pastoral thinking and pastoral planning.

(d)

**What does it mean to be a Bishop of Legazpi in the Quadricentennial Year of our Evangelization by the Franciscans?**

Fittingly we have chosen for general theme: **Renewal in Christ**. Any renewal in the diocese, liturgical or pastoral, theological or spiritual, must begin with the Bishop as its initiator and promoter, its sponsor and primary mover. Without him no renewal is possible nor conceivable. He is at the very core of the renewal movement. A renewed diocese presupposes a renewed Bishop, and a renewed Bishop implies a renewed clergy and a renewed clergy means a renewed people.

In the diocese of Legazpi "Renewal in Christ" has put on the form of "Rebuilding the Church": rebuilding along the lines traced by His Holiness Pope Paul VI in a series of eleven addresses delivered in 1976.

Rebuild the Church as the extension of Christ. Rebuild the Church as a communion of faith and charity, starting with the domestic Church which is the Christian family. Rebuild the Church with the grace of the sacraments and with the sign of the cross, sustained by prayer in the course of the apostolate with the collaboration of laymen, always in communion with the Universal Church under Peter.

This, in a nutshell, is the task at hand.

(e)

### Comfort my People

Into this task comes the new Bishop with his selected motto:

**Comfort my People** (Is. 40:1). It is God who speaks through the prophet Isaias.

**Comfort my people:** — a people in exile and under oppression; a people living in difficult times not unlike our times: a people who lived in messianic hope.

**Comfort my people:** — "prepare in the wilderness a way for Yahweh. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in; every mountain and hill be laid low; let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of Yahweh shall see it, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken" (Is. 40:3-5). These are prophetic words. The evangelists quote them and apply them to John the Baptist. The new Bishop takes them as applied to him and to what he feels his mission is. In the interpretation of the Jerusalem Bible mountains symbolize the pride and arrogance of the great; valleys the humility and forbearance of the poor. The reduction of the former and the exaltation of the latter are messianic signs — signs that the day of Yahweh is come" (Is. 2:12-17).

**Comfort my people:** — say not you are young. Say not you are barely 40 years old. Say not you know not how to speak. The words that God has spoken to the prophet Jeremiah (in the 1st reading) you take as spoken to you:

"To whomever I send you,  
you shall go.

## 210 BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

Whatever I command you,  
you shall speak.

Have no fear, because I am with you  
to deliver you" (Jer. 1:7-8).

**Comfort my people:** — not only by **rooting up** and **tearing down** "walls of sin and division", not only by **destroying** and **demonishing** "unjust structures" but also by **building** "Christian Communities" and by planting seeds of unity and peace, seeds of renewal and reform" (a paraphrase of Jer. 1:10).

**Comfort my people:** — by putting on love and kindness, service and joy, hope and hospitality, patience and prayer, generosity and humility: virtues stressed and enumerated by St. Paul in the selected 2nd Reading, taken from the Letter to the Romans (12:9-16).

**Most of all, Comfort my People:** — Through Mary, With Mary and In Mary". By a happy choice, we are celebrating this episcopal ordination on the feast of the Visitation and at once the first anniversary of the solemn proclamation of Our Lady of Salvation as Patroness of the Diocese.

For us in Albay, the Blessed Virgin Mary is Our Lady of Salvation, whose 200-year old image, as venerated in Joroan, presides over this episcopal ordination. She has to be here, for she is our Queen and Mother, canonically crowned by Cardinal Sin on August 25, 1976 and officially approved and declared by the Holy Father on February 7, 1977, as the heavenly Patroness, before God, of the Diocese of Legazpi-Province of Albay.

And today, exactly a year ago, over Peñaranda Park, under the burning afternoon sun, before a gathering of more than 20,000 from all over the diocese, in a concelebration of some 50 priests, we listened to the public reading of the Pontifical Letters by our Provincial Governor and City Mayor, proclaiming Our Lady of Salvation as Heavenly Patroness of the diocese-province of Albay.

She has to be here, because of the role she has played in the strengthening of our Christian life and in the deepening of our faith in these past two hundred years. She has to be here, as our sign of unity, our bond of peace, our pledge of motherly love and our assurance of continuing protection. She has to be here as our life, our sweetness and our hope in the task of renewal in Christ, in the task of rebuilding the Church. She has to be here because the new Bishop is specially devoted to her and specially committed to the spread of devotion to her. It is his special request that he be ordained in her presence. He knows, more than anyone else, what this gesture means to his episcopal life and ministry.

## III

**Conclusion**

The figure of the Bishop changes from age to age, from country to country. Cyril of Jerusalem was not Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan was not Isidore of Seville. Augustine of Hippo was not Augustine of Canterbury nor John Chrysostom of Constantinople. Francis de Sales was not Alphonsus Ligouri; Robert Bellarmine was not Bonaventure, and Patrick of Ireland was not Thomas Becket of London.

The Directory, issued by the Holy See, on May 31, 1973 exactly five years ago, outlines the life and pastoral ministry of a Bishop today. Glancing through its pages the Bishop is led to think over. He has no alternative but to be an apostle, a saint and a martyr. So I finish by making bold to ask for the alms of your prayers that we -Bishops- may follow in the footsteps of the apostles, saints and martyrs who were our predecessors in the episcopate down the ages. This that I ask for all Bishops, I ask most especially for Bishop Carliño whom we are ordaining today.

# THE GRAVE MATTER IN SIMPLE THEFT

By

Ben Vargas, O.P.

This article deals only with simple theft which is one moral act of unjust and often secret self-appropriation of something (not sacred) belonging to a stranger.<sup>1</sup> The other kind of theft is that which is morally circumscribed with either a diminuent or aggravating circumstance.<sup>2</sup> Obviously the thorough understanding of simple theft is the starting point of any serious inquiry into the other kinds of theft.

The topic of the grave matter in any kind of theft may be described as esoteric among priests, would-be-priests, professional catechists and such others who are duty-bound to be well grounded in Catholic doctrine. It should not be ventilated for general audiences, and thus it is highly unbecoming for the pulpit.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is among those topics of Moral Theology in which every actual or prospective confessor or spiritual guide should be versed and conversant, because theft (the frequency of which has not abated but rather escalated with the march of time) normally involves the duty of restitution, and, should an ignorant confessor or adviser culpably dispense of restitution in a given case, shouldn't he assume and make that very duty of restitution himself? Now, the thorough understanding of restitution presupposes necessarily a sufficient knowledge of the grave matter.

**The morality of theft.** — Moralists unanimously assert that theft is a mortal sin *ex genere suo*, but that it can be a venial sin, not only due to lack of sufficient advertence or of full consent, but mainly due to the parvitude or slightness of the thing stolen.<sup>4</sup> The thing stolen is usually called the matter of theft. Now pops up the question: When is the matter grave, and when slight? A thick

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. PISCETTA-GENNARO: *Elementa Theologiae Moralis*, Turini, 1930, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. HARING: *The Law of Christ*, Cork, 1967, vol. III, p. 478.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. VERMEERCH: *Theologiae Moralis Principia, Responsa, Consilia*, ed. III, Romae, 1937, tom. II, p. 585.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Haring, *ibid*.

book would be required to do justice to this question, and so the present article cannot be more than a brief digest of what the busy confessor needs to go over again once in a while.

### GRAVE AND SLIGHT MATTER

Moralists are agreed in distinguishing the matter in theft into grave and slight, and that the distinction of the matter in theft into grave and slight depends on the object itself and also on the circumstances, especially of place and time. Thus what was considered as grave during, say, the Middle Ages may not be grave nowadays; or what in our own time is slight matter in affluent America may be grave matter in, say, the Philippines. But at any given place and time, is there one separating line between the grave and slight matters?

According to Billuart<sup>5</sup> and several other Moralists, there is only one point (which we may call X) under which all matters are slight and which itself and all other matters above it are grave. Thus X is the minimum grave matter. A theft of X or of more than X (with sufficient advertence and full consent) is always a mortal sin — so they say —, irrespective of whether X was stolen from Millionaire Dives or Poor Lazarus.

On the other hand, for the vast majority of Moralists there are as many relative grave matters as clearly distinct social classes of persons robbed; but at any given time and place there is also one absolute grave matter to reckon with.

Sociologists and specifically economists base their division of the social classes on property, income standard of living, career, profession, occupation, business activity, social standing, and the like. Moralists are not as scientific and precise, but still more concrete, down-to-earth and commonsensical. For both sociologists or economists and Moralists it is easy to say that a beggar is poor and that a permanent employee of the government or a business firm is not so poor; but the borderline cases between the different classes offer some difficulty. In doubtful cases the confessor should decide as best as he can, and the distinction of the social classes according to the Moralists will serve him in good stead.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. BILLUART: *Cursus Theologiae Iuxta Mentem Divi Thomae*, ed. IX, Parisiis, 1886, tom. VI, dissert. XI, art. 3. Berardi (*Theologia Moralis*, Faventiae, 1904 vol. III, p. 120) approves of this opinion defended also by Toletus, Medina, Navarrus, Lessius, etc.

**Socio-economic classes according to the Moralists.** — St. Alphonsus<sup>6</sup> mentions the following social classes: "Poor beggars, working poor, diggers of the earth, artisans, mechanics, average rich who live out of their income, the rich who really do not live of their revenue, merchants of lean fortune, very rich merchants, the very rich, kings, very opulent communities." Father Ylla:<sup>7</sup> "A farmer of the middle class who is the owner of his land, different from the small farmer who has no helper except members of his family; merchant of middle economic position; average rich, and opulent rich." Berardi:<sup>8</sup> "One who has millions, a very rich or great merchant, absolutely rich, societies, colleges, institutes, banks, public treasuries, king, exorbitantly rich or a very wast community; average rich, poor, poor who is ashamed to beg, poor beggar."

**From whom is something stolen?** — Obviously only an owner of something can be deprived of it, hence the axiom: *Res perit domino*. Therefore, whatever is stolen, is stolen from its owner, though actually the one dispossessed is another, such as the child, dependent or servant of the owner. Thus to steal a queen's diamond ring from her treasurer is really to steal from the queen who is extra-rich and not from her probably underpaid treasurer. Thus, in general, the real victim of theft is the head of the family or household in cases of theft from dependents. An exhaustive application of this principle and fact would entail a thorough understanding of canonical and legal legislation appertaining to ownership; but usually the thief believes, unless the opposite is apparent, that the adult holder of the thing stolen is its owner, and this belief is the circumstance that bears on the morality of his sinful act.<sup>9</sup>

### THE DIFFERENT RELATIVE GRAVE MATTERS

Moralists who have enumerated different classes of people fix a different grave matter in thefts from every one of them. There are at least the following relative grave matters: 1) in thefts from

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI: *Theologia Moralis*, ed. II, Ratisbonae, 1879, tom. III, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. YLLA: *Cuestiones Ecclesiasticas*, Manila, 1940, p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. BERARDI: *Theologia Moralis*, Faventiae, 1904, vol. III, p. 119. The sedulous reader may also peruse the classifications of the socio-economic classes by SPORER, ANDREAS A MATRE DEI, BALLERINI, BUCCERONI, ELOY, FERRERES, GURY, KONINGS, LEHMKUHL, JOSEPHUS CALASANCTIUS A LLENAVENERAS, NOLDIN-SCHMITT, PRUMMER, SALA, SCAVINI, AERTNYS-DAMEN, MORAN, LARRAGA-LUMBRERAS, etc., in their classical and familiar works.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PRUMMER: *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, ed. VIII, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1936, tom. II, pp. 15-39.



the very poor (beggars); 2) in thefts from the poor (laborers and the like); 3) in thefts from the middle-class (artisans, mechanics, skilled laborers and the like); 4) in thefts from the rich; and 5) in thefts from the very rich, including companies, societies or corporations. The best of the lowest class is nearest the worst of the next higher class, and so on, but it is no easy task to define where one class ends and the next begins. However, the median and average in every class are easy to spot and place in their respective classes.

### THE ABSOLUTE GRAVE MATTER

As each and all are included in between the very poorest and the very richest, it seems that the different relative grave matters suffice for all possible thefts. So it may be asked why there should be an absolute grave matter?

As will be pointed out later, one of the many criteria for the grave matter is the damage or harm done to the person deprived through theft. St. Thomas<sup>10</sup> said: "In the loss of a chicken a poor man is hurt more than a very rich man in the loss of a thousand marks." But there should be an amount less than a thousand marks which should be fixed as absolute grave matter, which should always be grave matter, because on the contrary its theft would be so frequent with grave harm to the vast majority of society, and thus to society itself, though not to the most affluent members of society. To forestall the grave harm to society itself, this absolute grave matter should apply even to the few richest members of society, and thus the relative grave matter in thefts from such richest members of society should not overshoot, but must equalize, the absolute grave matter. In plain words, the absolute grave matter is equivalent mathematically to the relative grave matter in thefts from the richest, and *vice versa*. McHugh & Callan<sup>11</sup> put it thus: "The absolute amount is grave matter even when theft is from the wealthiest person or society." And Delaney:<sup>12</sup> "There is an absolute sum which is always a mortal sin to take even from the wealthiest person or corporation." And chiming in are all the renowned and not so renowned Moralists of all times.

**When is the absolute grave matter applicable? —** Of course, if the theft is known to have been committed against a very wealthy

<sup>10</sup> S. THOMAS: *De Erud. Princ.*, lib. VII, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. MCHUGH & CALLAN: *Moral Theology*, N.Y., 1930, vol. II, p. 146.

<sup>12</sup> Apud CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, N.Y., First Ed., vol. 14, word THEFT, p. 565.

person or society, the relative grave matter for the richest — which is the same as the absolute grave matter — is applied. But what if the socio-economic class of the victim of theft is unknown?

Scavini<sup>13</sup> and some others say that in this case the absolute grave matter should apply. But in such a case Vermeersch,<sup>14</sup> Noldin-Schmitt,<sup>15</sup> etc., prescribe the use of the relative grave matter for the middle-class and at most the relative grave matter for the average rich, and not the absolute grave matter.

### SOME WRONG METHODS OF DETERMINING THE GRAVE MATTER

1. We should not be befuddled with the idea that only money can be stolen. The matter in theft can be real estate, animals, equipment, furniture, clothing, victuals and foodstuffs, and even some rights and privileges (patents, franchises, etc.), and, of course, money and money substitutes (certificates of stocks, money orders, checks, etc.). Before the invention of money, that is, during the barter society, real estate should have been held as grave matter. Probably a horse or a cow too. But a sheep, dog, hen and the like should have been reckoned as grave matter only from the poor. At present, however, when money is the standard or measure of all values and the most efficient medium of exchange and a most convenient store of value, Moralists are one in expressing the grave matters in theft in terms of their national currencies. But whenever this method should be impractical and even iniquitous as in an emergency case of hyper-inflation, we should revert to the values in themselves as during the barter society.

2. A well-known American Moralist<sup>16</sup> would fix the absolute grave matter in America at \$100 or thereabouts. But it would be wrong to peg the absolute grave matter in the Philippines at the foreign exchange equivalent of \$100 in terms of Philippine pesos, for there are many other things to take into account.

3. Merkelbach<sup>17</sup> rightly says: "(The grave matter) differs in accordance with different nations and diverse conditions of peoples, and also depends on whether the places are big cities or far-flung

<sup>13</sup> Cf. SCAVINI: *Theologia Moralis Universa*, ed. XIII, Mediolani, 1882, lib. 2us., p. 546.

<sup>14</sup> VERMEERSCH, *ibid.*, p. 582.

<sup>15</sup> NOLDIN-SCHMITT: *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Lipsigiae, 1938, p. 394.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. HARING, *ibid.*, in translator's note, no. 58, in p. 703.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. MERKELBACH: *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, Parisiis, 1932, tom. II, p. 419.

rural regions." Thus it may be questioned whether in a big country there should be uniform grave matters throughout the length and breadth of the whole land.

4. Computations made long ago by eminent Moralists such as St. Alphonsus, Prummer, etc., are untenable in our times, because socio-economic conditions have greatly changed. Thus for Ylla<sup>18</sup> who wrote in the 1940's the absolute grave matter in theft in the Philippines was around ₱5; but this amount would be too paltry for our times.

### CRITERIA TO DETERMINE THE GRAVE MATTERS

Three different criteria of the grave matters have been advanced, namely: abstract, concrete and quasi-algebraical. The abstract criteria are some philosophical or theoretical considerations that aid in determining the grave matters in a generic or vague way. Concrete criteria are specific standards of a social and universal character. Quasi-algebraic criteria are formulae that result in more or less exact mathematical computations adapted to every country and period.

**The abstract criteria.** — The following have been proposed by well-known Moralists:

1. The grave matter in theft is that which is also a grave breach of charity. Thus Davis,<sup>19</sup> Vermeersch,<sup>20</sup> etc.
2. The grave matter is that the theft of which is a grave damage to the person deprived. Thus Marc,<sup>21</sup> Ballerini,<sup>22</sup> Scavini,<sup>23</sup> etc.
3. The grave matter is that the theft of which is a grave breach of the right of property. Thus Lehmkuhl,<sup>24</sup> etc.
4. If the owner is gravely or strongly reluctant to be deprived of something, this is a grave matter. Thus Sabetti.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Cf. YLLA, *ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. DAVIS: *Moral Theology*, 3rd. ed., N.Y., 1938, II, p. 299.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 581.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. MARC: *Institutiones Morales Alphonsinianae*, ed. XV, Romae, 1917, p. 575.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. BALLERINI: *Opus Theologicum Morales*, Prati, 1892, vol. III, p. 271.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 547.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. LEHMKUHL: *Theologia Moralis*, ed. XI, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1910, vol. I, p. 633.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. SABETTI: *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, ed. XXVII, N.Y., 1919, p. 368.

5. If the loss of something causes grave or deep sadness in its owner, this is grave matter. Thus Aertnys-Damen,<sup>26</sup> Ballerini,<sup>27</sup> etc.

6. If the person robbed wants reasonably that the thief be punished in hell, the matter is grave. This hypothetical opinion is mentioned by Vermersch,<sup>28</sup> Davis,<sup>29</sup> etc.

7. An amount which in the locality is regarded as considerable (*notabilis*) is grave matter. Thus Busembaum,<sup>30</sup> etc.

8. Grave matter is what a "good" man deems so. Thus Navarrus.<sup>31</sup>

9. The grave matter is what the Christian "instinct" regards so. Thus Berardi.<sup>32</sup>

10. The grave matter is an amount that can be called "riches" (*divitiae*). Thus apparently Tummulo-Iorio,<sup>33</sup> and this probably is intended to apply only to the absolute grave matter.

11. The amount which, if not forbidden under pain of mortal sin, would be stolen often (as men are not afraid enough to commit venial sins), and thus would redound to the decay, disturbance or collapse of society, is grave matter, and indeed absolute grave matter. Thus Ballerini,<sup>34</sup> Ebel,<sup>35</sup> Scavini,<sup>36</sup> Eloy,<sup>37</sup> Piscetta-Genaro,<sup>38</sup> McHugh & Callan,<sup>39</sup> and many others.

12. The grave matter is that amount the theft of which is punished in the Penal Code of the country by a grave penalty. Thus Ylla,<sup>40</sup> who considered ₱5 as absolute grave matter, because

<sup>26</sup> Cf. AERTNYS-DAMEN: *Theologia Moralis*, ed. XII, Taurinorum Augustae, 1932, tom. I, p. 471.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 584.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. BUSEMBAUM: *Theologia Moralis*, Bononiae, 1778, p. 183.

<sup>31</sup> BERARDI, *ibid.*, p. 122, writes: "Scripsit Navarrus: 'Communitur tenetur, et quidem recte, id (determinationem materiae gravis) boni viri arbitrio relinqui.'" Cf. TANQUEREY: *Synopsis Theologiae Moralis et Pastoralis*, ed. IV, Tornaci, Belgii, 1910, p. 191.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. TUMMULO-IORIO: *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, Neapoli, 1934, vol. II, p. 438.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. ELBEL: *Theologia Moralis*, ed. 2a., Paberbonae, 1893, vol. II, p. 387.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. ELOY: *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, Hongkong, 1911, tom. II, p. 45.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

its theft is punished in Philippine Penal Law with *arresto mayor*, to its full extent.

13. The grave matter, and indeed the absolute one, is that the frequent theft of which would curtail the incentive to industriousness and hard work. Thus Piscetta-Gennaro.<sup>41</sup>

As can be seen, several authors proposed more than one criteria. But even if such criteria were taken jointly, they cannot lead us to even an approximate definite amount to express the grave matter. Nevertheless they should not be made light of, because they are the bases on which the concrete criteria of the grave matter rest.

**The concrete criteria of the grave matters.** — Many Moralists have proposed two concrete criteria of the grave matters in theft, namely, the daily consumption or support, and the daily wage. Moralists who favor consumption or support include Busebaum,<sup>42</sup> Elbel,<sup>43</sup> Sporer,<sup>44</sup> St. Alphonsus,<sup>45</sup> Aertnys-Damen,<sup>46</sup> Berthier & Raemers,<sup>47</sup> Eloy,<sup>48</sup> Merkelbach,<sup>49</sup> Bucceroni,<sup>50</sup> etc. Those who prefer the criterion of wage are Lehmkuhl,<sup>51</sup> Arendt,<sup>52</sup> Vermeersch,<sup>53</sup> Piscetta-Gennaro,<sup>54</sup> McHugh & Callan,<sup>55</sup> Balirach,<sup>56</sup> etc. Some other Moralists consider the daily support and the daily wage are nearly synonymous criteria: they are Ubach,<sup>57</sup> Noldin-Schmitt,<sup>58</sup> etc.

**Consumption or support.** — Modern economists list the following items of consumption or support: food, housing, clothing, medical care, education, transportation, recreation, and miscellaneous

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 387.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. SPORER: *Theologia Moralis*, ed. II, Paderbonae, 1903, tom. II, p. 480.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 556.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. BERTHIER & RAEMERS: *Compendium of Moral Theology*, p. 375.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. BUCCERONI: *Institutiones Theologiae Moralis*, ed. V, Romae, 1908, vol. I, p. 524.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 633.

<sup>52</sup> N.R. Th., 1926, p. 123 & ss.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 584.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. JESUS MARTINEZ BALIRACH, S.J.: *Estudios Modernos de Teologia Moral*, Santander, 1967, vol. II, p. 472.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. UBACH: *Compendium Theologiae Moralis*, Friburgi, 1926, vol. I, p. 229.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 395.

(tobacco, taxes, etc.).<sup>59</sup> Moralists, however, have a more limited idea of consumption or support. For Busenbaum,<sup>60</sup> Elbel,<sup>61</sup> Sporer, Babenstuber, Lessius, Layman, Bonacina, Lugo, Marchant, etc., the relative grave matter is the daily food (*victus*), and indeed of the individual and not of the family. For Bucceroni<sup>62</sup> it is food, clothing, housing and some convenient (*honestae*) recreations.

For St. Alphonsus,<sup>63</sup> Aertnys-Damen,<sup>64</sup> McHugh & Callan,<sup>65</sup> Noldin-Schmitt,<sup>66</sup> Ubach,<sup>67</sup> Eloy,<sup>68</sup> Merkelbach,<sup>69</sup> etc., it is the daily support of the person robbed and of his family. And for them support includes at least food, clothing and shelter. Modern Moralists would insist in including medication, education, transportation and some other items, depending upon the place.

St. Alphonsus<sup>70</sup> passed the following judgment on this criterion: "But this rule... is too obscure and vague, and it does not apply to all cases." Thus perhaps the second concrete criterion — daily wage — would be more satisfactory.

**The daily wage as criterion of the grave matter.** — Of course, the Moralists who propose this criterion have in mind the just wage. So the just daily wage in every definite socio-economic class is the grave matter in that class. For the richest, however, the absolute grave matter is applied, as said earlier.

Wages authorized or tolerated by the government may be presumed to be just, because the government is concerned with the common good, and its agencies are knowledgeable in worldly and economic affairs. Whenever the employer can afford, and especially in countries where labor is organized or unionized, no government or public official or any other right-thinking person will dissent with the following stand of the Catholic Church as expressed by

<sup>59</sup> Cf., for example, WILLIAM H. KIEKHOFER: *Economic Principles*, N. Y., 1951, pp. 652-659.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387, says: "*Materia respectiva gravis illa est, quae in unum diem sufficeret ad victum illius hominis, cui aufertur. Ita Babenstuber, Lessius, Layman, Sporer, Bonacina, Lugo, Marchant.*"

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 524.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 556.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

## GRAVE MATTER IN SIMPLE THEFT 221

Pius XI:<sup>71</sup> "The wage paid to the working man must be sufficient for the support of himself and his family... Every effort must therefore be made, that fathers of families receive a wage sufficient to meet adequately normal domestic needs. If under present circumstances that is not always feasible, social justice demands that reforms be introduced without delay, which will guarantee such a wage to every adult working man."

### QUASI-ALGEBRAIC FORMULAE OF THE GRAVE MATTERS

To deal about the monetary amounts which would be grave matters would need a special and separate article. So we shall merely quote some formulae that may serve the confessor in good stead.

1. Vermeersch<sup>72</sup> approvingly quotes I. Arendt, S.J.,<sup>73</sup> according to whom the absolute grave matter is equivalent to the weekly income of a middle-class person.

2. For Piscetta-Gennaro,<sup>74</sup> the absolute grave matter is the wage of a laborer for thirty days (one month).

3. McHugh & Callan<sup>75</sup> have this quite vague formula for the absolute grave matter: "The opinion today fixes the absolute amount which is grave matter even when theft is from the wealthiest person or society, above the daily earnings of a highly paid worker, but below the daily income of a very wealthy person; for the loss of the worker's salary would not be a serious damage to a rich man, but both the rich man and society would be insufficiently protected if the figure were much above that."

4. Ubach<sup>76</sup> says that once the scale of daily wages in any region is known, the relative grave matters can be easily determined.

---

<sup>71</sup> In QUADRAGESIMO ANNO, and the same thought is repeated in CASTI CONNUBI, both encyclicals of Pius XI.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 584.

<sup>73</sup> N. R. Th., 1926, p. 123 & ss.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 229, says: "Statuat ergo quisque, quid in sua regione teneri possit (ut materia gravis), sequentia prae oculis habendo: 1o. Non habenda est ratio valoris pecuniae absoluti sed relative, id est eius aptitudinis ad compranda sibi, quae ad vitam necessaria sunt vel utilia, v.g., victum, vestes, habitationem. 2o. Facile erit explorare, quantum sit salarium solvendum in ea regione operario (non artifice, cuius laboris qualitas aliunde pretium auget) pro conductione laboris uni us diei, et iam habebis normam pro hominibus paris conditionis; *salarium enim representat sustentationem congruam pro se et familia*. Idem facile explorare poteris

5. Jesus Martinez Balirach, S.J.,<sup>77</sup> says: "The grave matter is what the owner needs for the daily maintenance of his family. The basic amount is  $N$ , which is equal to the daily wage of a laborer. The relative grave matters for the other classes are in accordance with the following geometric progression:  $\frac{1}{2}N$  is the relative grave matter in theft from the poor;  $N$  is the relative grave matter in theft from a laborer;  $2N$  is that in theft from the skilled worker;  $4N$  is that in theft from one of the middle-class;  $8N$  is that in theft from the rich man;  $16N$  is the relative grave matter in theft from the very rich." For Balirach, therefore, the absolute grave matter would be  $16N$  also. In countries where the minimum wage is fixed by the government, such minimum wage would be the value of  $N$  in Balirach's formulae.

6. Noldin-Schmitt<sup>78</sup> say that the relative grave matter is one-seventh of the weekly fixed salary of the working man. In this opinion we should multiply  $N$  by the number of working days in a week, and divide the result by 7.

All the above quasi-algebraic formulae of the grave matter may be followed by the confessor or guide of souls, because their proponents are well-revered Moralists.

\* \* \*

This short article might have whetted the interest of the assiduous reader so as to ask: What is the scale of the different grave matters in terms of our currency? What is the grave matter in thefts other than simple? What bearing has the determination of the grave matter on the duty of restitution? Each of those questions deserves a separate article.

---

pro personis mediocris fortunae seu, ut aiunt, condicionis mediae, cuiusmodi sunt plerique in magnis urbibus, qui se suosque alunt artem vel officium exercentes non servile (secretarii, pharmacopolae, magistri in lyceis, iudicis inferiores etc.), a quibus exinde facile gradus fiet ad ceteras hominum classes, proportionem simili servata ac ea, quae apud auctores reperitur"

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 472.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 395.



# THE OBLIGATION OF PASTORS OF SAYING THE *MISSA PRO POPULO*

By

Florencio Testera, O.P.

## QUESTION

About the Masses **pro Populo** the **Ordo** states that "pastors say the Mass for the people only on sundays and holidays of obligation". So may I ask: what happened to the indult given by the Holy See in 1966 which permitted pastors to say only twelve Masses for the people entrusted to their spiritual care throughout the year **ex titulo iustitiae** and to apply the other Masses (that should have been applied for the people) **ad mentem Ordinarii** and indeed with stipends?

## ANSWER

Our personal efforts to verify the existence of an alleged indult purportedly granting filipino pastors the privilege of saying only twelve Masses for the people during the year instead of a larger number as had been prescribed by John XXIII on June 1, 1961 (AAS., 25, p. 985), has uncovered a startling discrepancy among pastors regarding their ideas about, and the compliance with, the Masses for the people, and this even within the same diocese.

Indeed, as we found out, priests through the length and breadth of the Philippine archipelago are more or less equally divided between two opinions and practices, viz.: 1) saying the Mass for the people on all (52 or 53) sundays and on three holidays of obligation (thus 55 or 56 days in all); 2) saying the said Mass on twelve (12) sundays only during the year, and on the remainder of sundays and holidays (43 or 44) saying the said Mass not for the people but **ad mentem Ordinarii** and with stipend.

*Which is the right thing to do?*

In Sept. 30, 1966, The Philippine Hierarchy obtained an indult from the Holy See whereby pastors were granted the faculty to offer Mass for the people only twelve Sundays during the year, provided the other Masses which should be said for the people be applied *ad intentionem Ordinarii* and the stipends be used to help the diocesan seminaries and the Colegio Filipino in Rome, (Boletín Eclesiástico, 1967, p. 255). The indult was valid for five years only, this is up to Sept. 30, 1971.

Moreover, according to the records of the CBCP, the Congregation of the Clergy sent in February of 1970 a communication to ask the opinion of Filipino bishops on "whether the obligation of saying Mass for the people should be reduced to only each and every Sunday of the year and the holidays of obligation in the locality." Out of the twenty six bishops who submitted their answers, fifteen favored the saying of said Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation; ten expressed their desire that the duty be reduced to once a month; only one bishop still wanted to keep the old practice of saying the Mass on some more days than the Sundays and holidays. During the Bishops' annual meeting in July of 1970, the Conference decided in favor of the Congregation's proposal, viz., to say the Mass for the people only on Sundays and holidays of obligation. The final decision of the Holy See on the matter came out on July 25, 1970 in a decree issued by the Congregation of the Clergy, the English translation of which follows:

"The obligation to offer Mass for the People which binds pastors of souls —*animarum rectores*—, is decreed for all and each of the Sundays and, in addition, for the holidays of obligation which are current in the locality, without prejudice to the rescripts containing a lesser obligation which have been heretofore granted and which will continue until their expiration" (AAS., 63, p. 943).

This new norm, though obviously aiming at uniformity, introduces quite substantial modifications into the previous law regarding the Mass for the people. Among its salient features one may single out the uniformity of obligation for all pastors of souls, —*animarum rectores*— regardless of rank and geography.

Moreover, the decree evinces the avowed determination of the law-giver to revoke all existing indults granting a lesser obligation.

In fact, such privileges are declared to cease upon their expiration dates. It is presumed that in the future the granting of similar privileges will be greatly lessened if not utterly discontinued.

*Which are the days when the Mass for the people should be offered?*

Each and every sunday and the local holidays of obligation throughout the year. This means that all pastors laboring in the Philippines must offer 52 (or 53) Masses corresponding to the number of sundays in a year, and three more Masses, viz., on Christmas Day, New Year and the Immaculate Conception. Privileges granted in the past to particular persons or dioceses will hold only until their expiration dates.

*Who are the persons bound by the new regulation?*

All pastors of souls, **animarum rectores**. The following must be counted among such pastors: residential bishops (c. 399); vicars capitular (c. 440); abbots and prelates **nullius** (c. 323); pastors (c. 466); parochial vicars with all the powers and duties of pastors, namely the parochial vicars of moral persons **vicarius actualis** (c. 471), and the vicars **oeconomi** in charge of vacant parishes (c. 473, 1).

Mere substitute vicars (c. 474), namely, those who take over in the absence of their pastors; auxiliary vicars (c. 475), who manage the parish in case of incapacitation of titular pastors, and parochial assistants — **cooperatores** (c. 476), are not obliged to offer Mass for the people.

What about Vicars and Prefects Apostolic (c. 306) and quasi-pastors (c. 466,1) in mission lands? They are all pastors of souls in the strictest sense, and as such they are obliged to say the Mass for the people just as residential Bishops and other pastors.

Military both Vicars and chaplains are governed by special statutes. Existing laws usually exempt them from applying the Mass for their subjects. However, if chaplains receive salaries or notable compensation then, they can be compelled by the Military Vicar to offer the Mass for the people entrusted to their pastoral care., (AAS. 43, p. 562). If such were the case, military chaplains as well as

their Vicars should, in all probability, say the Mass for the people every sunday and local holiday of obligation just as any other pastors of souls.

*When did the new law become effective?*

The decree was made public on July 25, 1970, and became effective January 1, 1971. Hence, all pastors should have started to be bound by the new law on this date, unless otherwise exempted by a special privilege.

However, since the indult granted to the Philippine Hierarchy for five years — Sept. 30, 1966 to Sept. 30, 1971, — expired only on Sept. 30, 1971, filipino pastors were bound by the new law as of Oct. 1, 1971 and should have started right then to say the Mass for the people all sundays and local holidays as stated in the Ordo.

On the other hand, the prescriptions of c. 339,3,5; and c. 466,2, concerning the obligation of offering only one Mass for the people on Christmas day or when a feast of obligation falls on a sunday, or again when one and the same pastor administers several pastoral units such as dioceses or parishes, should be considered as still in force.

Likewise, the duty to say Mass for the people remains to be both personal and real. The pastor of souls, therefore, must himself celebrate the Mass, or when legitimately impeded, have it celebrated by someone else on the respective day.

International Commission on English in the Liturgy

## REFLECTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION ON THE LITURGY 1963 - 1978

*To the Bishops of the Countries where English is Spoken:*

Each year the International Commission on English in the Liturgy submits a report to the bishops of the sponsoring and participating conferences and to the Church in the countries where English is spoken. This year, in addition to ICEL's annual chronicle, it is appropriate to reappraise the fifteen-year old Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and its continuing effects on the Christian life. These reflections are submitted to the bishops with the hope that they may be shared with the members of the local churches lay women and lay men, as well as priests and deacons.

Fifteen years ago, on 4 December 1963, the venerated bishop of Rome and chief pastor of the Church, Pope Paul VI, and all the other Catholic bishops issued the first decree of the Second Vatican Council, the Constitution on the Liturgy. It responded perfectly to the aims of the good and beloved Pope John in calling the Council: "to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of humanity into the household of the Church."

### *The Word of God*

In 1963 the Constitution on the Liturgy represented a conciliar "return to the sources," that is to the best spiritual and liturgical insights of sound Catholic tradition and above all to the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures. The practical results of promoting liturgically a "warm and living love for the Scriptures" have been great indeed, especially the enlarged proclamation of the word at every kind of celebration and the new Roman lectionary for Mass.

The lectionary for eucharistic celebrations deserves special mention. This massive accomplishment of the Apostolic See has restored the principle of semi-continuous reading of much larger

portions of the Scriptures, it has strengthened the best traditions of the Church year, and it has created the cycle based upon the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The basic acceptance of this lectionary by other Christian churches and communities of North America and its recent recommendation by the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion are providential signs of ecumenical progress. And, although there are reasonable complaints about the quality of liturgical preaching, as there have always been, such preaching is now done with far greater attention to the written word of God and the context of the liturgical assembly of God's people.

### *The Mystery of the Church*

The 1963 Constitution on the Liturgy anticipated the Council's great reflections upon the mystery of the Church (*Lumen gentium*, 1964) and upon the relationship of the Church to this world of the twentieth century (*Gaudium et spes*, 1965). The Church of Christ is "the sign lifted up among the nations under which the scattered children of God may be gathered together." In turn, the liturgy is the high point of the Church's life, the complex of signs that express both the acts of God by which we are made holy and the worship we offer to the Father in union with the Lord Jesus.

The Constitution made concrete the conciliar teaching on the particular church, which is the local gathering or assembly of God's people, united with the bishop, priests, and deacons who serve them. It is here in the local church that the Church of Christ is realized. It is here that the actual life of the Church is best manifested by "the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers."

Whether this dimension of the liturgy is called ecclesial or social or communal, it underlies most of the reform we have seen thus far. It also underlies our attempts to discover clearer styles of liturgical celebration, the attitudes which will assure "that full, conscious, and active participation which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" and which is "the right and duty of the Christian people by reason of their baptism."

All the way from the parochial celebration of the Christian initiation of children and adults in which the whole community now has a responsible part, to communal penitential services, rites have taken on a sense that public worship is the act and deed of the

whole praying people of God. From the common singing of the alleluia of praise, which welcomes the proclamation of the holy gospel, to the sign of Christian love and peace we exchange before coming together to share in the body and blood of Jesus, it is this sense of Church, the local assembly and the universal assembly, that is gradually transforming Catholic liturgy.

Some elements of reform have been misunderstood and even obstructed by faulty individualism or false nostalgia. But this is not the moment to speak of the relatively few who devise their own liturgy without regard for precedent or liturgical principle, or of the articulate minority who fail to comprehend change and growth in the Church. We pray that they may be receptive to the Spirit of God at work in the authentic, restored liturgy.

Without its being a didactic exercise, the best experience of liturgy constantly teaches and forms us. The reflective and meditative singing of the responsorial psalm at Mass helps the community to receive God's call, the call that comes in the proclamation of his word. The common singing of a refrain or hymn as we approach the table of the Lord is an inescapable reminder that the eucharist is the sign of the Church's unity; it is the sacrament that makes the Church. As the Roman Missal explains, by communion under both kinds "the intention of Christ that the new and eternal covenant be ratified in his blood is better expressed, as is the relation of the eucharistic banquet to the heavenly banquet."

### *The Church as Community*

Involving the whole people actively in the celebration of the eucharist and the other sacraments has meant a clearer perception of the diverse ministries in the one community of the Church. This was intended by the Council. The reading of God's word in the assembly by lay men and women, the distinct roles of the eucharist, all such changes have also brought into sharper focus the liturgical ministry of the ordained ministers, those who are called to the pastoral office in the Church.

The collaboration of lay singers and servers and readers with the presiding celebrant in the planning and preparation of eucharistic and other celebrations has placed greater responsibility upon the priests who preside. But it has also freed them for a more thoughtful, personal, and authentic leadership of the praying community. The corporate or collegial character of the pastoral office in the Church is now demonstrated when assisting priests concelebrate the eucharist as a body under the presidency of the bishop or another priest.

The hierarchical structure of bishop, priests, and deacons has taken on visibility, as the liturgical ministry of those who are ordained to serve the whole Church is carried out in the midst of an active worshipping community.

### *Faith and Devotion*

Neither the reiteration of the communal nature of the liturgy nor the constant emphasis on the external signs of participation detracts from the Constitution's concern that the liturgy be worship in spirit and in truth.

On the one hand, the fathers of the Council enumerated the external means of sharing in that worship: "acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes." And this insistence is all the stronger in the chapter of the Constitution on music, where almost every paragraph urges congregational participation in the religious song that is integral to the liturgy. On the other hand, the participation externalized in song must always be conscious, sincere, interior; it must manifest in the community what the first eucharistic prayer calls the "faith and devotion" of each worshiper.

Before men and women can come to the liturgy, says the Constitution, "they must be called to faith and to conversion." The liturgy itself is a commitment to "the works of charity, piety, and the apostolate." The celebration, by the action of the Spirit of God, moves us to be one in holiness, and "the renewal in the eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and humankind draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire."

This is in fact the heart of the liturgical renewal, as it has been ever since 1903, when Pope Saint Pius X called participation in the indispensable source of the Christian spirit.

The implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy nourishes this inner spirit in many ways. There are the periods of silent prayer newly introduced into the Roman liturgy. There is the ritual recognition that genuine conversion of life is the center of sacramental reconciliation with God and his Church.

One evident example is the deepening of faith in the paschal mystery through the eucharistic celebration of the ordinary Sunday, which is the "original feast day" when the Church "keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection, which it also celebrates once in the year, together with his blessed passion, in the most solemn festival of



Easter." Another example, which the Church is only now beginning to experience, is the renewed daily prayer of the Church, the liturgy of the hours. The restoration of morning prayer and evening prayer, as "the two hinges on which the daily office turns," to parish and other community celebration has a high place on the Church's agenda for the immediate future. Finally, the Constitution on the Liturgy has addressed all the other services of prayer and devotion which are "to be drawn up in harmony with the liturgical seasons, in accord with the sacred liturgy, to be in some fashion derived from it, and to lead people to it."

### *Future of the Liturgy*

Pope Paul VI faithfully executed the decess of the Council on the Church's public praise and prayer. Over a ten-year period almost all the Roman liturgical books were pastorally revised "with the collaboration of experts and the consultation of bishops from various parts of the world." They embrace new flexibility, accommodation to contemporary mentality, and recovery of the best insights into celebrating the mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Any weaknesses in the revised books lie less in the rites than in ourselves. The limitations are found in failure to prepare celebrations thoroughly or to examine the profound meanings and inner purposes of the reform. This fact justifies the good sense of the Constitution on the Liturgy when it speaks repeatedly of liturgical education and catechesis.

The preparation of the new service books of the Roman rite from 1964 to the present has followed a long tradition of reforming liturgical celebration through the revision of books. This huge and successful undertaking of the Apostolic See, at the mandate of the Council, has perhaps been insufficiently appreciated. The reform reflects both continuity with the past and accommodations to the present; it has achieved a large measure of the "noble simplicity" that was its goal. Now it needs to be carried out with the fullest programs of formation for the Church's ordained ministers and specialists in pastoral liturgy. It demands sharing of the religious and cultural values of the liturgy with the Catholic people who celebrate it.

The Constitution on the Liturgy was a plateau of liturgical renewal, as a statement of doctrine and a project for reform. The revised books in Latin and their official versions in the vernacular are a second plateau, representing further and welcome development anticipated by the Council. In a sense these books establish what

is now the "substantial unity of the Roman rite." But Pope Paul and the other bishops recognized a further advance required by a living liturgy. This advance is the cultural adaptation or accommodation of the liturgy to "the genius and talents of the various races and peoples."

Having acknowledged the responsibility of the local church in the moderation of its own liturgy, under the presidency of the Apostolic See of Rome, the Constitution on the Liturgy left to the responsibility of the conferences of bishops initiative for further developments. These may be rather slight accommodations to local and regional conditions, they may be more radical contributions from the traditions of particular nations, they may be the creation of a new rite.

It is not for us to predict where the Spirit of God will lead the Church in the forms and styles of public worship. But openness to dynamic and creative growth, evident especially in symbol, language, music, and the arts is a presupposition of the Constitution on the Liturgy. Such a growth of the liturgy must "harmonize with its true and authentic spirit" and develop in full communion with those who are responsible for the direction of the liturgy. "Any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already in existence."

### *Liturgical Language*

Only a few weeks before the promulgation of the Constitution on the Liturgy, on 17 October 1963, ICEL was founded in Rome by the ten bishops who had been designated for this purpose by the sponsoring conferences of bishops. Their stated goal was liturgical texts "true to the needs of public worship, as well as musical and literary requirements ... which will win acceptance in those parts of the world where English is spoken."

As ICEL also observes its fifteenth anniversary, the Episcopal Board and Advisory Committee are the first to admit imperfections in the translations, original texts, music, and subsidiary aids and commentaries produced over the past decade and more. But we are even more strongly convinced that overall ICEL has been successful. It has made a massive contribution to the dignity, life, and religious effectiveness of liturgical celebrations.

ICEL has had the loyal encouragement of the sponsoring and participating conferences of bishops. They have freely accepted and approved almost every text submitted for liturgical use in the churches

of their territories. The ICEL program has also been helped immeasurably by the Apostolic See's 1969 instruction on translation. This document warmly supported the principle of liturgical language that is suited to singing and speaking in the Christian assembly in preference to a slavish translation of Latin. It set down, moreover, a significant guidelines for the future: translation is "the best school and discipline for the creation of new texts" that are necessary since "texts translated from another language are clearly not sufficient for the celebration of a fully renewed liturgy."

### *Conclusion*

Pope Pius XII, the author of the 1947 encyclical on public worship, called the liturgical movement of this century "a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, a movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church." In 1963 the Church assembled in Council called us to the renewal of Christian life through its liturgical manifestations and celebrations. The International Commission on English in the Liturgy expresses gratitude to all who shared in that call, pledges to assist the conferences of a new chief bishop of the Church, Pope John Paul II, who has dedicated himself to the spiritual and religious aims of the great Council.

4 December 1978

Denis E. Hurley, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Durban  
(South Africa)

Chairman

James W. Malone  
Bishop of Youngstown  
(United States of America)

First Vice-Chairman

Joseph Cardinal Cordeiro  
Archbishop of Karachi  
(Pakistan)

Second Vice-Chairman

William Brasseur, C.I.C.M.  
Vicar Apostolic of the Mountain  
Province (Philippines)

Edward Bede Clancy  
Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney  
(Australia)

Gordon J. Cardinal Gray  
Archbishop of St. Andrews and  
Edinburgh (Scotland)

Joseph Gray  
Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool  
(England)

Michael A. Harty  
Archbishop of Halifax (Canada)

Joseph R. Rodericks, S.J.  
Bishop of Jamshedpur (India)

Owen N. Snedden  
Auxiliary Bishop of Wellington  
(New Zealand)

## **LITURGY**

### **BOWING OR GENUFLECTING?**

**By**

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

**Question:**

Quite a number of religious sisters and seminarians no longer make a genuflection upon entering or leaving a church. They make a more or less deep bow of the body, or, at least, of the head. Why do they refuse to genuflect and kneel? I can hardly believe that the genuflection has been officially abolished by the bishops' conference.

**Answer:**

One can easily observe these days Catholic religious and seminarians, even minor seminarians in this country who do no longer genuflect upon entering a church, even when the Blessed Sacrament is reserved there in a tabernacle. I asked several of them why they did so. I was told that in line with indigenization, we had to abandon genuflection as a Western custom. We should substitute it with a bow of the body. Kneeling and genuflecting is not Asian, I was told. We have to adapt to the Asian way of life.

My answer to this position is, that kneeling and genuflecting in their different forms are biblical, that they are Asian — and genuinely so — and that they are Filipino.

#### **KNEELING AND GENUFLECTING ARE BIBLICAL**

When we look into the Old Testament we have to admit that in the worship of both the Holy Tent and of the Temple standing was the more usual position in prayer. But the gesture of genuflecting and kneeling occurs also in the Old Testament as a sign of humility and worship, both in the prayer of the individual and of the community before God. After his solemn prayer of dedication of the temple, king Solomon "arose before the altar of the Lord,

where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven" (1 Kg 8:45). Daniel was accustomed "to get down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God" (Dan 6:10).

When we turn to the New Testament we find that the Lord himself prayed kneeling. In his agony in the garden "he knelt down and prayed" (Lk. 22:41). Also Christ's disciples and the first Christians prayed kneeling; so did Stephen (Acts 7:60), Peter (Acts 9:40) and Paul (Acts 20:36). Paul professes to kneel down in prayer both before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 3:14) and before the Lord himself.

The epistle to the Philippians presupposes that kneeling is the proper position of Christians before Jesus who had become Lord in his glorious resurrection. Christians here on earth are joined in their kneeling position before the Lord Jesus by those in heaven and those under the earth in a kind of cosmic liturgy.<sup>1</sup>

Also in the early patristic period kneeling was customary in individual prayer and public worship. For this we have attestations from as early as the end of the first century in the epistle of Clement (57,1). Bending one's knees expressed subjection, petition, sorrow and abasement in confession of sin. Therefore, it became in Christianity the preferred position of the penitents.

#### KNEELING AND GENUFLECTING IS ASIAN

The equivalent expression for "to bow one's knees" or "to fall to one's knees" are seldom mentioned among the Greeks and Romans.<sup>2</sup> In the normal worship of their official gods there was no bowing of the knee. It seems, therefore, to be wrong, to call kneeling and genuflecting Western. The prostration and its equivalent expression was seemingly absent in the pre-Persian period of Greece.<sup>3</sup> We have to assume that this custom of kneeling came to Greece and Rome from the East, i.e., from what we call today Asia. In the worship of chthonic deities — but not in that of the Olympic gods — there was genuflection and prostration (*proskunesis*). It is thought that the adoration of these deities offers a simple explanation for prostration (*proskunesis*) before these gods: if one wanted to honor such an earthly deity by kissing, he had to stoop to do so.

All this points to the ancient Near East where both genuflection and prostration were in use. But we find also in other parts of Asia

<sup>1</sup> J. Ratzinger, "Die Wuerde der Liturgie," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 8 (1978) 496.

<sup>2</sup> H. Schlier, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* I, 739.

<sup>3</sup> H. Greeven, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VI, 759.

— here used as a geographic concept<sup>4</sup> — at least the prostration. The kneeling position in the form of the “kowtow” is an ancient Chinese form to show homage or deep respect when a person kneels and touches the ground with one’s forehead. We observe something similar in the worship of the Muslims. Mohammedanism originated in Arabia. Most of the Muslims live today in Asia. Its origin and spread is, therefore Asian. For centuries Muslims live also in this country, especially in its extreme south. Is their practice not “Asian”? By the way, none of them would think of giving up their traditional forms of worship which includes also the prostration before God.

### KNEELING AND GENUFLECTING IS FILIPINO

The Philippines are a basically Christian country. Christianity grew and developed here for more than four hundred years. It became, especially in the form of Catholicism, a part of our common heritage. Its forms of piety and worship became a part of Filipino culture. After four hundred years of Christian faith and life, expressed both in the liturgy and in the personal piety of our people, the “common tao” has created its own expressions of religiosity. One of these expressions is certainly the genuflection and the kneeling position in personal devotion and in the liturgy.

To see and to experience this we have to go only to our shrines and places of popular devotions, like Quiapo, Santa Cruz, and Baclaran in Metro Manila, and in the many Marian shrines and places where the Santo Niño is venerated all over the country. How often can we observe people slowly “walking” on their knees from the entrance of the church up the sanctuary or to the statue or sacred image of the place. Kneeling became here a deep expression of faith, trust and piety of the Filipino.

Not so long ago I celebrated Mass in Metro Manila on a weekday. During the Mass I observed a young priest — not a Filipino — coming in on his way to the confessional. In front of the altar — it was after the consecration and before communion — he made merely slight bow of the head. After Mass I met an elderly gentleman who had similarly observed the same priest passing by the altar. He asked me why this priest had not made a genuflection. I tried to excuse this priest by pointing to the often-heard assertion that kneeling was not Asian. I told him among others that Christians in India had obtained the permission from Rome to replace genuflections by the profound bow with the *anjali hasta*.<sup>5</sup> I explained that

<sup>4</sup> Very problematic is the use of the term “Asian” for cultural phenomena.

<sup>5</sup> *Notitiae* 5 (1969) 365. 371.

Japanese Christians had the permission — from as early as 1937 — to make a deep bow of the body instead of a genuflection.<sup>6</sup> But when I mentioned Japan the old man got angry. He vividly remembered the war-years when he was forced — together with many others — to show a similar act of reverence to the Japanese occupation forces, and he still resented it deeply. He could not see why we had now to assume a similar gesture and even introduce it in worship. For him it was something smacking of neo-colonialism.

I think, he was right. Ours is a Christian country and a Christian culture. Christians form a very small minority in both India and Japan. Why is only the Indian and Japanese custom accepted as Asian? Why not forms of kneeling as that of the Muslims? As to India, we know that by far not all Christians there accepted the bow of the body in place of the genuflection. There is strong opposition against it. Therefore, its use was not made obligatory: it may be introduced in India. Here we have to call to mind a wise observation to the Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II: "There must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them" (art. 23).

Actually, the proposed 'Misa ng Bayang Pilipino' intends to extend kneeling in the course of the celebration of the Mass. According to the present Mass rite the people and the celebrating priest stand both during the penitential rite and during the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful). The proposed Filipino Mass rite wants to extend kneeling to the penitential rite and the Universal Prayer, but at the same time limit it to "the consecratory part of the (new) eucharistic prayer." In his commentary in the "Misa" Fr. Chupungco observes: "Kneeling is still a typical Filipino gesture of adoration deep respect in the presence of God and humble petition".<sup>7</sup> One can wholeheartedly agree with this statement, because it is also in full harmony with Sacred Scripture "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2:10).

<sup>6</sup> A. Snijders, *Liturgisch Woordenboek* II, 1362.

<sup>7</sup> A. J. Chupungco, *Towards a Filipino Liturgy* (Manila, 1976) 91. -- One may, however, question the little word "still," because it seems to imply that kneeling may be, after all, on the way out. But no reasons are given.

# COMMUNICATION

## ON THE PHILIPPINE BIBLE SOCIETY

March 2, 1979

The Editor

Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas

Manila

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to request the publication of the attached press release about the Philippine Bible Society.

Perhaps you will remember that the Philippine Bible Society had been in the news before in connection with some negative developments, particularly the expulsion of the Philippine Bible Society from the world-wide 63-member United Bible Societies. You will be happy to know that, in view of the election of a new Board and the action to mutually withdraw cases filed in court, that reinstatement of membership with the UBS will be only a matter of time.

We will appreciate the publication of this news item to correct all the negative reports about the organization which have been published in the newspapers before.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

PHILIPPINE BIBLE SOCIETY

(Sgd.) RICARDO B. JUMAWAN  
General Secretary



## PHILIPPINE BIBLE SOCIETY

890 United Nations Avenue, Manila  
(P.O. Box 755) Tels.: 50-88-49; 50-50-32

Philippine Bible Society wishes to announce the election of a new Board of Directors and appointment of a new Management.

At the 12th Annual Meeting last January 20, 1979 of the members of PBS, a new Board of Directors was elected:

<i>Names</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
1. Rev. Moley G. Familiaran	Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches
2. Atty. Agustin B. Vencer, Jr.	Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines
3. Dr. Cirilo A. Rigos	United Church of Christ in the Philippines
4. Rev. Federico M. Magbanua, Jr.	Conservative Baptist Association of the Philippines
5. Fr. Efren O. Rivera	Roman Catholic Church
6. Mr. Lingkod A. Juane	United Methodist Church
7. Mr. Tan Ching Heng	United Evangelical Church of Manila
8. Dr. Eliseo M. Pajaro	United Methodist Church
9. Rev. Juan P. Empig	Philippine Baptist Mission, SBC
10. Mr. Candelario L. Bragat	United Church of Christ in the Philippines
11. Mr. Aurelio C. Llenado, Jr.	United Methodist Church

New officers of PBS are:

1. Rev. Federico M. Magbanua, Jr.	President and Board Chairman
2. Dr. Eliseo M. Pajaro	Vice-Chairman
3. Rev. Moley G. Familiaran	Secretary
4. Prof. Ricardo B. Jumawan	General Secretary
5. Atty. Leven S. Puno	Legal Counsel

Three Committees of the Board:

1. Legal Affairs Committee, chaired by Atty. Agustin B. Vencer, Jr.
2. Personnel Committee, chaired by Dr. Cirilo A. Rigos with Mr. Lingkod A. Juane as Co-Chairman
3. Finance Committee, chaired by Mr. Candelario L. Bragat with Mr. Aurelio C. Llenado, Jr. as Co-Chairman

The new Board and Management moved swiftly to administer the affairs of PBS by approving and implementing emergency measures as follows:

1. Froze and suspended all operations temporarily while the new Board and Management make the transition from the old Board. Operations will be gradually resumed as finances and facilities permit.
2. Hired a reputable Auditor (Sycip, Gorres, Velayo & Co.) to audit the books from January 1, 1978 to February 5, 1979. Inventory of stocks and all other assets is now being undertaken.
3. Approved the eviction of all tenants and occupants of the PBS buildings and premises.
4. Referred to the Legal Committee and Legal Counsel all problems relating to labor, creditors, UBS and others.
5. Referred to Personnel Committee all problems involving senior staff members.
6. Transferred the Stockroom from the Main Building to the Translation Building at the back and consolidated Bodega and offices there.
7. Immediately started a dialogue with UBS aimed at normalizing relations as soon as possible.
8. Restored the translation work with active cooperation of UBS.
9. Began the difficult program of rebuilding PBS and restoring it to normal operation.

## **HISTORY**

# **BICOL'S LADY OF PEÑAFRANCIA**

**By**

**Jose Calleja Reyes**

Mountains have always fascinated man from time immemorial. They rise above plains of the earth towering into the sky in various shapes and forms. Some rise into dizzying heights presenting a forbidding spectacle. Others are gently rising, beckoning a promise of munificence. Still others are barren, rocky, forlorn and desolate. Like museum art pieces of painting or sculpture, they evoke from the onlookers varying degrees of emotions.

Mountains beckon man to scale their heights and there find fellowship with his creator. Sometimes, it is God Himself who comes down upon a mountain seeking the fellowship of His creatures. He came down on Mt. Sinai and to Moses He gave the stone tablets of the ten commandments.

Many accounts of heavenly apparitions in these fascinating mountains, however, are that of the Virgin Mother of God. She appeared in the Pyrennees at Lourdes to a simple peasant girl. She appeared at Cova de Ira in Fatima to three little children. She appeared at Tepayac to a lowly Mexican indio. She appeared in the Sierra of Peña de Francia in Spain to a simple devout man. And because of these apparitions of the Mother of God in isolated mountain areas, men of many climes and ages have been drawn to her and to God. The devotions that surged from these apparitions of the Virgin Mary have left the confines of the mountains where they happened and have crossed oceans and continents reaching the furthest corners of the earth.

### **PEÑA — THE MOUNTAIN OF ROCK**

The history of the Virgin Mary under her title of Lady of Peña de Francia is a story of contrast.

It begins with a gentle voice prodding a simple and devout Frenchman almost on the verge of sleep. The man specially chosen to hear this gentle prodding voice is recorded as Simon Vela.

Although by birth he was christened Simon Rolán, the surname Vela was to stay with him because of the gentle prodding voice saying — “Simon, vela y no duermas. Vete a buscar una imagen mia escondida en el Peña de Francia.” (Simon, Keep vigil and do not sleep. Go and find my image hidden in Peña de Francia). Peña is a Spanish word which means a mountain of rock. Francia is the Spanish name for France. Simon heard the gentle prodding voice on the steps of a Paris convent altar. Simple logic, therefore, seemed to indicate that the locus of the search he was gently prodded to make would be in any one of those many fascinating mountains of his native France. For five (5) years, Simon looked and searched at every mountain in France for Peña de Francia but no mountain in his native country bore that name. Weary and spent by years of fruitless mountain search, Simon was about to give up his quest. At that precise moment Simon once more heard the gentle prodding voice saying — “No desmayes en la empresa que se te encomienda.” (Do not despair in the work I have entrusted to you). Simon’s ebbing morale was instantly lifted by these sweet and consoling words of the voice. Coincidentally, it was the pilgrimage season to the tomb of the great Spanish apostle, Santiago de Compostela. Simon decided to join the pilgrim caravan to the city of Santiago de Compostela in Spain and there seek the help of this venerated apostle to give him the grace to know where Peña de Francia is located. Simon’s petition was granted. He was led to go to Salamanca, another city in Spain which in that period was the seat of culture and learning in all of Europe. In Salamanca he sought counsel from the learned men of the university but to no avail. Still the mountain of Peña de Francia was obscure, almost unknown. But God’s ways and the Virgin’s role in them are indeed ineffable. While in Salamanca, Simon strolled in the Plaza de Corrillo close to the church of San Martin. While there he heard two “carboneros”<sup>1</sup> arguing on the quality of their charcoal for sale. One of the “carboneros” argued that the charcoal of the other was of inferior quality. The other countered, his was the best charcoal hereabouts for they were charred from the hardy wood found only in Sierra de Francia. From this simple piece of argument, Simon knew that at last he would soon find the mountain of his long quest. When it was time for the charcoal dealers to return back to their villages he followed quietly the one who had given him the cue until they reached the village of San Martin de Castañar. Simon approached a group of womenfolk cooking in an open patio and kindly asked them if they could tell him where the mountain called Peña de Francia was situated. The women pointed to him a not too distant rocky pro-

<sup>1</sup> Charcoal makers.

montory in the horizon saying, "There it is." And after Simon had gazed with fascination at the mountain, he knelt and bowed his forehead to the ground and said to the women — "Do not be surprised of what I have to say because in that mountain is hidden an image of the Virgin Mary and she will appear soon". Simon promptly tarried towards the mountain and scaled its heights. When he was about to reach the highest point of the mountain, a strong tempest overcame him. A bolt of lightning struck, dislodging a piece of rock that fell upon Simon's head causing him some head injury. As Simon laid prostrate on the ground, the Virgin appeared and upon touching his wound, it was instantly healed. Then the Lady said — "Simon, no temas; mira la imagen que te mande buscar" (Simon, do not be afraid. Look at the image that I have sent you to find). The rocks of the mountainside were illumined into transparency by the light of the apparition and through it Simon saw the hidden image of the Virgin with the Child Jesus cuddled in her arms. When Simon stood to retrieve the image, the apparition said — "Go and look for witnesses so they may hear of what I desire in this place". Simon hastily returned to the village of San Martin. Five men from the village accompanied him back to the mountain carrying picks and shovels. Upon reaching the site, once more the bright and splendored light illumined the rocky mountainside, and the resulting transparency of the rocks once more made visible the hidden image of the Virgin. The gentle voice was heard to say — "take this Image and put it on the highest point of the peak. Make for me a shrine there. Here my children will come and I shall fill them with abundant graces. You will start the work and others will follow until it is done". It was the 19th day of May, 1434. The place was the rocky, desolate and forlorn mountain top of a range of mountains separating the Spanish provinces of Caceres and Salamanca. The mountain was originally called Monte de Peña or mountain of rock. In the lower slopes coursed a river called Rio de Francia. Tradition said that the place was once a battle ground that saw the French legions of Charlemagne battling with the infidel Moors. Since then the mountain called Monte de Peña became more popularly known to the local folks as Sierra de Peña de Francia. And the newly found image was thereafter venerably named "Nuestra Señora de Peña de Francia".

#### THE VIRGIN'S ODDYSEY IN 'TIERRAS DE ULTRAMAR'

When devotion to her spread like wildfire in that region of Spain, it was not enough that the Virgin's munificence should be showered only on that part of the Western World. It was not enough

that she would be later proclaimed Queen of the old Kingdom of Castile. She was a Lady for all seasons and for all peoples. She crossed oceans and continents, so to speak, to be with another group of her people of the Eastern World, in a region noted, too, for its majestic mountains and volcanoes.

She came to Bicol in 1710, three and one half centuries after her apparition in Peña de Francia. She chose a lowly group of mountain dwellers to indicate her dwelling place, by a river bank, under the shadows of majestic Mount Isarog, nearby the City of Nueva Caceres.

### **BICOL ORIGIN OF THE LADY OF PEÑA FRANCIA**

Just as the Lady's odyssey into Bicol is so full of providential meaning, the story of her Bicol origin is even more providentially fascinating.

A golden necklace enclosed in a letter datelined Nueva Caceres 1 May 1710 started the first recorded chapter of the story of her Bicol origin — a story which surpasses the best of fairy tales.

The letter's contents and the golden necklace accompanying it was mentioned for the first time in an extant chronicle account published in the year 1728, entitled "Historia de la Admirable Invenccion y Milagros de la Thaumaturga Imagen y Milagros de Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia".<sup>2</sup>

This letter, preserved in the archives of the Sanctuary of Peña de Francia in Spain, was a life testimony of an ardent devotee of Lady of Peña de Francia whose name is recorded as Fray Miguel Robles de Cobarrubias. He was a Spanish creole, born in the port of Cavite of Spanish peninsular parents.

From the time he began to study grammar in the University of Santo Tomas until he finished his Theology course, Miguel was prone to sickness and many bodily ailments. To sooth the pains caused by his infirmities, he would press against the aching part of his body a portrait of the Lady of Peña de Francia, which fortunately he had one, and the pain would subside. Because of his ardent belief that it was the Virgin who caused these instant cures, he became more devout to her. He took pains to secure a book from the University library on the history of the origin and miracles

---

<sup>2</sup> For M.R.P. Domingo Cavallero, O.P. Printed in 1728, Salamanca, Spain. Imprenta de la Viuda de Gregorio Oran.

worked by the Virgin in Peña de Francia in Spain, and when another kind of infirmity would afflict him, he would press the book upon his afflicted body and once more the pain was instantly relieved. Because of these heavenly favors bestowed upon him by the Virgin, he vowed to construct a small chapel of lime and stone by the Pasig River and there propagate the devotion to the Lady of Peña de Francia.

Miguel, however, would soon realize that this vow he made could not be realized as he originally intended. For even before he was ordained to the priesthood in Santo Tomas, the Bishop of Nueva Caceres that time, Andres de Gonzales, called him to do pastoral work in his Bicol diocese. Miguel then proceeded to Nueva Caceres. Sometime later he was ordained to the priesthood and was given a small parish nearby Nueva Caceres to administer. Devout and full of apostolic zeal, Father Miguel was soon elevated and named parish priest of the cathedral church and Vicar General of the Diocese. Sensing that his stay in the diocese of Nueva Caceres would be long and would prevent him from fulfilling his vow to the Virgin to construct a shrine for her by the banks of the Pasig River, Father Miguel had his vow commuted without prejudice to building the shrine of his dream perhaps within the confines of his pastoral jurisdiction in Nueva Caceres. The place where to properly build the shrine in Bicol bugged him for long. One day a group of *cimarrones*<sup>3</sup> gave him the cue. This group of mountaineers living in the mountain of Isarog requested that a "visita" or chapel be constructed near their haunts in the outskirts of the city where they can conveniently go for the practice of their new Christian faith. They indicated the site where the chapel should be constructed. Father Miguel felt that at last his dream of setting up a humble shrine for the Lady of Peña de Francia was at hand. On the site indicated by the *cimarrones* he immediately commenced to build a "visita" or chapel of bamboo and nipa. During the construction, the 1710 letter revealed, that many women clothed in white would be seen with the recruited native laborers working in setting up the chapel. The women were not known to be residents of the sitio where the chapel was being erected. Were they angelic beings? The chapel finished, the next task that faced Father Miguel, was to have an image of the Virgin carved in similitude to the portrait of the Lady of Peñafrancia which he had kept. A native artisan was commissioned to execute the work. The statuette of wood was finally completed. It was time to embellish the replica with the color of paint. In that remote time, the early Bicolos had a pigment mix which they used for painting icons of their patron saints on plain

<sup>3</sup> An ethnic group of negroes.

wood slabs. The process required the use of animal blood. And so, a dog was sacrificed and its blood used for the preparaion of the pigment which would be applied upon the newly carved replica of the Lady of Peña de Francia. Father Miguel felt pity on the poor animal whose life was snuffed out for the Virgin's sake. When the dead dog was about to be thrown into the river, Father Miguel exclaimed, "Would that the Virgin restore life on the poor dog who had been sacrificed for her?" Some of the priests around who heard his utterance simply laughed on such wild thought. But God, through the intercession of the Virgiin Mary, gives without measure. The wishful prayer of Father Miguel was answered. The first miracle of life was performed by the Virgin. The dead dog upon hitting the waters of the river started to swim across to the other bank and run towards his master's house. This prodigy soon spread like prarie fire all around the immediate vicinity of the chapel site. In simple but impressive procession attended by throngs of devout christians, Bicol's Lady of Peñafrancia was soon installed in the bamboo-nipa chapel.

In this almost fairy tale story, the devotion of the Bicol people to the Lady of Peñafrancia began. Since then and for the last 269 years, the Bicol's have carried a long, continuing and enduring romance with her. She is the Lady fiercely loved by all of the Bicol people. She is Bicol's own Lady of Peñafrancia, Queen and Patroness of Bicolandia. The golden necklace enclosed with the letter symbolized a "tinagba"<sup>4</sup> an offering of the best of the peoples' toil in thanksgiving for God's and the Lady's munificence. This ancient tradition is unique among the Bicol people.

Her first Sanctuary of nipa and bamboo has long perished. In its place a shrine of brick and stone was constructed in the year 1741 during the espiscopate of Bishop Isidoro Arevalo whose coat of arms engraved in stone is still visible to this day on the facade of the Shrine. During the espiscopate of the famous Dominican Bishop Francisco Gainza, the Shrine was extensively renovated in 1866. However, the stone foundation and buttresses constructed by Bishop Arevalo were retained. The interior of the Shrine was embellished with church ornaments of silver and gold and stately chandeliers. The main altar where the Virgin is enshrined was carved from the red-blood sheen of tindalo wood. Just before the outbreak of the last World War, the shrine was further embellished by Msgr. Florencio C. Yllana who was then the chaplain of the Virgin's Sanctuary.

<sup>4</sup> Derived from the Bicol word "tagba" which means gathering the first best sheaves of the palay harvest which is offered to a higher being. It is an ancient Bicol Christian way of making an offering. The early Bicol's were historically recorded as the best artificers in gold jewelry.



A well known historiographer writing about the Bicol Shrine of the Lady of Peñafrancia wrote the following observations—

"But of all the Shrines derived from Peña de Francia the most renowned without doubt is that in Nueva Caceres in the Philipines which up to this day has been preserved, surrounded by a great devotion of the faithful. About its origin we have abundant information in the archives of Peña and of its actual state, neither are we wanting."

This brief, yet highly said tribute published in foreign land about the shrine of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in the City of Naga is not only a tribute to a regional people's devotion to her and to the celebrity of her present Sanctuary, but also is a singular tribute to the Philippines of which the Bicol Region is part. As time passed, the Bicol devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia would spread out of its regional confines. She would draw devotees from the other regions of the Philippines. Today, it can be said that devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia has become one of the principal Philippine Marian devotions of national prominence.

### VIVA LA VIRGIN !

The deep seated faith and devotion of the Bikol people in their Lady can best be felt in the external manifestation and pageantry of their devotion come the month of September when her feast is solemnly celebrated. It is also better described by those who could pass as mere observers, like one seated in a modern day cultural center witnessing an opera or a stage production. The big difference, is that the latter is stage managed while the former is welled up by the spontaniety of human emotion borne out of centuries-old traditions of faith and love.

To provide the reader with an idea of the external manifestation of the Bikol peoples' devotion, faith and love for the Lady of Peñafrancia, the writer has reproduced in English translation an eyewitness account and his impression of the Virgin's festivities which was published in 1880 in the Madrid newspaper, "La Civilizacion"—

"I have just witnessed a religious festival which would be difficult to erase from my memory and which has moved and impressed me much.

In the first days of September, the sacred image is taken in a procession to the Cathedral where a solemn novena is held with a big number of the faithful in attendance.

In the afternoon of the Saturday that precedes the Sunday which is the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, the sacred image is brought back (translación) from the Cathedral to her sanctuary by way of the river. To see it is to precisely form an unforgettable picture of what takes place during the solemn translación. Never have I seen a similar pompous, majestic and moving event or is there a similar one written in history.

The church bells had been tolled twice announcing the start of the procession. I observed that it was raining. On the third toll of the bells the rain stopped. It is 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon when the procession begins to move out of the lateral door of the Cathedral which faces the magnificent Colegio de Santa Isabel, passing in front of the episcopal palace, to move towards the Tabuco bridge. Upon reaching the mouth of the river the procession stops and the Holy Virgin is carried passing through two files of the faithful accompanying her, amidst the singing of sacred songs, the general tolling of the bells, the vibrant sound of band music, the bursting of fire bombs and an infinitesimal array of sky rockets which criss-cross the sky from one bank of the river to the other. The sacred image is then placed in the center of a big and magnificent boat, followed by the clergy, the civil and military authorities, the Administrador de Hacienda Publica, the resident Spaniards in the capital, the principales of the city and a section of the students of the Seminario Conciliar.

In the meanwhile numerous groups of *bogadores*<sup>5</sup> dressed simply, neatly and notably elegant composed of the out-students of the Seminary, the youth of the city, and devotees from the neighboring towns have distributed themselves in 30 or 40 *barotos*,<sup>6</sup> each *baroto* holding 25 or 30 persons. All of them wave a flag or a standard on which is written:

**VIVA LA VIRGIN! Viva Nuestra Señora de Peña de Francia.**

**In others — Gloria a Nuestra Excelsa Protectora.**

<sup>5</sup> Or *boyadores* — a name given to the menfolk in bancas who paddle to pull the lines of rope stretched from the bow of the Virgin's fluvial pagoda. By this common effort the pagoda is propelled upstream in the river.

<sup>6</sup> A banca without outrigger.

Upon a pre-arranged signal, martial music is played. It is difficult to describe this solemn moment. You have to see it to believe what is happening at this very instant. An immense crowd of people can be seen on both banks of the river as well as on the Tabuco bridge. Big ropes are attached to the bow of the vessel and these are stretched and pulled by those in the *barotos*. Slowly and suavely the boat moves skimming the surface of the water. At the moment the musical march is played, thousands of devotees with arms uplifted wade into the water encircling the boat that carries the Blessed Virgin. By past practice and experience these devotees know that by doing this act in honor of Mary Immaculate, they are immediately relieved of their fevers or other diseases which afflict them. The singing does not stop. The shouts of VIVA LA VIRGIN! increase in crescendo. One can hear the beautiful refrains of music coming from the various *barotos*. The sun has set, but both banks of the river are illumined by innumerable lights. An infinitesimal number of sky rockets criss-cross the sky in all directions. A great number of torches fired by abaca wickers light in a gorgeous manner the thick foliage of the trees that stand majestically along the whole length of the river, such that the spectacle is one sublime, poetic, and enchanting portrait, difficult and almost impossible to describe.

The fluvial procession lasts for more than an hour. Upon nearing the sanctuary, which stands beside the river, the most illustrious Vicar General, in fluvial cape vestment assisted by the clergy receives the sacred image. If there is a bishop, he is the one that performs this office and ceremony.

The procession is once again formed and the sacred image is placed in her precious "andas" and upon thousands of interlocked arms and hands that hold her, she enters the Sanctuary which is brightly illuminated. The *Salve Regina* is sung with great solemnity and with this the procession ends.

The Blessed Virgin is once again in her precious temple. She has once more complied with the hopes of her faithful devotees. I can certify to the truth of what they have told me that there was no rain during the procession but after the sacred image had entered her Sanctuary, the rains fell. They have told me that in 1878 while the Blessed Virgin was in procession in the middle of the river, it was raining in

the mouth of the river but not a single drop of rain fell on the boat where the Virgin was being carried. What I can affirm is that in the earthquake during the month of July of this year which has caused great damage and death in various provinces of the island of Luzon, here in Camarines, we have been saved from a similar disaster by the special protection of the Blessed Virgin. I have also seen that the natives of this diocese opened a big canal and constructed a magnificent embankment to safeguard the Sanctuary of their beloved protectress. To those who serve her in this sacred devotion she has blessed them a hundredfold with rich and abundant harvests.

The same devotional and colorful scenario is seen today during the annual solemn festivities in honor of the Lady of Peñafrancia.

The miraculous image of Bicol's Lady of Peñafrancia was canonically crowned in September 20, 1924 pursuant to an edict of Pope Benedict XV by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Guillermo Piani, Apostolic delegate of the Holy See to the Philippines before a huge multitude of her devotees and a big concourse of high church dignitaries.

At the time of her coronation, the diocese of Caceres was "sede vacante" or bishopless. The prelate, Francisco S. Reyes, who administered the diocese was eminently responsible for this holy and historic event. A year later he was awarded the mitre of Caceres in secret consistory in Rome and became the 30th bishop of Caceres since its foundation in 1595.

In 1974, the golden jubilee of her magnificent coronation was celebrated with a great outpouring of the faith and love of the people who have been long devoted to her. Earlier, the bishopric of Caceres was elevated to an archdiocese and the reigning dignitary of this memorable event was no less than the Archbishop himself, Teopisto V. Alberto.

Attachment to centuries-old traditions have a way of taking deep, unshakable roots. Circumstances of time, place and persons may change but the core and the symbols of those traditions never change. After more than two and a half centuries, the Bicol devotion to the Lady of Peñafrancia has remained essentially the same as when it was first practiced by the early Bicol devotees. It is a devotion founded on "peña" — on rock, and it shall forever endure for the greater glory of God and His Virgin Mother. Would that her present shrine, so well revered even in "tierras de ultramar" shall forever remain her precious temple with the abiding will of the Bicol people to keep, enhance and embellish it in a measure that befits the Queen and Patroness of Bicolandia.

**B I B L I O G R A P H Y**

1. Historia de la Invencion de la Thaumaturga Imagen de Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia por M.R.P. Domingo Cavallero, O.P. Printed in 1728, Salamanca, Spain, Imprenta de la Viuda de Gregorio Oran.
2. Santuario de la Peña de Francia — Historia por M.R.P. Alberto Colunga, O.P., Imprenta Calatrava, Salamanca, 1968.
3. La Virgen de la Peña Francia en Camarines Sur, Cultura Social, Manila, Septiembre, 1924, pp. 503-505.
  4. The History of Peñafrancia, by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Florencio C. Yllana, Official Souvenir Program 1941, p. 70.
5. Historia o Agulagui Can Para-Milagrong Laduan ni Nuestra Señora de Peña Francia by Mons. Francisco Gainza, O.P., Manila, Tip. Pont. de la Univ. de Santo Tomas, 1926.
6. Bikol Annals, Vol. I by Domingo Abella.

# BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES

by

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

## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**(May 6th, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Acts 4:8-12. When asked by the Jewish leaders "by what power or in whose name" the cripple of 3:8 had been healed, Peter responded by stoutly confessing Jesus of Nazareth to be the source of all healing both physical and spiritual (v. 12). He gives the Kerygma in briefest form: Christ rejected by them but glorified by God in the resurrection. The quotation from Ps. 118 (117) 22 aptly describes this: rejected by the Jewish leaders, Christ was given the chief place in God's edifice. Even the Pharisees did not deny the messianic character of this passage (cf. Mk. 12:10). Three times Peter refers expressly to the name of Jesus (which is the expression of the power behind a person), and places all salvation exclusively in him. The name "Jesus" (Yeshua') gives added meaning, for etymologically it signifies "Yahweh saves".

**Second Reading:** First John 3:1-2. John is overwhelmed by the thought of our being truly God's own children, the result of God's greatest gift of love, that of his Son (Jn. 3:16), by which we are sons in the Son. What matter if the "world" (hostile to God) does not "know" us, that is, treat us with love and understanding! It did not do so even to God's own Son while on earth. Our divine sonship is truly a reality, but it will be perfected in the end-kingdom. Then, in the full vision of God, we shall be completely conformed to Christ who is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col. 1:13). "When it comes to light" can also be translated "when he appears" (RSV), that is, when Christ appears in his Parousia, we shall be like him (either Christ, who is God's perfect image, or God, into whose image we are being daily more and more transformed (2 Cor. 3:18)).

**Gospel Reading:** John 10:11-18. Jesus is the genuine shepherd, model for all shepherds. This appealing image is often found in the scriptures, referring both to God (Ps. 23), and to Christ, as well as to those who care for his flock (1 Pet. 5:3). A true shepherd loves his sheep and has personal care for each of them, even to risking his life for one single sheep. Not so the hired man, who works for

his pay and at the first sign of danger takes to his heels and abandons the sheep. So deep is the intimate interpersonal relation between Christ and his own, that it is a faithful reflection of the intimate union between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of Love. That is why he willingly lays down his life for his sheep. A final promise visualizes all nations together with the Chosen People of God of old, as the one flock of Christ. This will be brought about by his death and resurrection. (Christ's first thought here is the union of Jew and Gentile in one believing community, the Church. A later application referred it to the return of the separated brothers).

### **Outline for Homily: He loves them even unto death**

**Introduction:** Bishop William Finnemann was the ordinary of Calapan, E. Mindoro, when World War II broke out. After the Japs invaded the island, some of the soldiers tried to have access to the girls' dormitory in the high school for evil purposes, Bishop Finnemann protested vigorously, and managed to hide the girls from those who wished to molest them. When he remained adamant to their repeated demands, they determined to do away with him. They put him in a boat and took him out to sea. That was the last that was seen of him. It is said that he was placed in a sack and thrown overboard. The good shepherd gave his life for his sheep.

1. A remarkable trait of a genuine shepherd is that he is ready to face any danger, even death itself in order to ward off harm to every and any one of his sheep. This is because they are his own, and he has them at heart. David related to King Saul how he would go after a bear or a lion that came to carry off a sheep from the flock, attack it and kill it while rescuing the helpless sheep (1 Sam. 17:14). Truly, sheep are very helpless creatures. They need the constant care of watchful eyes, and guidance day after day. If one gets lost by lagging behind the flock, the shepherd spares no efforts to go and find it, because he has concern for each and everyone of the flock. They are very dear to his heart. The one interest of the hired man is his salary. In face of danger, he takes to his heels.
2. The Lord Jesus depicts himself in this appealing image of the Good Shepherd. To save us from eternal death, he was willing to give up the joy of life when his manhood was at its best. He met the enemy head-on, and although the struggle was fierce so that it forced the blood from his pores in the garden of Gethsemani, yet he rose to shoulder his cross manfully and went to the ignominious death of a Roman pagan crucifixion. But death had no hold on him, for he rose glorious and triumphant. By his death he broke down all the barriers between peoples and nations, so that all who are baptized are incorporated into his Body-Person, so close are they

to him. He cares for them individually and leads them invariably to their eternal goal, while watching over them in all the phases of this earthly life.

3. What confidence these words of Jesus ought to instill the heart with! God's own Son cares for me individually! From the moment of our coming into this world, his watchful eye is there to ward off all dangers of the Evil One, to offer nourishment in the form of good surroundings, healthy family life, sacramental life and the word of God in the scriptures. So intimate is the union between the flock and the Lord Jesus that it is a faithful reflection of the union between the Father and the Son. It ought not be difficult for man to reach his eternal goal, with such a Good Shepherd acting as Brother and Divine Friend. But there is need to keep the eye on him as he guides along safe paths, and not be deceived by the allurements which a world hostile to God offers us.

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 13th, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 9:26-31. Some time after Saul's conversion at Damascus, he journeyed to Jerusalem to meet the believing community, but a cold shower awaited him there. They were not convinced that this arch-persecutor of their brothers was sincere in his conversion. It was Barnabas who saved the day, and through his endorsement Paul was accepted into their midst. He soon began his vigorous work of evangelization, fearlessly professing Christ. His independent manner and perhaps lack of tact brought him into serious trouble. It evidently displeased the community who were enjoying on all sides a period of peace (v. 31). So they decided to send him off to his home-country (Tarsus).

**Second Reading:** First John 3:18-24. The command to love is selfless practical service in deeds. Words remain empty promises otherwise. By deeds of love we can be sure we are pleasing to God even though we may fail through weakness. The more one comes closer to God, the greater assurance he has of being heard in his requests. John reiterates the quintessence of the Christian dimension: belief in God's Son and love of one's fellowmen. That insures union with Christ to which the Spirit himself bears witness.

**Gospel Reading:** John 15:1-8. This is a superb allegory, in which the individual parts have a corresponding meaning. It is a vivid description of the vital union between Christ and his members in what Paul would call his Body. Christ is the source of all life and energy for everyone. Unless one remains in him, one becomes use-



less and ends in frustration. It is the Father's will that everyone bear much fruit, for that reason he "prunes" each branch, trimming away useless growth so that more fruit can be produced. This trimming is called a "cleaning", and Jesus continues to say that his divine revelation has already "cleansed" them by giving them true knowledge and proper attitudes. Only let them remain one in him. Then they can obtain anything they ask from the Father. (This is why the liturgy always approaches the Father "through Christ our Lord" or "in the name of Jesus, the Lord").

### **Outline for Homily: Bearing Fruit in Abundance.**

**Introduction:** Sonny Jaworski is the life of the Toyota basket-ball team. From him the entire team derives ever new energy, courage and the fighting spirit. When he is absent, things begin to fall apart. When he is present, everything clicks. There is team-work, precision, and a real show of sportmanship. And they score high.

1. It is the will of the Father that all who are one in Christ bear abundant fruit, that is, enjoy a truly successful Christian life in this world and in the next, both for themselves and all for whom they labor. But this will require an ever on-going close union with Christ. His arms must be our arms, his thoughts our thoughts. Abiding in him will constitute a daily and constant battle with the forces that draw away from Christ, the evil influences that try to sever us from the source of all holiness. That is why Jesus adds: "if my words stay part of you", to emphasize the need of frequently pondering his Gospel-message of love, if we are to continue living in him. Time will perfect and render fruitful this on-going process and daily endeavor.

2. That is why the Father "prunes" the branches, as Jesus mentions. He prunes them by cutting off useless attachments or harmful connections that we have thoughtlessly made. Such "pruning" is painful to human nature, and when such are one's lot, people often ask what they have done to deserve such treatment from God whom they thought they were serving faithfully. How many can see behind the trials, the hand of the Father not punishing them, but purifying, cleansing, detaching them from whatever hinders growth and fruitful union with Christ? Otherwise, the results of one's striving are very mediocre, and they will not bear the abundance of fruit which the Father has in mind.

3. Patient suffering is the real test of faith. It is easy to praise the Lord when all things are running smoothly, when one's health is in good condition, and when one is accepted on all sides with respect and in friendship. But let there come into one's life some

troublesome sickness, a long-drawn-out misunderstanding in which one's reputation has been marred; then patient long-suffering will show up the quality of the branch that is destined to bear much fruit. Here one needs prayer, one's own and those of others, to see the sun behind the dark clouds. St. Therese of the Child Jesus spent the last years of her young life confined in bed on account of a serious case of tuberculosis, but it was those years of patient suffering that gleaned for her the harvest of so many souls for heaven. Can we learn from the examples of the saints how to bear abundant fruit?

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 20, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48. Peter admits the first pagans into the believing community in the person of Cornelius and his household. It took a special vision to convince Peter that the pagans were equally called to share the riches of Christ (cf. 10:15). He refers to this impartial salvific action of God in v. 34, and intimates that a non-Jew could also be pleasing to God (v. 35). The fact that the charismatic gifts were poured out on the pagans as they were on the apostles at Pentecost left no doubt in Peter's mind as to his course of action. (Note that although the Spirit could be poured out in his gifts apart from the baptismal rite, that rite was nevertheless required for admission into the community of believers).

**Second Reading:** First John 4:7-10. One of the most pregnant passages in the Bible. It is the summary and highlight of the Johannine kerygma. The reason and motivation for the command of mutual love is the fact that love itself is from God, and that God *himself* is love. This latter is John's mightiest statement. (Note that he does not say: love is God, but God is love.) It follows that only those who love are born of God (truly his children), and really know him. God has proved that he is love by the very gift of his Son to us to be our propitiation for sin and our means of sharing his divine life. This is God's sheer gift, no merit on man's part.

**Gospel Reading:** John 15:9-17. The source of all love is the Father who through his incarnate Son pours out his Spirit of love on all who are Christ's. Knowing that they are so greatly loved produces that atmosphere of joy and happiness that characterizes a truly Christian community. Yet to remain steadfast in Christ's love demands continuous mutual love of fellowmen, or love in action, as the saints demonstrated throughout their lives. The greatest proof of such selfless love is willingness to suffer and die for others, as Christ

did. He made his chosen ones his close friends, disclosing to them all the Father's secrets (as friend to friend); and he has invested them with his own mission. They are to continue his salvific work of man's redemption, and bear fruit in abundance (here he reverts to the image of the vine).

### **Outline for Homily: Love in Action.**

**Introduction:** A widow had lost her only son in the Korean war. Daily she sat by the window, staring out into space, seemingly lonely and shattered. Seeing this one day, one of the boy's buddies in the war was haunted by that mother's face, and resolved to do something about it. He called on three others who were with him in the war and they secretly agreed to be substitute sons: one by one they began to casually drop in to visit her, and now and then took her out to dinner or to a movie, just as her own son would have done. As the boys married, she was drawn into their family circle and was considered the grandmother of all their children. She was one of the happiest old ladies in the town. What love in action can do to make others happy!

1. St. John could not have put it more eloquently: "God is love" he wrote. And love wants to give itself in all directions. Only when the Son became incarnate did we see Love fully in action. Jesus went around doing good to each and everyone in need. They brought him the sick from all sides and he cured them. He despised neither the tax-collectors, nor the lepers nor the Pharisee who sought his counsel (Jn. 3:1). He went from town to town as an itinerant preacher to bring them the Good News of the Kingdom (Mk. 1:38). He spent whole days teaching the multitudes (Mt. 15:32) and then fed them by multiplying the loaves. He put up with the lack of understanding of his own chosen ones concerning the path of suffering laid down for him (Lk. 9:45). But the climax of love in action was the giving of himself over to his friends in the institution of the Eucharist, and over to his enemies in his passion and death. God is love, but we came to realize it best in the stupendous outpouring of love in the loving example of Jesus, our divine Brother,
2. "Love one another as I have loved you" is his last request. What he desires of us is the same love in action which impelled him all during his life, that willing service of fellowmen in need. For some it will be caring for their families, for others the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, for still others teaching children and youth. There are ways and means for each of Christ's followers to serve his fellowmen from the professional doctor and engineer down to the common day laborer. Greed seeks to possess what others have,

but love desires to give all that it has to make others happy. Countless examples of love in action flourish in every city and town, hidden perhaps from the most of men and known only to few, but recognized by the Father in heaven as the other Christs carrying out his last appeal.

3. When St. John was a very old and venerable figure, they used to carry him to the sanctuary that the mere sight of him would inspire the faithful. Then upon being asked to give a short exhortation, he would invariably repeat over and over again: "Little children, love one another". Tiring of hearing this same admonition again and again, he was requested to say something different. But St. John replied: "It is the will of the Lord. If it is carried out, it is fully sufficient". How true! To acknowledge ourselves as children of God in need of everything from the good God, and to manifest genuine brotherly love toward one another is the epitome of the Christian calling. Happy are those who realize this and endeavor to carry it out.

## SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION

(May 27th, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 1:1-11. The period after the resurrection was of great importance for the chosen band. Jesus continued to give them proofs of his being alive, so that they would be staunch witnesses of that fact. He also concentrated on the special preparation needed for their role in the believing community where God would reign. Furthermore, he impressed upon them the importance of the Spirit, the promised Gift of the Father, in which they would be invested (baptized). "Forty days symbolizes a definite period of preparation for a specific work, as for example. Moses receiving divine instructions for forty days on Mt. Sinai (E. 24:18)

Jesus also corrects their idea of a temporal kingdom and an imminent Parousia. At first there lay before them the gigantic task of bearing witness to all nations on the earth, something they could only perform properly when endowed with the Spirit. In describing the Ascension, Luke is emphasizing the *parting of the Lord's visible presence*. The manner of describing it belongs to Luke's literary techniques as author, to drive home his point. Both Luke and John in their gospel accounts give the impression that Easter and Ascension took place on the same day, but that is a theological perspective. Here in Acts, Luke's perspective is symbolic and may be connected with the end of the forty days when Moses received the Law, while

the forty days after the resurrection are in preparation for the New Law of Love which is the gift of the Spirit.

**Second Reading:** Ephesians 1:17-23. Paul's prayer for his Christians is intimately bound up with the Father, the Son and the Spirit (in his gifts). Its object is that they clearly know God (wisdom) and appreciate his work in them (insight). Such insight involves a better understanding of their calling, a fuller appreciation of the riches of their inheritance, and a deeper grasp of God's power working within them. That power is identical with the power at work in Christ's resurrection, his exaltation to God's right hand, making him superior to every possible created being while giving him universal dominion. Thus supremely exalted, it constituted him Head of the Church.

The Church is both the Body of Christ and his fullness. "Fullness" in all five passages where it occurs in the captivity letters is used to signify with great emphasis the concentration of sanctifying power of God (Cerfaux). This has been concentrated in Christ, God's primordial sacrament for man's salvation, and he in turn concentrated it in his Body-Person, the Church, which as his extension on earth is likewise the fundamental sacrament which communicates Christ to men (by various sacramental rites). God is the fullness which lives in Christ, and eventually will replenish regenerated redeemed humanity (Rev. 21: 22-24).

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 16:15-20. This longer ending in Mark's gospel is written by a different hand although it is accepted as inspired and canonical. It is a resumé of Christ's activity after the resurrection: it contains 1) the universal commission to preach the Good News of salvation to the whole world; 2) the necessity of faith in the gospel-message, and of incorporation into Christ by baptism; 3) the promise of accompanying charisms: driving out demons, healing, tongues and others; 4) the ascension and exaltation of Christ. "Seated at the right hand of God" is a symbol of Christ's equality with the Father in power and dignity; 5) the fulfillment of the promise given in Mt. 28:20: I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.

In v. 15, Mark uses remarkably two words which could have a much wider extension in the mind of the inspiring Spirit: *kosmos* for world, and *ktisis*, which is creature. Does mankind have the further call to evangelize every intellectual creature in the universe? And does this reflect man's present endeavor to move out beyond this planet earth?

**Outline for Homily: He Returned in Triumph.**

**Introduction:** When General Douglas MacArthur was commanded by his superior to leave the Philippine shores in March 1942, he did so with great reluctance. It was a dark day for all and apparent defeat. But he made his famous promise: "I shall return". In October 1944 he kept his promise. His forces invaded the shores of Leyte and swept the enemy before him. In six months most of the Philippines were no longer in enemy hands. His was a lasting triumph.

1. From Advent to Easter we have accompanied the Savior in his Paschal Mystery. We died with him on Golgotha heights and we rose with him spiritually on Easter morning. His death seemed to all to be failure and defeat but today we celebrate with him his glorious exaltation at God's right hand, high above any angelic creature or any other name in this age or the age to come. He humbled himself beneath the feet of all, but now the Father puts all things under his feet. His life of total obedience to the Father's will is now immensely rewarded, for now he is invested with full power, and commands as Lord of the universe: "Go into the whole world and preach the good news to every creature. The man who believes it and accepts baptism will be saved; the man who refuses to accept it will be condemned". Now the Father conquers all enemies before him as he reigns triumphantly in heaven, and invisibly in the midst of the Church.

2. How well the opening prayer has worded it: "His ascension is our glory and our hope". For we are the members of his Body-Person, and where he is, we also shall be. He has entered into the new creation. We beg God to allow us to enter the new creation with him. There all things will be made anew. No sorrow or suffering, no evil serpent lurking in this New Paradise, no danger of losing this heavenly inheritance, no death stalking its hallways to inflict his deadly blow. For with Christ we shall be at God's right hand, never again to die. There we shall experience the immeasurable scope of his power in us, as St. Paul clearly states in the second reading. Though we seem to fade away in death, what a glorious return in the final resurrection and exaltation!

3. When the Christians in pagan Rome under the Emperor Nero were accused of setting fire to Rome (although history accredits the burning of Rome to Nero himself), the whole pagan populace was stirred up against them. They were despised, hunted down, thrown to the lions in the arena, and considered the worst enemies of the empire. Nero had many of their bodies covered with pitch and used as torches set afire. But those same Christians triumphed. Today Christian Rome celebrates their glorious martyrdom on her

altars and on all the altars of the world. Peter was crucified head down, Paul was beheaded, and scores of others were martyred. But today Peter stands out as the holder of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Paul as the apostle of the nations, and the martyrs as Christ's triumphant cortege, honored by millions. Through death they triumphed. And the blood of martyrs was the seed of Christians. In how many countries has this repeated itself down to our day! Death for Christ and with Christ spells eternal triumph when Christ returns in glory.

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

(June 3rd, 1979)

**First Reading:** Acts 2:1-11. Pentecost in Israel was a harvest festival (Ex. 23:16). Thus it symbolized fulfillment, and from that aspect St. Luke depicts the outpouring of the Spirit, for it is the fulfillment of the salvific work of Jesus. It was celebrated seven weeks or fifty days after Passover, and hence was called pentecosté, the Greek word for fifty. Fifty was the sacred number of the jubilee year, which signaled the remission of all debts and a new start for the People of God (Lev. 25:6). It is these theological dimensions of Pentecost that Luke is presenting rather than any stress on chronology, for Pentecost, the fulfillment of Christ's Paschal Mystery, is when the believing community came alive with the life of the Spirit of Christ.

The Promised Gift is that of the invisible Spirit of God himself (v. 4), who is communicated to all present. Clearly to be distinguished from this divine Gift is the visible and ostensible manifestation of his Presence in the charism of tongues poured out on those present. In this scene, the object of the charism of tongues is the public praise and the extolling of God for his marvellous deeds (v. 11), above all for the Paschal Mystery of the Savior, the fruit of which is the gift of the Spirit. Luke is also possibly giving us an idealized picture of the Early Church, comprising events that happened over a longer period of time. The essential message is that the Spirit of God is the great Gift of the Father and the Son for the final age.

By the power of this Spirit, the Apostles were endowed from on high to proclaim everywhere (with tongues of fire!) to all nations the mighty salvific work of God. Luke's "table of nations" is a selection of peoples of the then known Mediterranean world, symbolizing all nations united in the one community of Christ by

and in his Spirit, the Bond of union and love. Thus the events at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11) are reversed. Salvation is universal, and for all nations, but gained by belonging to the New People of God.

Wind, fire, tongues (for speech) all symbolize the Spirit. In both Hebrew and Greek, spirit and wind are identical terms (ruach, pneuma) though Luke uses a slightly different word here, yet from the same root. John the Baptizer had foretold that Jesus would immerse his followers in Spirit and fire (Lk. 3:16). Tongues, coming from a central source, indicate that one and the same divine Spirit is imparted to all, to *speaking the new language of the Spirit to the world*, the message of love concerning Christ and his universal salvific work, to which the Spirit bears witness.

**Second Reading:** First Corinthians 12:3b-7. 12-13. A passage rich in content. Paul writes to the Corinthian community which experienced the abundance of the Spirit's charismatic outpouring. Yet he makes it clear that the primary activity of the indwelling Spirit is to enable the Christian to confess the divinity of Christ the Lord (v. 3). Only then does he mention the gifts of the Spirit (which include here various ministries and functions). Moreover, it is the same identical Spirit at work in everyone, imparting his gifts to the individual members as he pleases, but all for the benefit of the whole Body (v. 7). Comparing the human body with the Body of Christ, Paul shows the necessity of a variety of functions. That all should have the same function is against the very notion of an organized body. So also in the Body of Christ, each member contributes in his own way and by means of his particular gift to the good of the whole community. What one member accomplishes, affects all the others.

**Gospel Reading:** John 20:19-23. In giving his last injunction to his chosen ones, the Lord 1) reminds them that his passion and death were foretold, and thus were in the plan of God for man's salvation; 2) he sends them out in his name and authority, with a message of reconciliation coupled with a call for repentance for sin; 3) he orders them to begin with the chosen people at Jerusalem, but not before they were invested with the Father's Promise, the mighty Spirit, by whom they would be enabled to be his staunch witnesses.

The Lord's last gesture was one of priestly blessing (see Sir. 50:20). Then he was taken from them visibly. Luke projects all this on the day of the resurrection from his theological perspective, so that he can end his gospel in Jerusalem where it began, namely in the Holy City, God's chosen site. It began in the material Temple, but ends in the Spiritual Temple, the Lord Jesus, in whom all con-



tinue to praise the Father. Their final act is one of adoration of him in whom they now believe, and of joy in accordance with the work of Jesus in Jn. 14:28, and also of acceptance of their noble mission.

#### **Outline for Homily: The Pentecost-Event.**

Suggested is to explain the first reading, paragraph by paragraph, as given in the above notes, and combine the explanation of the second reading with it.

**Conclusion:** In baptism, the Holy Spirit has been given to each and every Christian. The virtues and gifts are also given in baptism. But they need to be activated by conscious effort, so that each individual experiences a new release of the Spirit (or a "baptism" as it is often called). This awareness of the Spirit's activity is accompanied by a manifestation of his charisms in a marked degree, so that the Christian truly lives the life of the Spirit with renewed vigor.

*Note:* For a full-fledged homily see Bol. Ecl., Mar.-Apr. 1976, pp. 274-276, and Bol. Ecl., Apr.-May 1977, pp. 375ff.

### **SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY**

**(June 10th, 1979)**

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40. Part of a superb homily on God's unique election of Israel to be his covenant-people, so unique as to be unknown before to man. Both in word and in deed Yahweh manifested himself in the marvels of the Exodus and Sinai events, revealing himself in a manner unparalleled in any other nation. That calls for faithful service of the One True God, and the earnest endeavor to keep his commandments. All the more does this hold good for the New People of God.

**Second Reading:** Romans 8:14-17. A particularly pregnant passage in the eight chapter of Romans, which climaxes the entire first part of the letter. It is an eminently trinitarian passage and parallels Gal. 4:4-7. The Father truly imparts the very Spirit of his Son to the believer, to be the vital principle and impulse of the new Christ-life. Only by the Spirit of his Son do we proclaim God as Father in the unique Christian sense, in intimate relation of sons in the One Son Christ. It is not a mere legal adoption, that the Spirit brings about, but a true participation in the life of the Divine

**Son.** "Abba" is an Aramaic term of endearment, best rendered by "O Father" or "loving Father". With the utmost filial confidence Jesus prayed thus in the Garden (Mk. 14:36), and the Early Church retained the original Aramaic along with the Greek in her community worship. So close is God's Spirit knit to our own that both co-jointly bear witness to man's divine sonship. In virtue of that sonship, we inherit Christ's glory as well as his divine riches, provided we also share his sufferings now on earth.

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 28:16-20. A final summary of Christ's salvific work. A mountain is mentioned to symbolize the position of authority. In the mandate of Christ, the Early Church expresses her awareness of her universal mission. It can be described as the *fourfold all*, since the original Greek uses the same word for "all" four times (*pas*), whereas English translations prefer a variety of words.

1) **All power:** The fullness of sovereign authority, possessed by the Risen Christ. In view of this, one can justly infer Christ's cosmic role as king and heir of the universe, exercising full authority over all created intelligence.

2) **All nations:** In virtue of this delegated authority, the believing community is to make disciples or "Christify" all mankind. From Christ's salvific work no nation, no race, no minority groups is excluded. God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 18:18) is thus fulfilled. By the initiation rite of baptism, man is actually immersed (the fundamental meaning of "baptize") into a new atmosphere which is the Christian Trinitarian atmosphere. The baptized Christian relates to God as *triune God*. "Unto the name" expresses intimate belonging, closest covenant-fellowship with the holy and triune God.

3) **All things I commanded you:** Teaching and preaching are a primary duty of Christ's apostles. They share the role of Christ, the Great Teacher, held up as such in Matthew's five great discourses (5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24). They are to teach the fullness of Christ's message that leads to true life; not watering it down to cater to the whims of men.

4) **All days:** A fitting close to the gospel which began with the Savior-Child who was given the name of Emmanuel: God-with-us (1:23). Christ lives on now in the believing community in his dynamic person, exercising continually his saving action so that God's reign among men be fully realized. "End of the world" does not imply annihilation but consummation, effected by the Parousia of Christ.

**Outline for Homily: The Efficacy of Christian Baptism.**

**Introduction:** Initiation rites for student groups and special societies have a definite meaning for those initiated. By means of them, a person becomes a full-fledged member, and belongs in a particular way to that group, taking upon himself its aims and plans. There are obligations as well as privileges involved. The spirit of the group channels its energy and thought toward realizing the common purpose of the group.

1. Baptism is the initiation rite for the Christian. It is not a mere external rite but an efficacious sign instituted by Christ to give new birth to a man, and immerse him into a new atmosphere, the Christian atmosphere of the Triune God: Father, Son and Spirit, one God in a community of love of three divine persons. This supreme reality of the Trinity is to enter into every phase of the Christian life and give meaning to it. Every community (family, religious, parochial) finds its model in this community of love. But only when the individual Christian becomes more aware of his relation to the three persons of the Trinity and lives it, does it become truly effectual. Reborn as a child of God, one lives as a true child of God, crying out "Abba, Father". He realizes he is truly a brother to the Son who loved him even unto death. To the Spirit he turns as Indwelling Guest who is Advocate and Consoler in every need.

2. This awareness expresses itself in Christian prayers and practices. Whereas of old, Israel turned to Yahweh in the unity of God, the Christian turns to the same Yahweh in the trinity of Persons, praying to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, the Love of both. We live our Christian calling in the words of the Sign of the Cross, in the Gloria at mass, in the "Glory be" at the end of a decade of the rosary, in the apostles' creed, and many prayers of the liturgy. The Father is praised and loved for giving us his Son to be our Savior and Brother, our sacrifice and our food. With the Son we pass through all the vicissitudes of life and go with him to the Father, being assured of his personal love and care as Shepherd of the flock. In the Spirit we are enabled to live our Christian commitment, and to love the Father and the Son with the very Love with which we are loved.

3. The Christian faith in which baptism has initiated us is a great gift of God. There are millions of pagans who do not possess this gift. But to appreciate it more fully, we ought to have a deep knowledge of what that faith entails. Often the knowledge of the

faith remains at the elementary schools level. Today there are many efforts being made to deepen the Christian faith entails. Often the knowledge of the faith remains at the elementary school level. Today there are many efforts being made to deepen the Christian faith, in study groups, cursillos, legion of Mary meetings, charismatic prayer-meetings and the like. Everyone ought to make use of the opportunities given. But it is not enough to know the faith. One must live it. What more appealing objective than to live in union with God who is our Father, our Brother, our Advocate and Consoler! The life of the Christian is most fulfilled when it is oriented toward the Triune God, for that motivation will impel it to live in a community of love with one's fellowmen.

## SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

### (June 17th, 1979)

✓ **First Reading:** Exodus 24: 3-8. The ratification of the Sinai covenant by means of a covenant-sacrifice and a covenant-meal (v. 11). The whole people took part in it by representation from the various tribes. They openly state their full consent and willing participation in the covenant (v. 3). Moses the intermediary pours half of the blood out on the altar, which represents Yahweh; since the blood was the symbol of life and stands for the victim itself, the emphasis is on the life of the victim offered to Yahweh. Then from the identical source the blood is sprinkled on the people; they thus enter into covenant-union of new life with Yahweh. In v. 8, the covenant is declared to be ratified by the outpouring (sacrifice) of the blood. There are remarkable similarities with the ratification of the new Covenant in the Blood of Christ.

✓ **Second Reading:** Hebrews 9:11-15. The sacrifice of Christ is presented in contrast to the sacrificial rites of the Old Covenant. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and that only on the Day of atonement. In that Most Holy Place God's presence was manifested. The high priest took with him the blood of the slaughtered victim in order to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat above the Ark, as a token of reconciliation between God and his People, though it could not effect it. But Christ, the true high priest entered the real Holy of Holies of God's heavenly presence with his own precious Blood, the sacrifice of himself, achieving true and lasting reconciliation and deliverance from sin. Cleansing by animal sacrifices

would only bring about a legal and ritual purification, but the sacrifice (blood) of Christ really cleanses man from sinful works that wrought death. Now with new life he can serve the living God. As Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus by his death freed the men of the old covenant from their transgressions and made them inherit the blessings of the new and eternal Covenant.

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 14:12-16, 22-26. / The institution of the Eucharist is placed in the setting of a meal. The Passover was a sacrificial meal, the chief items needed for it were the paschal lamb and unleavened bread. Through Christ's divine foreknowledge, Judas was not able to learn before hand the place where the disciples were sent to prepare. A spacious, well-furnished room placed at the Master's disposal would indicate that the owner was himself a follower of Jesus (the house of Mark's parents?). There Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb, inaugurates the new and permanent Covenant with God, by means of his Body and Blood which are shared by his intimate friends in the form of a meal of bread and wine. Crystal clear is the Lord's statement, so that there can be no doubt as to the real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which only divine power could bring about. "This is the Blood of the New Covenant" unmistakably parallels Ex. 24:8 (first reading), marking the Eucharistic meal as a *sacrificial banquet*, and the Eucharist a sacrifice. Partaking of the Blood means sharing in Christ's life which he offered to the Father for our salvation, and took up again in the resurrection. The Covenant-theme remains central also the Christian dispensation, bringing man into closest union with God through the sacred humanity of the Divine Savior of men.

#### **Outline for Homily: Eucharists Sacrifice and Sacrament.**

**Introduction:** During World War II, captured men of the armed forces were imprisoned, and food was scarce. The men became emaciated till finally food parcels were allowed to be brought to them. One day the men came to the chaplain with a box of raisins. "Now we can make wine from these dried grapes and have mass again" they eagerly told him. The chaplain looked at their emaciated bodies and said: "Eat them. You need the food." "No" they insisted, "we want the Mass." And so it was. They made wine from the raisins and soon after the prisoners knelt in deepest reverence to offer the sacrifice they had long been deprived of, and to receive the Food that they hungered for. A sterling example!

1. The Eucharist is both sacrifice and sacrament. All the animal and grain sacrifices of the Old Covenant merely prefigured the reality

that Christ instituted at the Last Supper. He offered himself in sacrifice to the Father and gave himself to his disciples as a sacrificial meal. "Take and eat" he said, "this is my Body which is for you" (1 Cor. 11:23). "This is my blood, the blood of the Covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many" (Mk. 14:24). No human ingenuity has been able to water down the meaning of these words. They are crystal clear. This is the all holy and adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, the one and only Sacrifice of the New Covenant, the sacrifice of Christ himself under the appearance of bread and wine. "Whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, sins against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27). This is the faith of our Catholic forefathers and it has been handed down to us for 2000 years from the very time of the Apostles.

2. Under the same aspect of sacrificial love, Jesus remains with his People in the consecrated hosts in the tabernacle. There he is "the Lamb that had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). "He lives forever to make intercession for us" (Hebr. 7:25). To all he says: "Come to me all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you" (Mt. 11:28). How many millions have obtained new strength and courage through the Bread of Life who deigns to remain with us in the Holy Sacrament! How often has a visit to a quiet chapel or church re-invigorated the troubled and weary heart, before the silent Presence that makes Itself felt so irresistibly there! He is there as a sacrifice for us! He is the personal Savior of each and everyone, with us to the consummation of the world.

3. When Tarcisius, the boy-martyr of early Christian times, was bringing the Eucharist to fellow-Christians in the catacombs, he was set upon and attacked by a bunch of rowdies who demanded that he hand over what he was holding close to his bosom. Tarcisius adamantly refused and was given the death blow, just before he was rescued by a Christian soldier. For Tarcisius, the Eucharist was not merely a symbol but in all reality the Living Body of Jesus the Savior. This is the faith that has ennobled men and women and children of all ages by the thousands, to rise early, to travel long distances to be present at the celebration of the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, and partake of the Eucharistic meal which is the Bread of Life. A mother Teresa of Calcutta could affirm that without this daily Bread she could not carry out the duties of the day. How do we stand in our estimation of the Gift of God in the Eucharist? Are we willing to make some sacrifice to participate in the sacred banquet of him who sacrificed his all for us?

## TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

(June 24th, 1979)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 49:1-6. The second of the Servant of Yahweh songs. It brings out; 1) his call as God's predilection; 2) his prophetic task will be effective, symbolized by the sharp sword and polished arrow. Yet first his life will be hidden and unknown; 3) in his task he encounters much opposition, and its visible success is so meager as to tempt him to discouragement; 4) but his trust is in Yahweh who is his reward; 5) in fact, the Lord widens his mission and extends it from the Chosen People to all the nations.

Though the Early Church saw Christ eminently depicted in these Servant songs, a collective interpretation is not excluded (Israel or the remnant). The passage fits well into the person and task of John the Baptist: He was called from his mother's womb (Lk. 1:15); he remained hidden in the desert (Lk. 1:80); he was powerful in word (Lk. 3:7); he was cut down by the whim of a woman (Mt. 14:10); his prophetic word was for all (Lk. 1:6).

**Second Reading:** Acts 13:22-26. In Paul's first recorded speech in Antioch in Pisidia, John the Baptist is depicted as 1) Christ's herald and forerunner; 2) by preparing the people for the Messiah through a baptism of water in which they confessed their sinfulness; 3) as humbly admitting his subordinate role, being not even worthy to be the servant of the Messiah, Savior of Israel. Paul may have in mind those who in his audience were giving the preference to the Baptist, so he quotes the very words of John, admitting his role of servant to Jesus.

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 1: 57-66. 80. The angel's promise in 1:13 is now fulfilled. The Lord "extended his mercy" by manifesting his power in persons beyond the age of child-bearing (1:18). Circumcision initiated a male child into God's covenant-people of old. A customary feast invited relatives and neighbors to celebrate. Both Elizabeth and Zachary insist on the name given by the angel in 1:13. Zachary praises God which Luke gives in the canticle of the Benedictus (1:67-79). This made a profound impression on all, and the news spread far and wide. Luke's account of the birth ends with an indication of the boy's spiritual and physical growth. That he

was at an early age in the desert may be an indication that he was given over to the religious sectarians at Qumran, on the NW shores of the Dead Sea.

**Outline for Homily:** There was a man named John, sent by God.

**Introduction:** A name for God-fearing Israelites meant more than just a distinctive mark to tell one person from another. It had religious significance and expressed something of the person's character or destiny. John in Hebrew means "Yahweh is gracious" or "Yahweh pours out favor". This befits those holy parents who had prayed so long for offspring. And it marks the role of the one who would prepare the People of God for God's final manifestation of his merciful favor: the Savior.

1. John was a great ascetic. This aspect had already been fortold by the angel to Zachary: "He will abstain from all alcoholic drinks (Lk. 1:15). Later we see him clothed in camel's hair, wearing a rough leather belt around his waist, taking as food grasshoppers and wild honey (Mk. 1:6). This external conduct was coupled with genuine inner virtue. In all truth, he refused to accept any homage intended for the Messiah, and constantly referred to himself as the one who prepared his coming like the heralds of old. In deep humility, he did not even consider himself worthy to do the most menial tasks for the coming One (Jn. 1:27). He openly stated that his baptism was merely preparatory, whereas the efficacious baptism with fire and the Spirit would be given by the Messiah himself (Mt. 1:11). In all this, John manifested a sterling character and a man of solid virtue, a model for all who endeavor to lead others to Christ.

2. He came as a witness to the Light (Jn. 1:7). Fearlessly he faced the Pharisees and Sadducees and demanded genuine inner compunction besides mere external show of penance (Mt. 3:7ff). He openly declared before them all that he was neither the Messiah, nor Elijah nor the Prophet (Jn. 1:20-25). To his own disciples he bore witness that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lamb of God who was to redeem the world (Jn., 1:29). When Jesus began to make more disciples than he himself had, he plainly told his followers that he was only the friend of the bridegroom sent to prepare the wedding for the Bridegroom himself, and now it was time for his influence to wane, and that of the Bridegroom to increase (Jn. 3:29f). He staunchly upheld the moral law



before Herod the Tetrarch even though that brought him imprisonment because of the jealousy of Herodias, and when the whim of that adulterous woman managed to secure his death in a most shameless manner, he gave up his life in witness to the truth (Mt. 13.3-11). No wonder the Early Church gave him such honor! He is a shining example of fortitude in bearing witness to the Light.

3. God has given everyone of his children a task to perform in his kingdom, to build the better world of Christ, and help bring one's fellowmen to the Savior who alone can make happy and fulfilled. In the resurrection each one will receive a new name which will be exclusively his forever (Rev. 2:17). Like John we are expected to strive after solid Christian virtue, with true metanoia or compunction of heart, and not mere external piety. Ours is the noble work to bear witness to Christ in whatever position of life we are placed, willing even to forego honors and privileges rather than compromise in our Christian convictions. Though John seemed to die an ignominious death, apparently brought about by mere chance, God who knows all things rewards each one according to his inner worth. Today, the entire Catholic world celebrates the name of John the Baptist, as the greatest of the prophets, the very forerunner of Christ. Today we experience the joy promised to Zachariah by the angel. God be praised!

## NOTICE ON BOOKS

**Auer, Johann; and Ratzinger, Joseph: Curso de Teología Dogmática.** Tomo VII. Los Sacramentos de la Iglesia. — Versión castellana de Claudio Gancho. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1977 — 452 págs. — Rústica 950 pesetas.

This is the 7th of eight volumes on Dogmatic Theology by two famous authors. Its contents: 1. Baptism and confirmation confer eternal life and mature it. 2. Penance and Holy anointing contribute to the moral cure and restore or increase grace. 3. Matrimony and Holy Orders increase the number of the People of God in the natural and supernatural realms respectively.

The Holy Fathers understood the sacraments as specific and distinct rites; the Middle Ages theologians stressed the common denominator of the general sacramental grace; and the time is up to peculiarize the distinctive grace conferred in every one of the seven sacraments. That this book purports to do.

**Bloom, Anthony: Meditación sobre un Tema.** — Versión castellana de Eloy Requena Calvo. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1977 — 156 págs. — Rústica 240 pesetas.

The author, Anthony Bloom, is the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church since 1966. This book collects many practical meditations on sundry quotations from the New Testament. Its theme is that we must strive to be true disciples of Christ, and the more we strive, the better we show our loyalty to, and express our love and imitation of, our Lord. The fruit of these meditations will be self-forgetfulness and the acquisition of a deep spiritual insight that will make God the light of our actions and the magnet of our hearts.

**Curle, Adam: Conflictividad y Pacificación.** — Versión castellana de Fausto Ezcurra Rolín. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1978 — 348 págs. — Rústica 680 pesetas.

This book is an in-depth study of the requisites for peace, the antonym of which is conflict. When two persons hate each other, they are in conflict. When there is only indifference between persons or nations, there is truce which is only a semblance of peace. When persons or nations are friends, only then is there peace.

This books is an interesting study of 14 test and clinical cases by an expert Harvard prof.

## 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,

**(Sgd.) EFREN RIVERA, O.P.**  
Editor, Good News

Address all communications to:

Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P.  
c/o Fathers' Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
España St., Manila 2806