



BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Bruno Torpigliani, D.D.

PAPAL VISIT AND BEATIFICATION OF LORENZO RUIZ

Catholic Hierarchy

PASTORAL LETTER ON PARENTS' CATECHISM

Miguel Cinches, D.D.

GUIDELINES FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES FOR THE SEMINARY

Federico P. de la Rosa, O.S.A.

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

EDITORIAL

- Regino Cortes, O.P. 210 POST-SYNOD: MANILA

DOCUMENTATION

- Bruno Torpigliani, D.D. 213 THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY
- CBCP Pastoral Letter 220 PAPAL VISIT AND BEATIFICATION OF LORENZO RUIZ
- Miguel Cinches, S.V.D., D.D. 223 PASTORAL LETTER ON PARENTS' CATECHISM
- Committee on the International Mission Congress 228 REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS
- Catholic Lawyers' Guild of the Philippines 234 RESOLUTIONS OF THE 10TH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC JURISTS

FEATURES

- Federico P. de la Rosa, O.S.A. 243 GUIDELINES FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES FOR THE SEMINARY
- H. J. Graf, S.V.D. 249 IN DEFENSE OF THE SUNDAY LITURGY
- Florencio Testera, O.P. 257 MINIMUM AGE AT MARRIAGE

HOMILETICS

- Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D. 266 BIBLICAL NOTES AND HOMILY OUTLINES FOR JUNE AND JULY
-

EDITORIAL

Post-Synod: Manila

On April 3, 1980, Maundy Thursday, His Eminence Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila, promulgated the Acts and Statutes of the 4th Synod of the Archdiocese of Manila celebrated last October 21 to 28, 1979. The legislations contained therein will take effect on May 25, 1980, feast of Pentecost — a very propitious start to a task worthily accomplished.

This was the first Synod held in the Archdiocese after the second Vatican Council, so that, compared with the previous synods, the last one 55 years ago, its concepts and directions are manifestly influenced by Vatican II. The synodal works revolve around the concept of the People of God. The 4 synodal documents bear this out very well. The first document is the **Organization of the Archdiocese**, "that portion of God's people entrusted to a bishop"; this is followed by **The People of God themselves**; then comes **The People of God in their Work and Relationship with One Another**; and **The People of God in their Work and Relationship with the World Today**. Freed all emotions, tensions, sweat and tears which went into the deliberations and formulation of the synodal Acts and Statutes one can now breathe with a sigh of relief that it is all over. But the synod was not a sort of fireworks that once it is all over would leave in its wake charred poles and burnt sticks. What resulted was an edifice with a strong foundation, well balanced parts and functional frameworks.

For sure it could not be said that the synodal documents are all perfect. There will always be room for development and polishing

of policies. At least it could not be said that the synodal proposals were haphazardly done. The statutory part is always backed up by two pillars: the doctrinal orientation and situational analysis. The Statutes did not come out just from the blue, an offshoot of doctrinal theorizing, nor dictated mainly by prevalent situations caring less for doctrine. Both doctrine and situation form the basis for legislation.

The resulting situational analysis of the Manila Archdiocese is not very rosy in many aspects. But such an objective analysis is necessary to bring about the true status, which parts are healthy and which are not, of the biggest Archdiocese in the Philippines. The synod, for instance, acknowledges the fact that "the present structures of the archdiocese lack proper perspective-orientation, and are neither holistic nor integrative." For this reason the section on Statutes for the Organization promulgated the direction and goal of the archdiocese.

Some of the analysis made were not only valid for the Manila situation alone but for the whole Philippines as well. In fact it is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether the documents are dealing with the Philippine situation as a whole or only of the Manila Archdiocese. Some of the data mentioned are indeed helpful to view some aspects of the Philippine Church.

There are a few affirmations in the synod which are worthy of note. One of them is the recognition of small ecclesial communities or "Basic Christian Communities" in the Archdiocese. In spite of difficulties in other parts of the country and successes in others we are told that "some sporadic attempts are presently being made in various parishes of the archdiocese and have generally met with notable success" (p. 19). With proper supervision and strictly complying with the Church guidelines these "Communities *de base*" could be a great instrument for evangelization.

The synod also calls "for more relevant forms of ministry" (p. 32). This does not mean that acceptance is being given to forms of ministry which are strictly secular and profane. As a matter of fact, priests are also warned "against the danger of losing sight of his proper priestly identity" (p. 33). Such profane ministries improper to a priest should be exercised by the laity who "are called

to make the Church present and operative in the places and circumstances where she cannot be salt of the earth except by and through them" (p. 46).

Some minimal data, however, need precision. It is not exact as stated in the situational analysis (p. 57) that some movements like the Cursillo, Focolare, etc. are mandated organizations, neither are the Third Orders of some religious orders. On the other hand the Student Catholic Action (SCA) is notably missing among the mandated organizations. The list understandably, was taken *in toto* without correction from the **Catholic Directory of the Philippines, 1978.**

Those outside the synod might also wonder why there is no mention at all about the sacrament of the **Anointing of the Sick** in the section on "Sacraments in General" (p. 61 ff.). I do not know exactly the reason for this omission, the synodal delegates would know, but I believe certain misconceptions among the faithful concerning this sacrament even, if not most especially, in the Archdiocese of Manila, would warrant a separate study and proper legislation.

This is not, of course, the last of the Manila synods. As the Church of Manila embarks on its mission of evangelization of all levels and sectors in the Archdiocese on this last quarter of the twentieth century, new situations would be forthcoming that would need new and fresh solutions. The People of God of Manila led by their pastor, young and energetic as ever, with the Holy Spirit in our midst will be equal to the task.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

by

Bruno Torpigliani, D.D.

The beginning of 1980, marks the end of a decade which — despite undeniable blessings it has brought us — must be seen as (in many ways) a tragic decade. It suffices merely to mention some names and some events: the terrorism of extremist groups; the dramatic fall of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos into communist hands, and the subsequent sacrificing (we are told) of millions of citizens and the flight of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Indochina; the steady escalation of energy costs and the subsequent economic crises and great hardship it has triggered in most countries, especially among the poor, etc., etc. These and other currents, have had profound effects on every aspect of human life, on religious faith and moral attitudes and practice, on the daily lives of our Christian faithful. Now we have come to the end of this turbulent decade, and ask, perhaps, what awaits us in the eighties which have already begun.

This January meeting opens then on a sober note, which invites us to much prayer and reflection.

We must not pass over, however, those events of this past year which give us ground for gratitude and rejoicing. The significant quadricentennial of the Archdiocese of Manila, with its October Synod which — once its decrees are approved, — will have — we hope — widespread influence throughout the country; The International Congress on Mission, which we trust will bear precious fruit in the years to come, especially in Asia, and (if we may look forward to the near future) the joyously expected beatification of the first Filipino *beatus* — a layman! — and the eagerly awaited visit of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the second papal coming within a decade to our people and our shores.

The topic which I would like to dwell on is the theme of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops in Rome: the Christian family in the contemporary world. It is a theme of primordial moment, and I believe the Synod and its preparatory period asks us to deepen our reflection on Christian Family Life in the Philippines, and invites us to find ways of renewing, strengthening and fostering Christian family life within our dioceses and communities.

In an assembly like ours there is hardly any need to recall the importance of Christian family life, that "first vital cell of human society" (AA, 11). Surely we can say of the Filipino family what the Latin American Bishops — both at Medellin and at Puebla — affirmed: "the central significance of the family is a primordial feature of our culture". None of us needs any convincing on this point.

During his visit to Mexico, Pope John Paul II spoke of the negative effects of underdevelopment on the family, especially among the poor.

Migration to the cities in search of work and education, the mushrooming of urban slums, the increasingly difficult struggle of the poor to sustain themselves and maintain a decent livelihood, state-organized pressures for every means of birth regulation, the creation of marginalized subcultural groupings in urban areas, — all these erode and disintegrate the traditional bonds of cohesion in the family. Thus families are more and more fragmented, and this even during the earliest year of the children, once again especially among the poor.

Among the middle classes, more fortunate in some ways than the economically disadvantaged, these and other divisive forces are operative: diverse living and recreational patterns, the time-demands of the parents' work and social obligations, the cultural ruptures created by new educational systems, languages, by "new" moral standards and hierarchies of value. All these lead to increasing mutual lack of comprehension within the family.

A pervasive materialism, sometimes accompanied by consumerism and by a pleasure-seeking ethos which, in sum, is basically pagan. The highly developed consciousness of modern freedom" in the younger generations, the plurality of values and ideological frameworks, even the diverse styles of "religious culture", the imported "sexual revolution" and its influence on social and sexual (especially pre-marital behaviour, the images of life created by the movies and television, with their easy acceptance of violence, ostentation, infidelity, promiscuous sex, and the like, corrosive influence of pornography (now brought into middle-class homes by the "betamax invasion") — in greater or lesser extent the family crises present in the so-called developed countries are already quite active in the homes of the middle-class and the wealthy among us.

This impressionist sketch and random cataloguing of contemporary currents and trends tell us something of the societal forces which bear on family life and give us much food for thought. We must ask ourselves if we have considered in sufficient dept the real

situation of the Christian family in Philippine society today. Have we inquired, with courageous honesty, what its "state of health" is, communities committed to us by the Lord? Have we, together with Christian parents and youth, discerned how we might face up to these difficulties that confront the Christian home in a society where change will almost certainly be increasingly rapid and wide-ranging?

A few years ago, the Committee on the Family, of the hierarchy of France, after a series of studies and surveys, saw that Christian families in their countries were looking to the Church and their bishops to **provide them with realistic guidance, as families**, through renewed family life education. They asked that the Church make stepped-up efforts to provide married couples and Christian homes with strong and clear Christian teaching regarding marriage and family life. They wanted to catch a **renewed vision of the sacramental dimensions of these great human realities**. "Help us as families to understand the streams of change in society, to read the signs of the times vis-a-vis our homes and families, to know how, within the new shapes of human sociality, how to live out in all authenticity our responsibilities as Christian parents, how to "re-create" our homes so that they are in tune with the times yet wholly Christian, living by evangelical and sacramental ideals."

The same challenge faces every local church, every national and regional hierarchy, every bishop, pastor and Christian educator in the world today. For, as the social⁶ question has now become worldwide (in the words of Pope Paul VI, in **Populorum Progressio**), so the crisis of the family too has become worldwide.

There is truly the need of a renewed Christian vision of marriage and family in contemporary society. There is need of a renewed anthropological and theological perspective, made available to our faithful. There is the need of renewed catechesis on these realities for parents and their children on all levels of society.

Renewed: for the Church cannot entrench herself in a position of rigid conservatism of past norms, forms and policies. The Holy Spirit moves us, not toward a fearful and defensive guarding of all past positions. But neither is a wooly-headed liberalism which agrees to all the new trends an attitude of spirit which precedes from graced prudence. Rather, the Spirit creates in us, if we listen to Him, a true gift of discernment, of judgment, by His light, of the new realities, the new findings of the human sciences, and leads us to the new judgements and decisions we must make.

How important it is, my dear Brothers in the episcopacy, to find ways of communicating to our faithful people the renewed Christian vision of marriage and family. And, increasingly, how little it

is known, while often enough the mass media propagate purely secular views, naturalistic sociological and psychological perspectives, sometimes even blatantly pagan and crassly hedonistic attitudes. **Lumen Gentium** and **Gaudium et Spes**, those two great ecclesiological texts of Vatican II, together with **Apostolicam Actuositatem**, can readily serve us as rich veins of doctrine and pastoral guidance which can be fruitfully mined, for the instruction of our people. How many of our priests know this teaching well enough to explain it in its beauty and all its challenge to their communities? Perhaps only a few among us pastors have undertaken with sufficient zeal this family life education and formation which is so urgent today.

The Church teaches us that marriage is truly a sacrament of human love. She repeats for us that "by the sacrament of matrimony Christ comes into the lives of the Christian spouses. He continues to abide with them, so that by their mutual self-gift, they can love one another with perpetual fidelity, just as He himself has loved the Church and has delivered himself up for her." (Eph. 5, 26; **Gaudium et Spes**, 48).

At the heart of the Church's theology of marriage is this perpetual and redemptive presence of Christ, within the very heart of the "sacramental love" of husband and wife. His presence assumes the love of the two persons into His own love. The miracle of Cana symbolizes this: the change of water into wine. Christ the Lord gives to married love its fidelity and strength, the gentleness, compassion and mercy of his own heart, so that it can become the foundation of a family and the family's "many-sided love" (**Gaudium et Spes**, 48. Christian married love, love within the Christian family, the Council recalls for us, becomes the symbol and presence of the Father's own love for mankind, revealed in Jesus — like the tabernacle lamp which tells us, **Dios esta aqui**, God's love is here in our midst. The "graced-loving" which is the fruit of the sacramental covenant gives us the guarantee of the very possibility of human love transcending the limitations of human selfishness and changeability — by the power of the Spirit.

The Council has called the family "the domestic church", **ecclesia domestica** (**Lumen Gentium**, 11), in parvo, the realization of the mystery of communion and community in Christ: a community of equality and solidarity of persons (LG, 32), of mutual acceptance, trust, forgiveness, of sharing, corresponsibility, communication, dialogue (GS, 92).

As domestic church the family becomes the first and foremost school of Christian faith and prayer, of religious experience and sacramental life. It is the catechetical school par excellence — and

not of teaching only, but of the lived ways of authentic Christian existence. Here the depth, breadth, perseveringness of Christ-like love is imbibed; here simplicity of life, the great and necessary virtue of evangelical poverty of spirit (so much needed in our day as an antidote to consumerism) and the compassionate and open-handed sharing with the less fortunate are learned; here the critical attitudes toward materialism and the evangelical passion for social justice are inculcated from earliest years. The great domestic virtues of thoughtfulness and mutual respect, of collaboration and the subordination of self for a common task, of dedication to duty and to hard persevering work, and the spirit of Christian joy are fostered. Here the life-long love for Christ and his Church is planted and nourished, grows to maturity and fruitfulness in service. Family life is the great apprenticeship for Christian freedom — better perhaps, of christian freedom for responsibility and service. It is the parents who, above all, must teach their children that their truest happiness can be found in bringing happiness to others, so that the evangelical saying, "He who loses His life for my sake shall find it" becomes not a clever paradox, but the Gospel formula for generosity and fulfillment.

But none of these rich and fundamental Christian meanings and values are "automatically" communicated; neither are they communicated primarily by words. In the family they are communicated by deed and example, by a "dialogue of life". Again, we must remind ourselves, it is our duty as pastors to spare no effort to ensure that these meanings and values are kept and fostered within Christian families, through our own personal pastoral concern and by means of an increasingly important family life education.

"It devolves on priests duly trained in family matters to nurture the vocation of spouses by a variety of pastoral means, by preaching God's word, by liturgical worship, and by other spiritual aids to conjugal and family life, to sustain them sympathetically and patiently in difficulties, and to make them courageous through love, so that families which are truly noble will be formed (GS, 52).

It is not for me, surely, to develop in detail what a relevant and adequate family life formation should consist in. It is study and research done in your own dioceses, it is the pastoral experience of your priests, it is the contribution of lay leaders, parents, teachers, — all these gathered through your own initiative and your own deep pastoral interest, which will suggest what should be your preferred approaches to this indispensable pastoral work. There is need for all of these elements, applied within the context of your com-

munities, if you will develop the reflection, policies and programs called for by the Church's response to the "crisis of the family" today.

Just a few proposals may be allowed, before we end. We might note that the apostolate to the Christian family must be an apostolate of the entire Christian family, indeed of the entire Christian community. This apostolate will be an apostolate of evangelization and education, of Christian **formation**. Its concern is not directed to social and material services, but to the development of Christian persons and communities—to the development of the Christian family in the fulness of "graced living". At the least some of our priests, with special gifts and qualifications appropriate for this work, should be prepared for it, in our dioceses.

We can suggest also that in our country, of which so large a part of the population are economically less fortunate, our family life apostolate must give preferential (though not exclusive) attention to the poor. It should strive to develop leadership among the unlettered, the truly "simple faithful" who yet have great potential for understanding the religious significance of the marriage-covenant and even to transmit it to other believing, hoping and loving Christians like themselves. We will remember that Saint Paul addressed his sublime reflections on marriage to "simple folk" among the early Christians, humble people, working people not unlike our own. Our late Pope Paul VI, in *Evangelii nuntiandi* — not without the prophetic insight of a genuine pastor — saw the importance of the community and "grassroots" dimension of evangelization and Christian formation.

Before leaving this topic I would also like to mention to Your Excellencies/Eminences, the attentive study of the "Declaration of the Rights of the Family" which was ringingly endorsed by the International Conference of Catholic Jurists held in Manila during the Christmas week of last year. I believe that the document will repay your consideration, and it will perhaps be useful for "conscientization" of various sectors in your communities — teachers, lawyers, government officials and older students.

Your Excellencies/Your Eminences, I have touched on just a few things regarding the situation of the Christian family in our present-day world. I realize, as we come to the end of these reflections, that I have only skimmed the surface of so many issues of importance. No matter, in these months which precede the Synod on the family I am sure that these — and other related points — will serve as paths for your pastoral reflection with your priests and other ecclesial collaborators. I am certain that the Church in the Philippines,

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY 219

which has so rich an experience of family life to draw from, will have much to contribute to the forthcoming Synod. May your insights and the lessons you yourselves have learned from your pastoral concern for the family serve as a source of light and inspiration for the entire Church.

Let me end with a wish and a prayer for the year which is still new. We await, as we noted earlier, the longed-for visit of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, to proclaim the layman-martyr, Lorenzo Ruiz, as the first native-born Filipino *beatus*. We are sure that this papal coming will renew the deep affection and loyalty which the Filipino people bear toward the person of him whom St. Catherine of Siena called "the sweet Christ on the earth." We are sure the response of our people will gladden the heart of the Holy Father.

May I urge that we take pains to "educate" our communities to prepare for the event *spiritually*, to explain the meaning of our loyalty to the Roman Pontiff — how, in these difficult times for the Christian faith, this solidarity with Peter is a source of strength and confidence — *portae inferi non praevallebunt*. Let this period of expectation also be a period of prayer for the strengthening and deepening of the Faith. The eighties open somewhat uncertainty, even ominously. We move, not onto broad sunlit uplands, but onto shadowed territory amid much turbulence. The coming decade will call for great fortitude, faith and confidence in the Lord. Let us pray to the Lord of History, whose providence presides over the destinies of men and nations, and His blessed Mother, Mother of the Church, to accompany our people throughout this new decade, to make of them more truly His people — a people which, as the well-known hymn says, "places its heart at His feet, in dedication, in loving service, in noble and unwavering faith."

Thank you, and good day.

Address of the Apostolic Nuncio
during the annual meeting of the
Catholic Bishops Conference of the
Philippines, Baguio City
26 January 1980

CBCP PASTORAL LETTER

PAPAL VISIT AND BEATIFICATION OF LORENZO RUIZ

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Pope John Paul II is coming to the Philippines. And we, your Bishops, wish to share with you our great joy and gratitude.

We recall with fondness and thanksgiving the visit of His Holiness, the late Pope Paul VI, in the course of his historic pilgrimage to the Far East and Oceania. His presence, his character, brought to our lives a message of peace and love, of renewal and salvation.

Soon, the present Vicar of Christ, Pope John Paul II, will walk among us. A second papal visit in so short a time is a privilege and honor few countries have had. We should appreciate this gift with a total readiness to open our hearts to his person, receive his words with reverence, and give practical response to his teachings.

His Holiness will come as a pastor to feed the Lord's flock, to evangelize the poor, and to strengthen the brethren in the faith. This he has been doing in a very human heartwarming manner, and this, we are certain, he will do when he is in our midst.

In Mexico and Poland, in Ireland and the United States, in Turkey and at the United Nations, he showed deep concern for all men, and a real understanding of the crucial problems of mankind. He is totally committed to working for world peace, for a just social order, for the upliftment of the underprivileged. He is working tirelessly for human rights and dignity, for a renewal of the Church through greater loyalty to truth and the love of God, and for a fraternal dialogue with peoples of various religious convictions. When he reaches our shores, we can expect the same pastoral concern for each one of us.

The highlight of the Holy Father's visit will be the beatification of a group of martyrs, one of whom is a Filipino, the Venerable Lorenzo Ruiz. Their martyrdom took place in Nagasaki, Japan, more

than three centuries ago. By proclaiming them Blessed, the Church wishes to emphasize and recognize anew the shining example of some of her members.

The forthcoming beatification will be the first to be held outside of Rome. This unprecedented event will focus the eyes of the world on our country, our people, and our way of life. The occasion, therefore, calls for soul-searching and self-examination.

The martyrdom happened more than three hundred years ago, but the event is nonetheless not without modern meaning. The persecution suffered by Christianity in various parts of the world, still speaks of a Church of silence, a Church of heroes, and a Church of weakings, a Church in hiding, and a Church of fraternal charity.

The candidates for the honors of the altars came from a variety of nationalities and professions, rendering their beatification ecclesial and universal. The group includes ten Japanese, four Spaniards, one Filipino, one Italian, and one Frenchman. Nine of them were Dominican priests, two Dominican laybrothers, two Dominican Sisters, and four laymen, among whom was Lorenzo Ruiz, a family man with three children.

Unknown until recently, Lorenzo is nevertheless a true hero of God and of the Philippines. His humble origin, his ordinary kind of life, his simple faith and his strong convictions make him easily identifiable with the rest of us Filipinos.

Born in Binondo, Manila, around 1600, an adverse fate made him leave his country with a group of missionaries headed for Japan, a mysterious land where they knew missionaries were not welcomed.

Imprisoned upon landing in the island of Okinawa, he was taken to Nagasaki on September 21, 1637 to stand trial for his life before a Japanese tribunal. But the threat of death did not make him flinch. When asked to confess his beliefs, Lorenzo declared: **"I am a Christian, and this I profess until the hour of my death; and for God I shall give my life; and although I did not come to Japan to be a martyr, however, as a Christian and for God I shall give my life."** Asked to deny his God, he answered without hesitation: **"That I will never do because I am a Christian and I shall die for God, and for Him I shall give many thousands of lives if I had them. And so do with me as you please."**

For being steadfast in his faith he underwent unspeakable tortures. First: spikes were driven under his fingernails; then gallons of water were forced to his stomach; finally, he was hanged up-

side down with his head in a pit. He remained in this position until he died three days later. This was on September 29, 1637. To frustrate the other Christians in the effort to recover the body and give it a decent burial, the executioners cremated the body and threw the ashes into the sea.

Because one of our countrymen suffered and died for the Christian faith, the Holy Father has seen fit to recognize this by coming to visit us. We should welcome him, not just with our traditional Filipino hospitality, but with hearts and souls open to the message of his spirit. Let us then prepare ourselves spiritually so that the coming visit will project not just the social dimension, but the larger aspect of renewal and reconciliation. Let us show our loyalty to the Holy Father by abiding with his teachings and by sharing his love for all mankind.

Finally, let us learn this lesson from the martyrdom of Lorenzo Ruiz: that while we need courage to die for our faith, we also must have the courage to live it from day to day, to keep it strong and unshakable in the face of the blandishment of a materialistic and secular world.

Let this visit not be a fleeting moment of religious fervor but an occasion for reflection. Let us rekindle in our hearts the missionary call that is ours, and resolve to build structures of love, justice, peace and understanding among men.

For the Catholic Bishops Conference
of the Philippines:

JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN
President

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes
February 11, 1980

PASTORAL LETTER

ON PARENTS' CATECHISM

by

Bishop Miguel C. Cinches, S.V.D.

To All Beloved Parents, Diocese of Surigao!

Greetings and Peace in the Lord!

On this Happy Feast of the Holy Family let me convey to you a matter of utmost importance and concern in our Diocese: the religious education of our children; and by children I mean not only our teenage youth, but also (and more especially) our children of pre-school age.

Allow me to state the problem in brief questions. Who will teach our children the life our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to live? Who will teach them the truths of our faith? Who will teach them prayer and the way of eternal salvation? In brief, who will teach them Catechism?

The fast and traditional answer to all these is the Church. But who is the Church? The Church is the Christian community! We are the Church.

Last October 16, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, wrote a Pastoral letter to all the Bishops, priests, and faithful of the entire Catholic Church on this important concern of teaching Catechism to children. In this letter he discusses among many others the various ways and methods of imparting Catechism especially to children; in the parishes, in the school, and in the families.

In this letter he singles out the family as having a special character in the task of catechizing children. He calls the family "the irreplaceable" agent of teaching children the truths of our faith and of Christian living. He writes: "The family's Catechetical activity has a special character, which is in a sense irreplaceable. This special character has been rightly stressed by the Church particularly by the Second Vatican Council. Education in the faith by parents, which should begin from the children's tenderest age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to

grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words but which perseveres throughout a day-to-day life lived in accordance with the Gospel." In concluding this section on family catechetical apostolate the Holy Father writes: "There cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for the ministry of being **their own children's catechists** and to carry it out with tireless zeal."

Notice the special obligation of teaching imposed on parents.

Following the lead of our Holy Father, I would like to address my appeal in this letter to you our Catholic parents. To you I would like to address a solemn reminder of the truth which has always been taught in our Church; that in the important matter of the faith, you parents, are the first teachers of your children. And being the first catechists of your children, you are the ones entrusted by the Lord with the gravest obligation. And a happy but perhaps onerous discovery for you: You are the most effective teachers of your children. And for no other reason than that you are parents, i.e. the givers of their lives.

1) **Parents are the first catechists of their Children.** It has always been a constant teaching of the Church that you parents are the first ones obligated by divine law to teach and train your children in the way of Christian living. This is evidenced by the very natural fact that they are with you in the tenderest and most pliant age of their lives. Thus no priest, or sister, or catechist (however high or professional their training may be) can take your place or equal you in teaching your children in the faith. Why? Because no one in this whole wide world is more loved and trusted by your children than you. For your child there cannot be another Nanay or Tatay. For this, the Holy Father calls your role as parent-catechists irreplaceable. The most that priests, sisters, and catechists can do is supplement what you give your children at home. Our Holy Father writes, "Family Catechesis **precedes, accompanies and enriches** all other forms of Catechesis."

2) **Parents, the most effective teachers of their children.** It is a common consensus among educators and psychologists that the most receptive and effective age for education is between the year 3 - 7. As they say the child's mind at this stage receives impressions like wax and retains them like marble. The child's mind at this age is most receptive either to good or evil. In brief, it is the best time for laying the foundations of a man's life. And it is precisely the time when the child is with you, day and night, hour after hour, and drinks that knowledge from you in much the same way as he draws his nourishment from you. At this age, the parents,

and especially the mother, set up values and attitudes and patterns which will last and in whose light all later experiences in adult life will be interpreted and evaluated. Thus it is not just mere jargon to say that the best training of a child is at the "university of mother's knee". It is not merely poetry this saying so often quoted which says: "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

Thus if you fail to do your duty at this early age, big damage will be done to your child's personality, a damage which the Church or school will find very difficult to repair later.

Because of all this, I will state again that you dear parents, are entrusted by God with this gravest obligation. When a child is born to you, God addresses you these words: "Take this child and nurse him for me." (Exod., 2, 9) You are the stewards and guardians of your children. You are not free to do with them whatever you like. A strict accounting will be demanded of you on judgement day.

Thus, my dear parents, with regards to your grave duty of Catechizing your children, I would like to exhort you in the Lord: Do away with that attitude which lightly dismiss this obligation by saying "Ah that's not for me. The priests and sisters will take care of that. That's their duty anyway. And also the schools. What do we have schools, even Catholic schools for?" This is a wrong attitude. Even if we have a whole army of priests and sisters, even if all our schools were Catholic Schools to which you can send all your children, still this will not free you from this grave obligation of teaching. For, to repeat, all the other agencies, no matter how efficient and sufficient, can only supplement what you give in the classrooms of your living rooms in your homes.

If you are gravely obligated by the Lord to give your children ample nourishment, clothing and shelter, how much more are you obligated to give your children adequate spiritual nourishment. If no parent, in his right senses, can say he is freed from the obligation of feeding his offsprings, there should be no parent who can say he is exonerated from giving spiritual nourishment to the same. As the soul is above the body, so much higher is your spiritual obligation towards your children.

Now I am saying all this to instill in you the conviction: that you are the first and the most effective teachers (catechists) of

your children in the faith. You will perform this duty, I believe, if this conviction is deeply rooted in your soul. Realize this therefore, and act according to this conviction: Be your own children's catechists.

Take on, therefore, the obligation to prepare your children for First Holy Communion. Prepare them even long before they receive this most Blessed Sacrament and follow them up likewise after. Both of you, together with your children, in the quiet of your homes, read Holy Scriptures during quiet evenings, explain and discuss with them the meaning of the sacraments, the significance of the great liturgical feasts and seasons e.g. Christmas, Lent, Pentecost, etc. Above all pray regularly and perseveringly together as one family around the family altar. And remember this task is not for a month or a year but will last until your children can stand on their own in adult life.

The Church will help in facilitating this task for you, but let her be only your helper. Aids like pamphlets and booklets will be made available to you. These will help you on such vital needs like **What** and **How** to teach. Seminars of small groups will be conducted to help you understand and use these aids. I strongly suggest that you allot the necessary time for this. It would be tragic if you have all the time to attend to the farm, go to the office or to fish, etc., but no time to prepare yourselves to fulfill one of your gravest and noblest duties towards your children. Attend therefore these seminars. Church helpers cannot do much without your hearty participation.

Many of you today are painfully aware of the breakdown of your families, e.g. that your children do not obey you anymore, that they consort with the devil of drinking and gambling together with their barkada. Don't you think that these children of yours precisely seek the unhealthy companionship of their barkada, because earlier they never experienced the healthy companionship at home, particularly with their parents? Do not the youth also complain against you saying that you have even no time to talk to them? Is this not also painfully true?

I believe you can solve this by establishing intimate and loving relations with them right at their tenderest age. One of the best ways of doing this is by being their teachers and guides at an age when the devil of vice and barkada-system has not yet crept in. As you teach them, listen also to them, for being

listened to contributes very much to their self-esteem and confidence which lead to maturity. Above all teach Christ, His way, and His truth. Do this by word of mouth but most effectively through your own good example, the witness of your authentic Christian life. The Holy Father calls this a teaching without words, without which teaching thru words would be empty and futile.

Conclusion: By doing so, joy and love in the home will be your great reward. For what better achievement can you as parents strive after than a happy christian family where peace and love abide, where all the members live after the likeness of the Holy Family. This will be your shining crown now and in heaven with our Father where all the members will regroup again around Him in the great and final homecoming.

Then the promise of Scriptures will be fulfilled in you. "They that instruct many unto justice shall shine as the stars for all eternity." (Dan. 12, 3)

God bless you and all your beloved children at home. May the Spirit of the Lord guide you and give you the grace and strength to fulfill this your noble task.

✠ MIGUEL C. CINCHES, S.V.D.
Bishop of Surigao

Given at the Diocesan Chancery, Surigao City December 30,
Feast of the Holy Family in the year of our Lord, 1979

REPORT

ON

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS

(December 2-7, 1979)*

The International Mission Congress, held in Manila, attracted six cardinals, headed by Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, Prefect of the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Evangelization, and 200 delegates and observers from all parts of the world. It began Sunday, December 2, in the morning at the Manila Metropolitan Cathedral with Cardinal Rossi as main celebrant and Bishop Mariano G. Gaviola, Secretary-General of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) as preacher, and ended Friday, December 7, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the Redemptorist Church at Baclaran, Parañaque, Metro Manila. The International Mission Congress was the first to be held in Asia. It came at a time when the center of gravity is slowly shifting to the Third World" (Bishop Patrick D'Souza of Varanasi, India).

1. Celebration

Official delegates to the Congress were National Directors of Pontifical Mission Aid Societies of various countries, Chairmen of the Episcopal Commission on Missions for various episcopal conferences and Presidents and secretaries-general of episcopal conferences affiliated with the FABC. They were joined by other Philippine Bishops and theologians who served as resource persons.

The purpose of this Congress as spelled out by Bishop Gaudencio Rosales was:

- to discuss contemporary orientations in the Church's "Theology of Mission" with the hope of clarifying and deepening the theological foundation of the work of the Pontifical Mission Societies; or, as Fr. C. G. Arévalo stated, "put into a synthetic vision what 'new' thinking on mission has been done in the past 15 years;"
- to renew the motivation for the Church's primary task which is evangelization;
- to lay down renewed guidelines for policies and planning for the immediate future of the Church's missionary effort.

*This report was submitted to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines by the Committee on the IMC.

In the afternoon of the first day the Congress started work with the keynote address of Bishop Patrick D'Souza.

Every evening at the close of the day's activities a liturgical celebration was held at the St. Vincent de Paul Church in San Marcelino across the Congress site (Adamson University and St. Theresa's College). Perhaps these celebrations were the real highlights of the Congress together with the celebration at the Cathedral and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Baclaran. The Mass for China, the "Indian mode" Mass — the most colorful of the major celebrations —, for the Mass for the Peoples of Asia, the Mass with our Lady of Antipolo, and the final Misa ng Bayan Pilipino were particularly meaningful.

After the masses, public conferences were held at the St. Theresa's auditorium, Bishop Patrick D'Souza spoke on "Important Tasks of Evangelization Today," Stephen Cardinal Kim of Seoul, Korea spoke on "Jesus' Evangelization to the Poor," Vicente Cardinal Enrique y Tarancon spoke (in Spanish) on "The Holy Spirit and Mission."

The main officers of the Congress, outside Cardinal Rossi were Bishop Gaudencio B. Rosales as convenor and director, and Fr. C. G. Arevalo, S. J., in charge of the Theological Conference. The work of Sister Thelma Peña, D.C., Msgr. Ted J. Buhain Msgr. Francisco Tantoco and Sister Constancio Pacis, C.F.I.C., was invaluable.

The core of the Congress — the theological conference — was a series of general sessions, including a "round table discussion," and nine different workshops organized around the Congress theme, "The Good News of God's Kingdom to the Peoples of Asia."

The nine workshops during the four-day Congress were: 1) the theology of mission, especially for Asia; 2) local churches, cultures and communities; 3) inter-religious dialogue and collaboration; 4) Mission and the task of human development, liberation, and the promotion of justice; 5) basic Christian Communities and local ministries; 6) prayer, missionary spirituality and formation; 7) co-responsible evangelization; 8) mission and education (formal and non-formal); 9) media and evangelization.

2. Key Ideas

A decisive turning point in the mission history of the Third World has been reached, declared the delegates. "There is no return to the past, neither to past mission theories, nor to past mission methods, nor to past mission goals."

"It is our belief, confirmed by the exchanges of this Congress," they declared, "that with God's grace this re-evangelization and renewal of our local churches is a promise and earnest of a new age of mission. Through it the Holy Spirit, we are convinced, is readying them for a true renewal of mission in Asia and throughout the world."

Mission, the delegates pointed out, no longer refers to foreign missionaries and funding alone, but to the responsibility of every Catholic to be a credible witness to the faith in all aspects of his or her life.

"Mission," Congress delegates emphasized, is no longer, can no longer be, a one-way movement from the "older Churches" to the "younger Churches," from the Churches of the old Christendom to the Churches in the colonial lands. Every local Church is a missionary Church, responsible for its mission and co-responsible for the mission of all its sister Churches. "Every local Church, according to its possibilities, must share whatever its gifts are, for the needs of the other Churches for mission throughout mankind, for the life of the world."

Henceforth every local Church is missionary, and the flow of "mission" is no longer from Europe and North America to the "missions," mainly from the local (young) Churches to their own surroundings. The flow of personnel, ideas, theology (e.g., the theology of liberation), liturgical initiatives, is two-way: the coming-to-be of a truly World Church. (Incidentally, this same theme was developed by noted theologian Karl Rahner, S.J., in a public address earlier this year, namely that with Vatican II the Church was henceforth to become **THE WORLD CHURCH**. This may prove the most significant moment in Church history since the transition to Greco-Western culture, the transition to actualization of a truly World Church, with its diversity of cultures and peoples). One of the theologians present (from abroad) remarked at the end of the Congress: Henceforth the diversity of cultures in the Church is an accepted programme; no one can deny that **the** task of mission now is inculturation. The unanimity on this is evident and inescapable.

Moreover, the Mission Congress affirmed, "The Spirit of the Lord calls each people and each culture to its own fresh and creative response to the Gospel. Each local Church has its own vocation in the one history of salvation, in the one Church of Christ. In each local Church each people's history, each people's culture, meanings and values, each people's traditions are taken up, not diminished nor destroyed, but celebrated and renewed, purified if need be, and fulfilled in the life of the Spirit."

Two dimensions of Asian life heavily influenced the thinking of the delegates: the degrading poverty and oppression that dominate the lives of most Asians, and the fact that Catholics constitute only one percent of the total population. Such a minority position, unique throughout the world, inspires a deep humility.

The assembly of representative Catholic clergy, religious and laity involved in mission work/aid from some 40 countries and every continent, recounted the various tasks of re-evangelization and renewal which the future demands:

- the continued building up of the local Church as the focus of evangelization with dialogue as the essential mode, through a more resolute, more creative and yet truly discerning and responsible inculturation;
- inter-religious dialogue undertaken in all seriousness;
- solidarity and sharing with the poor and the advocacy of human rights;
- the creation of "grassroots ecclesial communities" with structures of genuine co-responsibility and ministries of charism and service;
- the fostering and evangelizing education in schools and by non-formal education modes, and through an adequate media-ministry.

From the evaluation sheets that were handed in by the participants in the Congress the IMC seems to have met and even surpassed the expectations. In his concluding message, the Papal Envoy Agnelo Cardinal Rossi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples expressed himself in the following terms: "This Congress has been a proof of unity, Christian fraternity and loving fidelity to the Church. And through it a most important step in the history of civilization has undoubtedly been taken here in Manila. Just as in the case of Latin America, so also Asia is emerging in the Catholic Church as an active missionary force."

One of the most salient features of the Congress was the collaboration of some religious orders and congregations of men and women, and at least 3 secular institutes. It was really a joint effort of many different groups and people.

There was another less known aspect of the Congress; between 20 to 70 parishioners and students kept vigil before the Blessed Sacrament at Adamson University chapel all during the working hours of the Congress, and contemplative communities of men and women throughout Asia kept 24 hour prayer-vigils from the beginning to the end of the Congress.

At present there are some 535 Filipina Sisters working as missionaries in various countries and 133 Filipino priests. By the end of 1980, nearly 800 Filipino missionaries will be at their posts, scattered throughout the world.

3. The Closing

The Congress ended on December 7 with the "Mission-mandate" given to 63 Filipino priests, sisters and laypeople "going on mission" abroad in 1980. They came from 12 congregations of women, (39 sisters) 5 congregations of men (17 priests and 4 brothers) and 3 laypersons.

The mission-sending ceremony took place during the "Misa ng Bayang Pilipino" celebrated at 10 a.m. at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Baclaran. The main celebrant was Jaime L. Cardinal Sin. The new missionaries were given their mission cross symbolizing the beginning of their work, the start of their task to bring the Good News of the Kingdom to the peoples of the whole world. "Go therefore," they were told, "proclaim the good News, make disciples of all nations."

At present there are some 535 Filipina Sisters working as missionaries in various countries and 133 Filipino priests. By the end of 1980, nearly 800 Filipino missionaries will be at their posts, scattered throughout the world.

4. Excerpts from the Final Message

We have presented above a summary of the main ideas developed during the Congress. It seems worthwhile to copy here some paragraphs from the Congress' Message itself.

"It is with immense joy and hope, despite what seems like the gathering darkness of our time, that we foresee the dawning of this "new age of mission." We do this, not in any spirit of triumphalism or vain glory. Rather we believe in the perennial youthfulness the Spirit gives to the Church. For by His action and charisms He constantly quickens God's holy people to new life and new initiatives. Our task is to follow where He leads us, to discern His guidance amidst the many movements of our age, and to second it with all the courage and fidelity at our command.

This task of renewal of our local churches in the Gospel and by the power of the Spirit, we must admit, still has a long way to traverse. The discussions of this Congress have made us see with even greater evidence how much remains to be done in all the crucial areas of evangelization we tried to take up in our reflection. In our consensus papers we have developed this agenda more fully.

It suffices for the present to indicate here the continued building up of the local church as the focus of the task of evangelization today, with dialogue as its essential mode, through a more resolute, more creative and yet truly discerning and responsible inculturation; through inter-religious dialogue undertaken in all seriousness; through solidarity and sharing with the poor and the advocacy of human rights; through the creation of "grassroots ecclesial communities" with structures of genuine corresponsibility and ministries of charism and service; through the fostering of evangelizing education in schools and by non-formal education modes, and through and adequate media-ministry.

A more thorough-going renewal is called for catechesis, in the knowledge and study of the Scriptures, in our methods of formation for ministries, in the fostering of family life within contemporary society, in forms and processes of our institutional structures, in the life-style of our clergy and other leaders, in the hierarchy of values we set for ourselves and our communities, and the like.

This congress has reawakened our awareness of what mission today and in the future, especially in Asia, demands of us. It has shown us more clearly what ongoing efforts and labors it will ask of us for many years to come. For we have reached a decisive turning point in the mission history of the Third World. There is no return to the past, neither to the mission theories, nor to past mission methods, nor to past mission goals.

We commit ourselves to these tasks of re-evangelization and renewal, and to the new tasks of mission which the future demands of us, with a resoluteness born of our confidence in the promise of Jesus who told us that He would be with us all days until the end of time . . .

We close this Congress, which has been for all of us a source of joy and grace, on the eve of the Feast of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception, patroness of this archdiocese and patroness of this entire land. We recall with gratitude the role She played in the evangelization of this Christian people, and in faith and devotion that is theirs today: in almost every home her image is found, in almost every corner of this nation her shrines are placed. We turn to her during this Advent season, asking her to pray that the Good News her Son brought to the world may reach more and more hearts, and that the fulfillment of His prayer that all men may be one might be more fully realized in our time."

10th CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC JURISTS

(Organized by the Catholic Lawyers Guild of the Philippines)

December 23-29, 1979

Manila, Philippines

RESOLUTIONS

*APPROVED AT THE CLOSING PLENARY SESSION
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
MANILA, PHILIPPINES*

*ON DECEMBER 29, 1979 FROM 3:30—6:30 P.M.
(In the numerical order approved)*

I

A DECLARATION OF FAMILY RIGHTS

DEEPLY concerned with the need for strengthening Family Life and in response to the United Nations Declaration of 1979 as the "International Year of the Child" and with the forthcoming Synod of Bishops in Rome, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists adopts the following Declaration of Family Rights, with the hope that the same be universally adopted by the Organization of the United Nations:

DECLARATION OF FAMILY RIGHTS

CONSIDERING that the Family is the most basic unit of society which provides a setting wherein members can survive, grow and develop fully as human persons;

CONSIDERING that contemporary concerned institutions have emphatically regarded TOTAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT as the new expression of the social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual rights inherent in the Family;

CONSIDERING that the United Nations and its specialized Agencies have published resolutions, declarations and recommendations concerning the rights of women and children, all of which reinforce the importance of family life;

MOREOVER

CONVINCED that pernicious influences continue to undermine the family as an institution resulting in an alarming increase in family breakdown, unwanted and rejected children, and deteriorating behavioral and sexual mores;

CONVINCED that many of the problems facing the Family today stem from the consumerist, competitive and materialistic forces in society;

CONVINCED that society imperils its own future when it overlooks the importance of the family which provides its members a sense of absolute belonging and a place where they can experience what it means to be fully human;

CONVINCED that the integrity of society rests upon the integrity of family life;

WE DO SOLEMNLY PROCLAIM THIS DECLARATION:

The Family exists within economic, socio-cultural, political, and religious structures. Therefore, government, churches, schools, business and industry, labor, mass media, and all other sectors of society shall strive to ensure, preserve and promote the following Family Rights:

1. The right to live in freedom and dignity and experience its worth as a human institution.
2. The right to access to all basic institutions which respect the fundamental rights of individuals and groups, enhance the common good, promote social justice and participation in the decision-making process.
3. The right to opportunities and facilities for physical, spiritual, social and cultural development.
4. The right to security and inviolable privacy of their homes.
5. The right to a more equitable distribution of the wealth and resources of the nation.

6. The right to wages and welfare benefits that take into account the basic needs of the Family.
7. The right to working conditions and terms of employment continually upgraded so that the workers shall enjoy;
 - a. job security;
 - b. safe and healthful work environment;
 - c. termination and retirement benefits;
 - d. adequate death and disability compensation; and
 - e. opportunities for growth and development.
8. The right to:
 - a. basic functional literacy and vocational efficiency;
 - b. continuing education, including adult literacy programs; and
 - c. workers' education.
9. The right to attend educational institutions of their choice, including universities, vocational, technical and professional schools.
10. The right to educational information which helps to ensure the health and well-being of the Family.
11. The right to adequate housing, health care and social services.
12. The right to:
 - a. adequate preparation for marriage and family life; and
 - b. assistance, guidance and counselling for responsible parenthood in accordance with the religious beliefs and convictions of the Family.
13. The right to be informed by mass media according to the norms of truth, morality, justice, and desirable family values.
14. The right to be protected from undue manipulation so that the Family may be left free to pursue truth according to its own levels of understanding and awareness.
15. The right to legislation and other measures to protect minors from the corrupting influences of drugs, liquors, pornographic materials, immoral recreation and entertainment, violence and other moral depravities.

16. The right to be protected from legislation prejudicial to its moral, psychological, religious and political welfare.
17. The right to wholesome and constructive recreation and entertainment, especially those which contribute to the development of values conducive to the strengthening of the Family.
18. The right to the formation of public opinion and direction of national aspirations towards the promotion of family rights.

These family rights shall be exercised and enforced without distinction as to color, race, creed, political beliefs, social and financial status.

II

ON DIVORCE

CONSIDERING that absolute Divorce is, of itself, an evil for society as disruptive of the family institution, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves that in those jurisdictions with existing divorce laws, all Catholics act consistently with the exigencies of the Catholic Faith.

III

ON THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERING that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides, *inter alia*, that "childhood is entitled to special care and assistance," and considering further that "the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, of itself, has no force of law," the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists calls upon national governments that, pursuant to said Declaration, they implement the ten general principles therein contained by means of adequate municipal legislation.

IV

ON REFUGEE ASYLUM AND PROTECTION

CONSIDERING the refugee situation worldwide, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves and appeals to all Governments:

- a) To adhere to the principle of non-refoulement;
- b) To grant asylum to refugees arriving at their borders or shores;
- c) To give legal protection to refugees who have been granted asylum;
- d) To ensure that refugees benefit from basic human rights taking into account the customs and habits of the refugee population; and
- e) To ensure that refugees benefit from decent material living conditions in the centers where they are accommodated.

V

ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN IN HIS ENTIRETY

CONSIDERING that the Gospel and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights contain those human rights that are, in the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, in his Message to this Congress, in keeping with the substance of "the dignity of the human being, understood in his entirety, not as reduced to one dimension only", the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves that every effort be exerted by peoples and governments to create a continuous awareness of the dignity of man and that measures be adopted to guarantee and promote them anywhere, anytime.

VI

ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

CONSIDERING the primary importance of "The Dignity of Man" which is the theme of the Congress and of "Human Rights" which is the primary subject therein, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists strongly stresses the need for all efforts to promote the dignity of man and to protect and maintain his human rights, and strongly deplore any violation or diminution of the same.

VII

ON THE NEED TO HELP THE THIRD WORLD

CONSIDERING the justified demands of the Third World and the general needs of mankind, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves to reiterate that, as the Vatican Council II proclaims, "the advanced nations have a very heavy obligation to help the developing peoples in their desire to seek complete human fulfillment of their citizens as the explicit and fixed goal of progress."

VIII

ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

CONSIDERING the laudable repeated efforts to establish universally Inter-country Adoption, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves that definite steps be taken by all the States to bring to realization a United Nations Convention on Adoption and Foster Placement allowing for inter-country adoptions to be signed and ratified by all nations.

IX

ON FOREIGN ADOPTION DECREES

RECOGNIZING that the best interests of the child are paramount to the well-being of human society; and further RECOGNIZING the need of the child to permanence and stability in the family relationship; the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves that foreign adoption decrees be granted final effect in any State, unless to do so would be manifestly contrary to justice for the child, and would clearly result in immediate or irreparable harm to the child.

X

AGAINST VIOLENCE

CONSIDERING the utter prevalence of violence the world over, and deploring the attack they entail upon the dignity of man, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves

to condemn such violent overt acts and endorses, as well as fully adheres to, the recent censure on the subject aired by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, calling on all peoples and all nations to the ways of law and brotherly reconciliation.

XI

ON DIPLOMATIC INVIOABILITY

CONSIDERING recent events in various parts of the world violating the universally accepted principle of diplomatic immunity, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists condemns any attack against the inviolability of diplomatic premises and diplomatic personnel as against International Law and morality.

XII

AGAINST TAKING OF POLITICAL HOSTAGES

CONSIDERING recent events transpiring in some parts of the world wherein hostages are arbitrarily taken and forcibly held against their will for political reasons, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists reiterates that this is a gross violation of human rights and a serious harm to the dignity of man.

XIII

ON AVOIDING VIOLENCE

CONSIDERING how fundamental are human rights to the dignity of man and how disruptive thereof are acts of violence, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves to appeal to all leaders of governments and nations not to give cause or condone conditions which give excuse for violence.

XIV

AGAINST FEMALE CHILD CASTRATION

CONSIDERING that mankind owes the child the best it has to give and that children are the supreme gifts of marriage, and considering further that there exists now in many places of the world the

inhuman and barbarous practice of castrating young female children to deprive them entirely of the right to love and the opportunity to procreate, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves to condemn and denounce these cruel and inhuman practices.

XV

ON ALLEGIANCE TO THE CHURCH

CONSIDERING that the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists has convened giving testimony of its Catholic Faith in the field of law, the said Congress resolves to affirm faithful adherence and allegiance to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, as well as the teaching authority (Magisterium) of the Church.

XVI

AGAINST CONTRACEPTION

CONSIDERING the evil and disruptive effects of contraceptives and other anti-natalist instruments not only to the unborn child but also the family and the state and the inherent right to life, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves to condemn all contraceptives and anti-natalist legislation and/or government policies and plans of the same nature as a violation of the inalienable right to life.

XVII

AGAINST CHILD DISCRIMINATION

CONSIDERING the supreme importance of the welfare of children for the well-being of the entire world community, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists deplors all forms of discrimination against children on account of race, color sex, language, religion, or political status.

XVIII

ON LEGAL AID

CONSIDERING the dignity of man, made to the image and likeness of God, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists resolves that Catholic Jurists throughout the world be urged to extend to the needy, specially to indigent accused,

detainees or prisoners, not only free legal aid but also and more important, the knowledge of our religion to those belonging to the Catholic Faith, so that its transforming truths may be operative in their lives.

XIX

ON PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE

CONSIDERING the Opening Address of His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal L. Sin to the Congress, and in order to promote, secure and safeguard the Dignity of Man, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists enjoins all governments to guarantee the right of their respective peoples to a free and genuine participation in the shaping of their political life and administration of government, because the political is the context in which man lives, chooses, acts and moves towards God.

XX

GRATITUDE TO HOST ORGANIZATION

CONSIDERING the varied and highly fruitful papers, reports and discussions, as well as the excellent organization of the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists by the Philippine Congress Organization led by His Eminence Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila and Patron of the Congress, and Dr. Enrique P. Syquia, President of the Catholic Lawyers Guild of the Philippines; the delegates, participants and guests to the said Tenth Congress resolve to express their profound gratitude to the host organization, the Catholic Lawyers Guild of the Philippines, with fervent prayers to the Almighty for its continued prosperity and venture; and to the distinguished Guests of Honour, H.E. Opilio Cardinal Rossi, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and the Honorable Wee Chong Jin, Chief Justice of Singapore; and to all renowned guest speakers, chairmen and rapporteurs of the various working sessions.

XXI

GRATITUDE TO THE PHILIPPINES

CONSIDERING the many tangible tokens of welcome, kindness, courtesies and goodwill, the Tenth Congress of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists hereby makes public its expression of deep gratitude to the President and the Government of the Philippines, and its sincere recognition of Philippine hospitality at its best.

FEATURES

GUIDELINES FOR SCREENING CANDIDATES FOR THE SEMINARY

(Taken from the 'Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis'
by Pope Paul VI)

by

Fr. Federico P. de la Rosa, O.A.R.

In the words of our Holy Father, the late Pope Pius XII in "Menti Nostrae", we priests are a holy race set apart by God for His service which must look for its own preservation by seeking for itself its own descendency in posterity by fomenting, forming (encouraging) and supporting vocations to our state of life who in the day of tomorrow will take our place in the ministry. Among the duties of a priest specified in the Papal encyclical letters on the priesthood, one duty of paramount importance of each priest that can not be relegated to others, nor abandoned to posterity, is this duty to make sure that when he dies, some others are there to take his place whom he through his own efforts has **fomented, formed, encouraged, and supported** to the priesthood. This is one duty which we, as priest, can not abdicate. This duty is four fold — to foment, to form, to encourage and to support vocations to the priesthood. Vocation crisis would not exist, especially, to the priesthood if each priest would take to heart this obligation.

Yet often, in the busy schedules of our lives, we fail in this, not so much as due to poor interest, as to the lack of guidelines for proper selection of boys with vocation. We fail to discern when a boy of our parish or classroom may have a vocation. Failing to see the gliter of the gem we take no interest. Lacking interest we have no enthusiasm or desire to foment, encourage, form and support a vocation. To help us in the fulfillment of this obligation the "Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis" of Pope Paul VI has given us some guidelines for screening candidates for the seminary and the priesthood. These guidelines may be helpful to many of us who are busy, and have no time to dig into Papal Encyclicals.

"For the Church has maintained that in every vocation there are two elements to be considered — one the divine element, namely, the seed of vocation or the grace of the call of God placed in the

soul of the person called by God; another, the natural element, namely, the natural qualities and dispositions that would not hinder the grace of God, but help it to pursue the goals of the vocation. Grace does not do away with nature, but it takes it and lifts it up to higher perfection" (*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* No. 51).

Divine Element of a Vocation

"For the Church maintains — as is apparent from her doctrine, experience, and practice — that certain signs of divine vocation can be discerned right from boyhood which demand careful and specialized attention" (*Ibid.*, nt. 60)" ...in boys — which it frequently shows itself, like a "seed in company with certain elements of divine Grace". The qualities of the Grace of a Vocation are:

A). Spiritual Fitness of the boy (*Ibid.*, No. 8).

1. That the boy live a normal Catholic Life.
2. That the boy fulfill his spiritual duties as a Catholic
 - Sunday Mass
 - Frequent the sacraments.
3. Says his daily prayers (even minimal).
4. Obedient and subject to family life, not troublesome in the family.
5. Is not subject to moral aberrations
 - alcoholism
 - drug addiction
 - inordinate proclivity to sex
 - frequent bad company

B). Complete freedom of the boy in his vocation (*Ibid.*, No. 8).

1. His vocation is not forced upon him by parents, parish priest or any priest, religious sister or teacher who may want to see him a priest.
2. His vocation is not imposed on him by circumstances:
 - a desire to study which he can not fulfill except in the seminary
 - a desire to enjoy the social status of a priest
 - a desire to enjoy the nice comforts of life and economic security of the state of the priesthood.
 - a desire to be liberated from the poverty of his family background.
 - a desire to acquire means to help poor parents or help brothers and sisters.

3. A compulsive fanatical desire to be a priest without regard of rules and regulations, and of the workings of grace in man's soul.

C.) **Honest and right intention of the boy in his vocation** (*Ibid.*, no. 8).

This right intention must be shown by the boy in positive ways. Grace is a potentiality in the soul of a person. It is intrinsically repugnant that a potentiality in the soul of a person be not reduced to act. The positive signs expected of a candidate are (*Ibid.*, no. 7):

- a distinct piety
- an ardent love of God and neighbor
- a leaning towards the apostolate
- a sincere desire to follow the rules and regulations of the state of life of the seminary and the priesthood.
- a sincere desire to follow the workings of grace in his soul.

Natural Element of a Vocation

"This Grace of God (vocation) manifested as a seed must be rooted on **natural endowments**: if any is lacking, it is to be doubted if a vocation is really there. Hence, the young student must be carefully examined as regards:

1. Family background
2. Physical fitness
3. Human and Moral qualities
4. Spiritual qualities
5. Intellectual qualities

in order that sure factors for a judgment of their fitness may be had in good time" (*Ibid.*, no. 12). Before any boy is considered for admission into the seminary these elements should be carefully examined in him, namely, the supernatural element of a vocation (the "seed" as it is manifested) and the natural endowments or qualities. This assessment will cover in particular the following details (*Ibid.*, no. 39):

1. Family Background

The family background of the boy has its importance in a vocation. A boy whose parents are:

- not properly married
- have been unfaithful to marriage

- whose parents are given to alcoholism (any of them), gambling (any of them), addiction
- whose parents are not mentally balanced or have psychologically marked deficiencies

should be disregarded as candidates to the seminary. There are many elements hidden in the personality of such a boy which sooner or later would render the pursuit of the goals of his vocation difficult to attain. The office of the priest requires from those called the continuous pursuit of certain standards of behavior compatible with the evangelical state of the priesthood set down by Jesus Christ. A defective family background breeds certain elements in the personality of the person incompatible with those standards of behavior. To force the issue is tantamount to a "Deus ex machina" attitude, which attitude Jesus condemned when He said, "It is wrong to tempt God". Can a persistence on the part of a candidate with the wrong family background be taken as a sign of the Grace of Vocation? It should be strongly doubted.

2. Physical Fitness

The life of a priest is a strenuous one. The training in the seminary requires a healthy body. "**Mens sana in corpore sano**". If a boy is sickly, he should be disregarded as a candidate. The sickness spoken of here are sicknesses of permanent nature, and rather serious ones, especially, the contagious ones. If in doubt let the opinion of a physician be the verdict.

3. Human and Moral Qualities

- sincerity in words and deeds
- emotional stability and maturity
- good manners in dealings with elders and companions
- keeping their word in honor (honoring their word, compulsive liars, cheaters and gossipers should be disregarded)
- steady concern for justice (not emotional concern for justice. Persons given to fantasy or to emotive irascibility in this regard should be examined as to their emotional maturity)
- feeling for friendship in an honorable manner not with a wrong sense of loyalty nor in an emotive way. Irascible persons and emotive persons given to exclusive friendship should be excluded
- sense of responsibility in doing his duties and in using the freedom and trust given to him (compulsive rule — breakers

should be examined carefully to determine the depth of their intellectual capacity to comprehend the responsibilities of the state of life of the priesthood)

- industrious and hardworking (lazy people should be immediately disregarded. The priesthood should not be the hide-out or the refuge of lazy people).
- the will to work with others (The priest is a member of a team in the task of evangelization. The capacity of a person to work as a team member and to sublime his own personal view for the sake of the common good is a quality needed from the personality of a person occupying the office of the priest)
- cheerful and not melancholic in temperament or disposition.

4. Spiritual Qualities

- spirit of fellowship with companions (founded in the love of neighbor)
- apostolic and missionary concern (founded in the love of God)
- respectful of rules, regulations, law and order
- modesty in dress and behavior or language is a quality contrary to the evangelical standards set down by Christ for his ministers)
- spirit of sacrifice (an over-complaining attitude about hardships, and privations is a contrary quality)
- humility in spirit (an obstinate love for his own views and opinions, and his own false sense of dignity is a wrong quality in candidate for the priesthood).
- virile dispositions of piety and devotion grounded in faith, and not emotionalism or effeminate sensitivity in the practice of piety and prayer
- chaste in his dealing with companions, in his language and in his readings and mannerisms.

5. Intellectual Qualities

- right ideas of the priesthood and what it involves
- proper convictions about his faith and vocation
- correct judgment as to one's faith and vocation
- with sufficient mental capacity to complete the studies required of him in the seminary.

The definite choice of a state of life should be obtained from the boy in good time and as soon as possible, to prevent any harm to the candidate from exposure to a way of life which will end in frustration, because from the beginning there was no vocation (*Ibid.*, no. 40) Should a doubt be present, the safer opinion should be followed, namely, that there should be positive signs of a vocation (*Ibid.*, no. 41). If there are no positive signs of a vocation, there can not be a vocation. Vocation is a grace of God, which He uses to manifest to men those whom He has called. As such this grace should be discernible by men for them to recognize whom God has called. To maintain that a person has the grace of vocation without its being discernible in the conduct of that person is a blasphemy against God. The persistent desire of a person to become a priest does not constitute a vocation. It may be religious fanaticism. Positive signs of a vocation is a safer way rather than mere personal persistence amounting to nothing. "Ex nihilo nihil provenit".

IN DEFENSE OF THE SUNDAY LITURGY

By

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

INTRODUCTION

In its reform of the liturgy the Council of Trent established the principle that double feasts of saints (duplex, the equivalent of the present-day obligatory memorial) had to take the precedence over the ordinary or "green" Sundays. At the time this was not seen as a danger for the liturgical celebration of Sunday, since there were only about 49 duplex celebrations (including octave days) in the general calendar. During the following centuries the number of these double feasts increased continuously since it became almost a rule to assign to every newly canonized saint a double celebration. Until the time of Pope Leo XIII no less than 104 such double feasts had been added to the general calendar of the Church.¹ On 275 days of the year celebrations of saints — feasts of first and second class, double feasts could replace the liturgy of Sunday.² This amounted to a quasi-abolition of the Sunday liturgy in favor of the celebration of saints.

First steps away from this unhealthy development were taken by Pope St. Pius X: from 1911 on all Sundays have precedence over double feasts. Only feasts of first and second class could take the place of a green Sunday. At the same time he gave to those celebrations of saints which had up to this time been assigned to certain Sundays of the year a fixed date in the month. In this way he doubled the number of Sundays which could be observed liturgically again, thus achieving — at least in part — his original aim that the green Sundays could be celebrated again.

The next decades of the twentieth century saw a renewed increase of saints' feasts of higher rank, especially under Pope Pius XI. Therefore, Pope John XXIII in his Code of Rubrics (1960) tried to take up again the work of Pius X. To the Sundays of Advent and Lent he gave the rank of first class.³ The post-conciliar reform of the general calendar added to them the Sundays of the Easter

¹ H. A. P. Schmidt, *Introductio in Liturgiam Occidentalem* (Romae, 1960) pp. 547-576.

² Noele M. Denis-Boulet, *The Christian Calendar* (Faith & Fact Book, 112) (London, 1960) p. 104.

³ Code of Rubrics, n. 91.

season. No celebration of a saint, not even those celebrated with the rank of solemnity, can now replace any one of these Sundays. A solemnity occasionally falling on one of these Sundays, like the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), or the solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19) have then to be transferred to the preceding Saturday.

According to the Church's general calendar of 1969 only solemnities can now take the place of an ordinary (green) Sunday. Why this general tendency? Vatican II in its Constitution on the Liturgy and further ecclesiastical documents give the answer.

A THEOLOGY OF SUNDAY

In line with the last book of the Bible, Vatican II calls the Sunday the "Day of the Lord" or "the Lord's Day".⁴ Sunday is the Lord's Day because of Christ's resurrection; it is the weekly Easter.⁵ The Council Fathers were convinced that the Church celebrates Sunday not because of some common agreement, not because of a mere ecclesiastical law that could be abolished, but because of a tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection.

Consequently, the Christian Sunday has, from its very origin, the aspect of a memorial celebration: it celebrates the passage of Jesus from his earthly life through his passion and death to the new life of the resurrection; it celebrates the redeeming and liberating force of the paschal mystery which is now mentioned in five of the eight new Sunday prefaces.

Sunday has also an eschatological dimension: it looks toward the final revelation of the Lord, to the completion of the salvation brought to us in the paschal mystery. Intimately connected with this aspect is "the eighth day" as a Christian name for Sunday.⁷ It implies that Sunday has been taken out of the temporal order of the seven weekdays to signify that with the completion of the Lord's redeeming work the people of God have entered a new age and a new creation, giving them "the pledge of an eternal Easter."⁸

⁴ Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 106.

⁵ *Ibid.*, art. 102. — This is now forcefully stressed in the Liturgy of the Hours for Sundays, especially in Lauds and the Middle Hour. The concluding Prayer of Compline II prays: "Lord, we have celebrated today the mystery of the rising of Christ to new life."

⁶ *Ibid.*, art. 106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 106.

⁸ Title of Sunday preface VI.

Sunday is, therefore, not only the Day of the Lord as Head, but equally the Day of the Lord's Body. The christological, soteriological and ecclesiological aspects of Sunday belong intimately together. On Sunday the glorified Lord wants to meet his people. He expressed this desire when on the first day of the week, on the day of the resurrection, he came to meet repeatedly his disciples (Jn. 20:19.26; Lk. 23:13; MK. 16:9). Recognizing this wish of their Lord the apostles gathered their own faithful on the first day of the week for the breaking of the bread (Acts 20:7, at Troas). Paul gave orders that on the first day of the week his Christians at Corinth should, on a regular basis, take up a collection for the poor of the mother church at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1f), a collection that seemingly took place during a liturgical gathering. In view of this it is not to be wondered at that by the end of the first century the first day of the week had already a specifically Christian name (Apoc. 1:10). An ancient Christian catechism, the *Didache*, probably coming from about A.D. 100, prescribes: "Assemble on the Lord's Day, and break the bread and offer the eucharist".⁹

As conclusion of these premises Vatican II states that "Sunday is the original feast day"; it is the "foundation and kernel of the whole ecclesiastical year." We have to unfold in the Sunday Mass — because only here we can reach our people today — "within the cycle of a year the whole mystery of Christ from his incarnation and birth until his ascension," Pentecost and "to the expectation of the blessed hoped-for return of the Lord," and thus to make accessible to them "the riches of the Lord's powers and merits."¹⁰ Here we have the reason why "other celebrations, unless they be truly of the greatest importance" shall not have precedence over the Sunday.¹¹

On Sunday Christians come together not because of sociological and political reasons. This assertion does not mean that these and other petitions, e.g., ecclesiastical needs, themes and intentions could not be mentioned during Sunday celebrations. As a matter of fact, occasionally they have to be mentioned in the Sunday Mass. But they are and have to remain secondary themes and intentions in the course of the Sunday liturgy; they have to remain subordinated to it. They must not obscure the original meaning of the Sunday celebration and the eucharist. Here we have the reason why trini-

⁹ Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers. Translated by M. Staniforth (Penguin Books) Ch. 14, p. 234.

¹⁰ Const. on the Lit., art. 102.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, art. 106.

tarian thoughts and elements which had gradually entered the Sunday liturgy, e.g., the Athanasian Symbol in Prime in the Breviary and the preface of the Trinity (in 1759 under Pope Clement XIII), have been eliminated by the recent reform of the Liturgy.

It would be foolish to make a wedding celebration the occasion for a demonstration for the right of parents to educate their children against the attempts of civil authorities to undermine this right. Such a demonstration would destroy the wedding celebration. It would be equally wrong to make the Sunday liturgy the occasion for a propaganda drive to collect funds for certain ecclesiastical or civil purposes.

Therefore, the Church wants us to celebrate the Sunday liturgy as it has been prepared in her liturgical books. This certainly admits of exceptions. But they have to remain exceptions. They should never become the rule.

PRACTICAL "CONSEQUENCES"?

The General Norms for the Liturgical Year which accompanied the publication of the Church's general calendar in 1969 established as basic principle: "By its nature (*per se*) Sunday excludes the permanent assignment of another celebration" (n. 6). But after establishing this principle the same norms proceed right away to present the first exceptions of the rule: the feast of the Holy Family takes the place of the Sunday between Christmas and New Year. The celebration of the Sunday after the Lord's Epiphany is taken over by the feast of the Lord's Baptism. From the late Middle Ages on the Sunday after Pentecost yields to the solemnity of the Blessed Trinity. On the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year the Church celebrates permanently the solemnity of Christ, the King of the Universe. These four feasts and solemnities of the universal calendar take the place of Sundays.

Further exceptions of the general rule were made in favor of those countries and regions where the Epiphany, the Ascension and Corpus Christi are no longer public holidays: these solemnities are transferred to the next Sunday.

Particular calendars (of countries, dioceses and religious orders) may raise the number of Sundays which are permanently replaced by other celebrations. In the Philippines the feast of the Santo Niño takes the place of the third Sunday of January, usually the second Sunday in ordinary time. Thus at least eight Sundays are regularly omitted in their liturgical celebration in favor of other

mysteries. An author has observed that now, after the reform of Vatican II we are worse off concerning the Sunday liturgy than after the reform of Pope St. Pius X in 1911.¹²

Another general principle of the universal calendar has to be taken into consideration. Feasts of the Lord in the general calendar "which fall on Sundays in ordinary time" take the place of the Sunday liturgy.¹³ As a consequence of this principle, in 1980 the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14) replaces the twenty-fourth Sunday in the ordinary time and the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Nov. 9) the thirty-second Sunday. Accidentally the solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29) has precedence over the thirteenth Sunday and the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (Nov. 2), which is a day of first class, replaces the Sunday Masses of the thirty-first Sunday. Of the 52 Sundays of 1980 fourteen cannot be celebrated in the Mass formulary that is assigned to them in the Sacramentary and Lectionary.

Unfortunately, this is not yet the end. Every parish has its fiesta, the celebration of the patron saint (of the church or the place). Its external celebration usually replaces another Sunday in ordinary time (green Sundays).

THEMATIC OR TOPICAL SUNDAYS

In addition to this we have the so-called "topical",¹⁴ "thematic" or "special" Sundays which have similarly the tendency to replace the Sunday liturgy. Pope Paul VI established the World Day of Peace. In the Philippines the Sundays of Lent have been declared "Alay Kapwa" Sundays. For the whole Church Rome declared the fourth Easter Sunday, the so-called Good Shepherd Sunday, the day of prayers for priestly and religious vocations. Since this day usually falls in the great summer vacations, many dioceses establish their own vocation Sunday on another Sunday during the school year. According to the Ordo for the Philippines there is a Bible Sunday, a Filipino Tribal Sunday, a Fil-Mission Sunday (the last Sunday of July), a world communications day and a world mission Sunday.

Nobody will deny that all these are necessary and good topics and intentions which have to be brought to the attention of our faithful: the parish must be made aware of its social obligations,

¹² Ph. Harnoncourt, *Gesamtkirchliche und teilkirchliche Liturgie* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1974) p. 122.

¹³ General Norms for the Liturgical Year, nn. 5 and 13.

¹⁴ J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York, 1962) p. 404.

of its responsibility for the foreign missions, of the need to have more and better priests and religious vocations, of the need to know the Bible and to read it regularly, and so on.

Unfortunately, there exists, especially after the second Vatican Council and the subsequent introduction of the mother tongue in the liturgy the tendency to subordinate the Sunday liturgy to the need of information and conscientization, and to the need for collecting funds for certain purposes. In order to achieve these aims these topical or special Sundays are sometimes even given new, self-made liturgical texts. Special readings are selected and proposed; new euchaological texts (opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, etc.) are composed and offered to the parishes in place of the Mass texts of the respective Sundays.

For 1975 and 1976 here appeared in two editions (one in mimeo-form, the other in the **Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines**) a "set of Masses for Lent." It had been planned and worked out "at the request of and in cooperation with Alay Kapwa and the groups preparing paraliturgical and catechetical materials for Alay Kapwa with the encouragement also of the Secretariat of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines."¹⁵ Since the presidential prayers of the Masses for the Sundays of Lent had hardly anything in common with the prayers of the Sacramentary, it had been planned that "these Masses would also be presented to the CBCP board for endorsement." Whether this had been done could not be ascertained. Anyhow, the professed aim of these new Mass texts was to "focus on one theme per Mass so as to enhance its impact" (Ibid.). Repeatedly it is stated that the introductions to the individual Mass formularies offer a "better selection" for a "stronger thematic unity."¹⁶

Here the Mass is seen from an exclusively catechetical and informational point of view. But the proposal forgot that the opening prayer still belongs to the introductory part of the Mass, which is the introduction to the whole Mass, not only to the service of the word of God. Generally speaking the prayers over the gifts and after communion are much less affected by the special mystery celebrated on a given day (e. g., on Christmas and Pentecost). Basic for the prayer over the gifts is the petition: Accept our gifts! The prayer after communion asks for the fruits of the Mass and of holy communion. They are not to give information or to make moral appeals.

¹⁵ *The Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines* 10 (1975) 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 9, 22.

The modifications indicated resulted in a set of thematic Masses for some of the highest Sundays of the liturgical year, a set of Masses which have little to do with the spirit and aims of Lent. Here we have "thematic Masses," sometimes also called 'motive' or "topical" Masses.¹⁷ Particularly the series of Masses for Lent 1976 have clear themes for the individual Sundays: My transformation in Christ opens a new world for my neighbor" (Sunday II). "A renewed community can build structures of justice and love" (Sunday III). Where are here the true themes and aims of Lent? Characteristic for this season is, according to Vatican II the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance. "By means of them the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter."¹⁸ Unfortunately, these Alay Kapwa Masses make Lent subservient to certain purposes, to certain forms of social and political behavior.

The tendency to make the Sunday in this or similar ways thematic is not a new one. But until Vatican II and the subsequent period it had been confined to Protestantism, whose "Sundays are given over to special observances, Education Day, Family Day, and such like, which in traditional terms would be called Votives."¹⁹ Individual representatives of the Protestant Enlightenment went so far as to propose "to celebrate Christmas as the festival of birth, Easter as that of immortality, and to introduce other feasts of the Fatherland, Sanctity, Friendship, and so on."²⁰ The tendency to make Sunday subservient to certain intentions and themes is not a good one. At the basis of such efforts lies the failure to appreciate the true nature of the Sunday liturgy. Also the deficiency is not a new one. In times past it made possible the intrusion of saints' days. Thematic or topical Masses on Sundays are their modern substitutes.²¹

SOLUTIONS

How to proceed then? One solution to the problem, which, however is not always applicable, has been proposed by the late

¹⁷ A very critical reaction against thematic Masses came from A. Bugnini, the former Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship: 'Messe a Tema,' *Notitiae* 11 (1975) 350-352. — English translation in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (Canada), No. 54, May-June 1976, 190-192.

¹⁸ Const. on the Lit., art. 109. — Cf. also the General Norms for the Liturgical Year, n. 27.

¹⁹ P. G. Cobb, in: Ch. Jones (e.a.), *The Study of Liturgy* (London, 1977) 406.

²⁰ J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York, 1962) p. 398, n. 26.

²¹ R. Nardone, "The Roman Calendar in Ecumenical Perspective," *Workship*, 50 (1976) 239.

Fr. Jungmann.²² He prefers that for special intentions and needs days be chosen that will provide an appropriate background for the particular need. It seems that Rome has chosen the fourth Sunday of the Easter season as a day of prayer for priestly and religious vocations because of the readings of this Sunday: in all years Christ is presented here as the Good Shepherd.

Also when the proper Sunday Mass is taken in its entirety special topics and intentions can and should be mentioned in the introduction of the Mass, in the penitential rite if this be possible, in the homily, the general intercessions and after the postcommunion and before the concluding rite of the Mass. In other words: these themes and needs may be mentioned in those parts which are left to the free formulation of the celebrant. The homily seems to be, in this context, of primary importance. Its topics must not only be taken from the Mass readings. A homily may also be inspired by some text from the Ordinary (e.g., the Eucharistic Prayer) or the proper of the Mass. "The homilist should keep in mind the mystery that is being celebrated and the needs of the particular community."²³

CONCLUSION

St. Paul's decided to know nothing among" his faithful "except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). According to him in the celebration of the eucharist we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). It is also our aim and purpose when we come together to celebrate the Sunday Mass with our people to proclaim him as Savior and Redeemer. When we meet him on Sunday in word and sacrament he strengthens and renews our faith from which there is to result responsible activity in the world for both the Church and our fellow men.

²² J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York, 1962) 404.

²³ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 41.

MINIMUM AGE AT MARRIAGE

Should the Church Raise the Age Requirement for Marriage in the Philippines?

By

Florencio Testera, O.P.

A determined effort to raise the minimum age at marriage would seem to offer great hope in the Philippines where an alarming population growth and an increasing rate of marital breakdowns are becoming serious problems which must be dealt with urgently.¹

Though the median age at first marriage in the country has for years remained steady at a satisfactory level — 21 years for females and 23 for males —, nevertheless thousands of marriages take place every year among girls and boys still in their early or late teens.²

The latest available official statistics by detailed age of groom and bride for 1974 show that 2,050 marriages took place that year with the girls below 15, and 107,993 with the brides below 20. Of those brides who married in 1974, four out of ten — 38% — were teenagers. Officially, none of the grooms who married during that year was below 16. However, 37,713 got brides when they were still under 20. In 1974, over 13% of the Filipino grooms were teenagers.³

THE INCIDENCE OF MARITAL BREAKDOWNS

Statistical data and analysis, however reliable and meaningful, will never reveal the motives behind those early marriages among Filipino boys and girls, nor will they aid to forecast their outcome and the impact on the birth rate. However, surveys and studies conducted worldwide reveal a marked correlation between youthful

¹ CBCP, *On The Population Problem and Family Life*, Boletín Eclesiástico, 1974, pp. 11-16; *Joint Pastoral Letter on Christian Marriage*, Boletín Eclesiástico, 1976, pp. 774-784.

² *Demographic Yearbook—1976*, United Nations, N.Y., 1977, pp. 504, 505

³ *Demographic Yearbook—1976*, United Nations, N.Y., 1977, p. 526.

marriages and broken homes. The incidence of breakdown of early nuptials is more frequent than among those contracted at later ages. No one can deny that, as a general rule, young people are less equipped to face the complex reality of married life than elder couples who can be assumed to be better prepared to discharge the duties towards themselves, their children and families.

According to the USA National Center of Health Statistics, 56% of all divorces occur before the parties have reached the age of 24. And 33% of all divorced couples are teenagers. The religion pattern does not seem to change this general pattern. The National Life Bureau of the Bishops' Conference reported that seven out of ten marriages involving teenagers ended in separation or divorce. In teenage marriages where pregnancies was a decisive factor, 90% of the couples broke up.⁴ In England and Ireland, too, the phenomenon of divorce is more critical the younger the age of the contracting parties.⁵

The incidence of marital breakdown in the Philippines is not known since it is practically impossible to obtain reliable statistical information on this score. It is an undeniable fact, however, that the number of broken homes and unhappy marriages is increasing in an alarming proportion.⁶ The lingering and recurring cry for divorce is a concrete proof that the marriage situation in the country is not as healthy as hitherto presumed.

Data and information available from church marriage tribunals can perhaps shed some light on the rate of early marriage failures. The Manila Tribunal reported in 1975 that "most of those applying for a declaration of nullity are those who get married in their teens and those who contracted marriage late, that is, thirty years and above".⁷ Recently, the Cebu Tribunal has submitted the following data to the CBCP: "25 out of 43 marriage cases admitted by the ecclesiastical court in 1977 were entered on the ground of lack of due discretion on account of young age of either the husband or the wife". According to the same report, "in 32 out of the 43 couples, either the man or the woman got married at an early age".⁸

Putting those data in perspective, we should note that church tribunals cater only to catholic couples; that the cases brought to, and accepted by such courts are but a few of the many broken

⁴ Canon Law Digest, VIII, p. 649.

⁵ THE CANON LAW SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND, *Preparing for Marriage*, Doctrine and Life, 1976, pp. 909-916.

⁶ CBCP., *On Christian Marriage*, Boletín Eclesiástico, 1976, pp. 774-775.

⁷ Unpublished thesis at the Faculty of Canon Law, UST, 1975.

⁸ Private Report from the Cebu Tribunal to the CBCP., 1978.

catholic marriages; and finally, that still fewer cases are declared null and void. All this notwithstanding, it appears quite clear that marital breakdowns are more frequent among teenage partners than among couples marrying at a later age. Hence the urgent appeal of the Episcopal Commission on Canon Law to raise the minimum age requirement for marriage to 21 for either sex.

POPULATION PROBLEMS

Upgrading the age for marriage, too, would have a significant impact on the population growth in the country. "The age and rate of marriages, warns Dr. V. Rosales, are of singular importance. For a people to marry at the age of twenty years or thereabouts, as we do in this country, is to give the opportunity of the fullest exercise of biological fertility which is reached about that age and declines gradually over the next ten or fifteen years. A delay in the average marriage age of the Filipino, even if affecting only the male, would result in significant changes in the birth rates of this country".⁹

It has been observed, too, that women who marry late stop begetting children sooner than others. In other words, the fertility span is reduced at both ends and not only at the beginning. The English scientist Galton calculated that the woman who marries at 18 is likely to have twice as many children as and her who weds at 28.¹⁰ It is a fact, likewise, that either as a result of being more mature, or because of greater opportunities of education and gainful employment, or a combination of these, girls marrying at a later age favor or adopt family planning methods more readily.¹¹

Of course, it would be naive to think that raising the age for marriage will offer an over-all solution to population and family problems in the nation, but it will surely be a positive step in the direction of responsible marriage and responsible parenthood.

THE BEST AGE FOR MARRIAGE

Marriage entails a wide gamut of serious emotional, intellectual, moral, social and financial responsibilities, and persons about to marry should be required to possess a minimum of maturity to discharge them. What then should be considered as the optimum age for marriage? None in particular.

⁹ ROSALES, V. M.D., *The Control of Population Growth in the Philippines*, Unitas, 1966, p. 464.

¹⁰ LANDIS, P. H., *Population Problems*, N.Y., 1943, pp. 64-65.

¹¹ *Indian Population Problems*. The Month, 1974, p. 454.

Hart and Shields found that the ideal age at marriage was 29 for the groom and 25 for the bride, but that variations of four years on either side for the groom or two years on either side of the bride, made no appreciable difference in happiness. If the bride was under 21 and the groom under 24, however, an increase in domestic problems and difficulties was noted; the increase was greater the lower the age at marriage.¹²

Lately, Paul Glick, a noted sociologist, has shown that, in terms of stability, the optimum age for marriage is 22 for women and 24 for men; and that marriages in which the partners were younger than these ages were more vulnerable to instability.¹³

Early in 1976, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippine singled out the age factor as one of the greatest sources of marital instability in the country and endorsed to President Marcos a proposal to raise the minimum age for marriage to 20 for the male and 18 for the female.¹⁴ Strangely enough the Conference apparently failed to act on a new proposal submitted to it in 1973 by the Episcopal Commission on Canon Law to the effect that "the minimum age requirement for marriage before the church in the Philippines, under pain of nullity, be 21 years old for both parties".

Lately, the Manila Synod delegates expressing the prevalent view at the "grass-root" level of their communities, have again proposed that the marriage age be raised to at least 21 for both men and women. Younger couples should be asked to wait till they are 21 even if they are living together".¹⁵

How have the faithful, their pastors and church jurists arrived at age 21 as the most appropriate one for a happy, lasting marriage? Well, that is also the age when one attains the age of maturity and becomes civilly qualified for acts of civil life.¹⁶ And there are many other cogent reasons why marriage should not be taken lightly, as something less relevant to the church and the community than an ordinary contract which, after all, can be rescinded by the parties at will. Moreover, the practice in most countries or areas in the world is that persons between the legal age and a more advance age — usually 21 — may marry only with the consent of parents or guardians.¹⁷

¹² MIHANOVICH, SCHNEPP, THOMAS., *Marriage and the Family*, Milwaukee, 1955, p. 29.

¹³ BERNARD, Jessie., *The Future of Marriage*, N.Y., 1973, p. 185.

¹⁴ Boletín Eclesiástico, 1976., pp. 9, 779.

¹⁵ Cor Manila, Nov. 15, 1979, p. 6.

¹⁶ Civil Code of the Philippines, art. 402.

¹⁷ *Demographic Yearbook—1976*, United Nations, N.Y., 1977, p. 37.

From the psychological aspect, age 21 or thereabouts marks the period when young boys and young girls become young men and young women and are more or less ready to assume the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. Generally, this age-group has already overcome the identity complex and is less worried with grandiose ideas than those under 21, and so it tends to be more concerned with concrete and immediate problems pertaining to a job, the home, the family and the like.¹⁸

From the pastoral-religious view point, the dignity and sanctity of christian marriage as well as the solidarity of the family should be safeguarded at all costs by admitting to the sacrament of matrimony only adults adequately prepared to assume and discharge the responsibilities of married life.¹⁹ Thus, facts and experience show that the local church counts with serious pastoral reasons to forbid or at least to defer the marriage of adolescents not yet matured for married life.

THE RIGHT TO MARRY

The right to marry is a natural one of top priority. But is it an unrestricted absolute, unconditional right? Or, is man absolutely free to exercise such a right as to wed any person, any time, any way for little or no concern whatsoever for the rule of law, social and moral commitments?

Matrimony, which is envisioned as a community of life and love, was established primarily for the good of the human race and secondarily for that of the individual person. Thus while it is a valid fact that a person may choose not to marry and instead remain in the state of "single-blessedness" or celibacy, it is equally true that nature itself has bequeathed on the human race the instinct and duty to procreate and multiply.

Along this line of thought, marriage has been regarded both as a pact or agreement binding the partners to a life together, and as a social religious institution governed and controlled by civil as well as moral norms and regulations. Thus it follows as a corollary, that nature constrains as well as statutory, moral norms enacted by human authorities may curtail the right of the individual to take a partner in marriage, or even to limit the exercise of the right in other sundry ways. This is not an imaginary supposition, but rather a fact and historical reality amply acknowledged in the tradi-

¹⁸ BERNARD, J., *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁹ MARQUIS, J. C., *Teen-age Marriage is Unreal*, Homiletic and Pastoral Review, 3/1977, pp. 61-68.

tions and customs of the various peoples and nations. Restrictions on the freedom of the individuals to marry have been traditionally instituted by civil and religious groups since time immemorial, and are enshrined even in the most rudimentary legal systems of the world.

The church sums up the minimum essential requirement for marriage thus: "all persons who are not prohibited by law, can contract marriage", (CIC, c. 1035). And then the laws goes on to fix the minimum age for a valid marriage at 14 for the female and 16 for the male, (CIC, c. 1067).

But is this age-limit a guarantee of the mental, emotional, spiritual maturity necessary for married life and the rearing of children? Facts, knowledge and experience show that such is not the case.²⁰ Moreover, the church law in setting the age ruling of 14 and 16 has obviously adopted a biological criterion which is based on the physiological puberty or physical capacity of the couple to bear children. It is common knowledge, however, that a boy and a girl to be ready to wed need something else than just to be able to be a father or a mother. Boys and girls are physically able to become fathers or mothers years before they are ready to assume and discharge adequately the responsibilities of parenthood.

The church is well aware of this fact, and thus, while upholding the validity of a marriage between a 14 years old girl and a 16 years old boy, it nevertheless provides that: "pastors of souls should try to deter young people from marrying before the age at which, according to the customs of the country, marriage is usually contracted," (CIC, c.10 67, 2).

This precautionary measure notwithstanding, the fact is that many a pastor feels helpless in cases where the couple meet the minimum legal and spiritual requirements, but their youth leads the priest to believe that their marriage has little hope for success. Even if the priest may work to dissuade the youngsters, he feels that their natural right to carry and the established canonical age make it impossible for him to refuse or even to defer their marriage. Such should not be the case, however, for c. 1039, 1 of the CIC provides the legal basis for the selective postponement of a sacramental marriage when it prescribes that: "Ordinaries of places can forbid marriages in a particular case, but only temporarily, for a just cause and for as long as the just cause continues".

This power granted to Ordinaries of places attempts to guarantee not only the right of the parties to marry, but it likewise offers the

²⁰ CARTER, M., *Teen-age Marriages: Diocesan Policies*. The Jurist., 1975, p. 276.

couple the opportunity to adequately prepare themselves for married life by differing the sacramental marriage till a time when the partners should have reached that reasonable level of maturity that is needed for a happy, lasting union. However, once the person concerned gives positive signs of that minimum of maturity and mental discretion, he or she should not be excluded from marriage on account of young age, but should be rather encouraged. On the contrary, those who are obviously immature to venture into the complex married life are forbidden by natural law from doing so, whatever their age. The right to enter into a pact or agreement can only be exercised by one who is capable of discharging the obligations pertaining thereto.²¹

"SACRAMENTA PROPETER HOMINIES"

The doctrinal tenet "sacramenta propeter hominies" — the sacraments have been instituted for the benefit of men — and not the other way around, should in no way constitute a serious obstacle to the enactment of badly needed legislation raising the age requirement for marriage. After all, the unworthy, perhaps even invalid reception of the sacrament of matrimony by persons presumably unprepared can hardly be of benefit to either parents or children, the church or the state. The increasing incidence of marital breakdown on account of early nuptials and the scores of cases which are being brought to the church tribunals for a declaration of nullity on the ground of lack of due discretion or maturity of judgment offer, in our opinion, sufficient juridical grounds to delay or even to forbid early teenage marriages.

On the pastoral level it should be clear by now that not even a sturdy catholic faith will adequately withstand the pressure put on youngsters while trying to fulfill the responsibilities of adults in the sacrament of matrimony. Marriage is not a solution to the problems of the youth. All too often it adds greater problems.

The threat to marry outside the church is not a cogent reason why marriage should not be forbidden at an early age or differ for some time. Indeed, it is the duty of the church to forestall "unholy unions". But the church is no less committed to prevent risky marriages with less than reasonable chances of success. This means that sooner or later the local church will have to face reality and perhaps accept the least of two evils, as it has done more than once

²¹ TESTERA F., *Lack of Due Discretion for Marriage*. Boletín Eclesiástico, 1976, pp. 504-511.

in the past. The alternative could be fomulated thus: should the church tolerate for some time an unholy and illegitimate relationship or even a civil marriage while the couple is waiting in accordance to the mind of the church? Or rather should the church take the risk and sanction the celebration of dubious youthful nuptials which offer slim chances of success?

Priests, counselors, tribunal staffs... aware of the high rate of marital failure among young catholics, are quietly advicing immature couples, still unprepared for the sacrament of matrimony and yet unwilling to wait, to wed civilly first and postpone the celebration of the sacrament till they are good and ready for a worthy reception.²² Should they succeed in a civil union, the marriage can always be validated through the licit and valid reception of the sacrament. If, on the contrary, the civil experiment should fail, the partners are free from the trap of an intolerable marriage and all its tragic consequences from which there is but a little chance of escaping.

Obviously this is the same thrust of the proposal by the Manila Synod delegates, viz.; "younger couples should be asked to wait till they reach 21, **even if they are living together**". Waiting for the right age to marry may turn out after all, the best plan to avert divorce in the country and thus to prevent a further erosion of the people's esteem of, and faith in the sacrament of matrimony.

THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

Will this proposal be favorably viewed by the civil authorities? No one can tell. However, even if the state should not adopt it, the church can consider a second option more in conformity with civil legislation. The canonical age for a valid marriage would thus be raised to 18 and 20 for girls and boys respectively, at which ages boys and girls can validly wed in the country without parental consent. (**Civil Code of the Philippines**, a. 61). Still, should parents or guardians bend to the wishes of youngsters below such ages, this is before 18 or 20, then diocesan bishops could request the Holy See for special faculties to dispense from the non-age impediment and so meet this type of exceptional cases. At present all diocesan bishops — resident bishops and those who are equivalent to them in

²² HERTEL, J., *When Marriage Fails*, N.Y., 1969, p. 19; Catholic Bishops' Conference of France. January 11, 1977, *Canon Law Digest*, VIII, pp. 635-639

law — can, for a serious and reasonable cause, dispense from the non-age impediment by as much as one year.²³ The probability of obtaining wider faculties in this field should not be regarded as farfetched considering the readiness Rome has shown lately to come to grips with the problems of youthful nuptials. In fact a proposal already incorporated into the new canon law, still under revision, would even grant the Bishops' Conferences power to set even a higher age-level within the nation, one which would be over and above the minimum required for validity by the existing law.²⁴

At any rate, legislation alone will not suffice to check or even discourage teenage marriages. The success of whatever legal measures may be adopted depends to a great extent on social education and public opinion. There is no gainsaying the fact that a plan of such nature will be unpopular and encounter initial opposition from the youth, some parents and even priests and ministers of the gospel. In order to counter such adverse reaction, civil, social, political, religious leaders must join hands in stimulating public opinion by stressing the lasting benefits the individual, the family, society and religious sects will derive from raising the minimum age at marriage.

²³ *Motu Proprio*, The Episcoporum Muneribus, IX, 11; AAS., 1966, pp. 467-472.

²⁴ Schema Documenti Pontificii quo Disciplina Canonica de Sacramentis Recognoscitur, Vatican City, 1975, c. 282,2.

HOMILETICS

BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES FOR JUNE

by

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY (June 1st, 1980)

First Reading: Proverbs 8:22-31: Divine Wisdom in this passage is the closest approach in the Old Testament pages to a plurality of persons in God. St. Paul would make the final equation: Christ is the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:21), the firstborn of all creatures (Col. 1:15). And St. John would state clearly: The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); and God's Word is his Wisdom by which he created all things (v. 3). Here is this passage, which is a poetic strophe, Wisdom is begotten before anything else existed in the entire universe. In v. 22, the verb "qana" means "to acquire by birth" as in Gen. 4: 1, and is thus correctly translated "begot" (by NAB) in preference to "created" (JB, RSV). Wisdom's role in creation is to be God's architect, his mighty plan by which and with which he brought into existence the variety of the universe and its beauty (like Jn. 1:3). Wisdom is always pleasing to God (as was Jesus in Jn. 8:29), and is eminently in love with man, God's masterpiece. All creatures reflect God's Wisdom, his blueprint in creating them. In the New Testament, all this is said of the incarnate divine Word.

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-5. A Pauline trinitarian passage, expressly mentioning all three Persons (God, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Man has been set right (justified) and has peace with God (the Father) through Jesus Christ the Lord. By accepting Christ (faith), man enjoys God's favor at present, and hope gives him exceedingly great expectations for the future: to possess the very glory of God. Sufferings and trials do not diminish that hope, for it is founded on the immense love of God for him. This love has been poured out into his heart by the Holy Spirit, God's Gift of Love who is the source of all created love. Notice that all three divine Persons are active in bringing about man's well-being and salvation.

Reading of the Good News: John 16:12-15. The Holy Spirit of truth will complete the spiritual enlightenment of the believing community, begun by Christ, the Teacher. He will guide them into grasping more fully the Mystery which is Christ, as well as his message. All that the Spirit communicates, he receives from the Son who in turn receives it from the Father. Thus all revelation has its source in the Triune God. Theology will later draw from this passage the truth of one divine nature, possessed by the Father and communicated through the Son to the Spirit.

By giving the believing community an ever deeper understanding of the content of revelation, but especially of Christ and his Paschal Mystery, the Spirit gives great glory to the Son as the Son gave glory to the Father by manifesting him to men as the Father of love and compassion.

OUTLINE FOR HOMILY: Father, Son and Spirit.

Introduction: St. Patrick, it is said, was wont to explain to his Christians the mystery of the Blessed Trinity by a simple comparison. Stooping down he picked up a shamrock, which is a three-leaf clover. All three leaves are of equal size and quality, and they join at the stem to make one clover. This reminds you of the most Blessed Trinity. All three Persons are equal in all things yet they are One God, one divine Being.

1. Yes, the most Blessed Trinity is the great mystery of our holy faith. We hold it firmly in our Catholic belief, because Jesus has revealed it to us in his Gospel-message that "he and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30), and "the Holy Spirit will be sent by the Father" (Jn. 14:26). But as a true Israelite, Jesus professed one and only God (Mk. 12:29). All down the centuries, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church have fought strenuously to maintain this truth, though it took time to clarify it properly: One God in three divine Persons, equal in all things, equal in power and majesty, in holiness and beauty, in mercy and love: Father, Son and Spirit.

2. But Jesus did not only want us to believe this great mystery and then stow it away in a corner of our minds. He wants us to realize how meaningful it is to live this mystery. Each of the divine persons is very active in our individual lives: the Father loves us so much that he gives us his Son (Jn. 3:16) and gives him up to death for us (Gal. 2:20). The Son becomes our Brother and Savior, undergoing the victim death on the cross for our sakes to free us from the consequences of sin and death. The Spirit is poured out into our hearts and dwells there creating in them an atmosphere

of love and peace, as is mentioned in the second reading. Continually the Spirit is at work transforming the heart of man into active in our spiritual and temporal welfare because they love us. They constantly couple us with blessings so that our lives prove fruitful for time and eternity.

3. What is our response to the infinite love of the most blessed Trinity for us? Every Sunday, and often when reciting the rosary, we make a profession of faith. Aware of God's love, let us recite it joyfully and whole-heartedly, making it truly a profession of our inmost convictions. When we were baptized, we were immersed in the new atmosphere of the New Testament, which is that of the Trinity. Thus our prayers ought to revolve around all three persons of the Godhead. We pray through the Son, for he is our mediator with the Father, but we pray in the Spirit, for in that Spirit alone can we cry out "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). The Father is our ultimate goal as it was that of Jesus while he was on earth. He tended always and most faithfully toward the Father.

What a privilege it is to have entered into this perfect community of love: that of the Blessed Trinity, after which all community life is modeled. Someday in the vision of heaven we shall be given to see the beauty and the greatness of this mystery. Now in humble faith, let us believe and adore.

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

(June 8th, 1980)

First Reading: Genesis 14:18-20. Melchizedek prefigures Christ the Priest. Even Jewish tradition considered the Messiah to be both king and priest (as was Melchizedek: Ps. 110: 1-4), and it also identified Salem with Jerusalem (Ps. 76:3), the local of Christ's priestly sacrifice. His name means "king of justice" or "my king is justice" while Salem has an assonance with shalom (peace), hence, king of peace (Heb. 7:2). He was priest of El-Elyon (the most high God) whom Abraham identifies with the Lord his God (v. 23). As priest Melchizedek offers a sacrificial meal of bread and wine in thanksgiving, the very elements chosen by Jesus for the eucharistic sacrificial meal of thanksgiving. Abraham is blessed by Melchizedek and gives him tithes, thus acknowledging his superiority, a point that is developed in Hb. 7:4-10. The blessing extends to all who are in the loins of Abraham, namely, the entire People of God, whom Christ has blessed with abundance of gifts.

Second Reading: First Corinthians 11:23-26. Together with 10:21, this is the earliest witness to the Eucharist (written about 56 A.D.) Paul either had the revelation directly from the Lord or the tradition from the Apostles. It contains clear statements about the nature of the Eucharist: 1) The Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ. The words are crystal clear (vv. 24-25) as is the inference from v. 29. In Greek it is simply stated: "This (is) my Body which (is) for you", body in the Hebrew mind meaning the whole person is so far as visibly perceptible, thus a sacrifice, all for them. Two figures of speech are employed in the second part: The container (cup) stands for what is contained in it (the Blood), and the effect (covenant) is mentioned instead of the cause (Blood, that is, the redemptive death). Christ's sacrifice of himself brought about the permanent covenant between God and man.

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

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

4) The Apostles are empowered to perpetuate the very act which Christ performed: "Do this in remembrance of me" (vv. 24-25). This power passes on to their successors because it must be enacted "until he comes" (v. 26).

Reading of the Good News: Luke 9:11b-17. Luke recounts the multiplication of the loaves with details that are meant to symbolize the Eucharistic meal in the community for whom he is writing. Sunset was the time of the first Eucharistic meal. Jesus comes to the aid of a multitude hungry for food, and feeds them by multiplying bread. He will call himself the Bread of Life in a long discourse on the Eucharist (Jn. 6:35). The Early Church made the fish the symbol of Christ, since the Greek word for fish was an acrostic spelling "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" (ichthyus). The meal was to be taken in groupings, in orderly fashion. Jesus first offers a prayer of thanksgiving (the blessing), breaks the bread and gives it to the crowd through his ministers. All the fragments left over are gathered and preserved. Twelve may indicate that all twelve apostles gathered the fragments after distributing them. The action shows that Jesus frowned upon any waste of food, but it also points in Luke's mind to the care which the believing community takes to

preserve the particles of the Eucharist left over. This stupendous miracle manifests above all the limitless power and munificence of Jesus, who is likewise able to give himself to countless throngs in the Eucharist to satiate their hunger.

OUTLINE FOR HOMILY: Hungry for the Life of Jesus.

Introduction: It was in Africa. The chaplain was being called to the bedside of a 23 year old young man who had been blind since birth. Lying on his back he told his story: "My mother died when I was a baby. My father took me from place to place. When I was all ready for baptism, my father would move to another town. So I never got baptized. I beg you, baptize me now. Otherwise, after leaving the hospital, I will miss being baptized again!" He could read the Bible in Braille and he knew the whole story of Jesus. The sister in attendance gave him necessary instructions, and the chaplain baptized him with the name he wanted to bear: Christian is his name. He followed all the ceremonies of baptism and first communion with tears rolling down his cheeks. His smile was magnificent. He couldn't thank them enough. He got out his mandolin and played and sang songs of thanksgiving. Now he really belonged! Jesus was his Life*

1. The Lord in his wisdom knew that man is hungry for God. God made him for himself. So he devised this great sacrament of his love, in order that everyone could come, any day, without pay, to receive the Bread of Life to make one strong. The only price to be paid was to be baptized into the believing community, to be in God's friendship (that is, to be in sanctifying grace), and to want this Food from a motive of pleasing God or deriving benefit for the inner man. This is a very easy price to pay, and thousands are receiving this Food of the strong day after day. Many make real sacrifices to rise earlier, or to abstain from food and drink (except water) for an hour previous, and to keep themselves properly prepared in spirit for this sacred banquet. But they realize its strengthening effects. That is why they do not wish to be deprived of it.

2. What a blessing that Pope Pius X extended Communion to the little children, and encouraged its frequent reception! Before that, during the last century, communion was not received until about the 14th or 15th year, and then not at all frequently. But the saintly Pope, who was later canonized by the Church, sensed the longing of the Heart of Jesus to enter into our hearts often, and when we are still very young and unspoiled by sin. Since the first decade of this century, what a change has come to the Body of Christ that is nourished frequently by this heavenly Food! The Eucharistic

sacrifice has again become the central event in the lives of many Catholics, the liturgy has been completely revised and brought close to the people; the thousands that frequent our churches especially on Sundays but also on weekdays, and partake of the Bread of Life, are very edifying. The Eucharist is desired by young and old alike. They are hungry for the Lord.

3. Some caution, however, is to be kept in mind. There ought to be some preparation for the reception of this sacrament. The best preparation is our full participation in the entire Eucharistic sacrifice, being present also at the very beginning. Fasting from eating and drinking (except water) is the prescription of law, and it is meant to make us show respect for the divine Food which we are about to receive. Moreover, acts of faith, hope and love inflame the heart to receive the Lord, not in a routine way, but with fervor of heart. Our hunger for the Bread that gives immortality will dictate what is proper and fitting to welcome the King of kings and Shepherd of our souls. He alone can still the hunger of the human heart.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (June 15th, 1980)

First Reading: Second Samuel 12:7-10.13. In spite of all the favors the Lord had shown David, he sinned grievously by adultery, followed up by murder of the woman's husband who was a foreigner. David acknowledged his guilt, and did penance. The all-merciful Lord forgave him, though his sin was manifold. Yet temporal punishment for his family and posterity would remain as a reminder. Dissension would be their lot.

Second Reading: Galatians 2:16.19-21. Paul was convinced that the legal observances of the Law could never make a man inwardly holy. All holiness must flow from our acceptance of Christ and his salvific work. The Law was only preparatory and its purpose was to lead men through Christ to God. Paul's mysticism shines forth in his being nailed to the cross with Christ, and living totally in union with him. He lives in the Christ-life in faith and acceptance of love.

Reading of the Good News: Luke 7:36 to 3:3 (or 7:36-50). Since, according to the customs of the time, Jesus was reclining at table on a couch with the feet extended outward, it was not difficult for the woman to anoint them. Overcome with loving gratitude, her tears also flowed freely and the simplest way to wipe them was with her long hair.

Jesus proved to Simon that he truly was a prophet by discerning his thoughts. He has only praise for the woman, who was truly repentant of her sinful life and showed every mark of courtesy which Simon had denied him. Like the money lender in the parable, the good God remits every debt, big or small. Gratitude will be respectively greater from the one whose debt was greater.

Translators differ in the sense given for v. 47. For some, the love of the woman brought about the forgiveness of her sins (NAB), while for others she was showing loving gratitude because of her sins already forgiven (JBC).

HOMILY: Mercy Unlimited

Introduction: Alessandro was his name. He was the young man who tried to seduce Maria Goretti to sin with him, and when she strenuously resisted, he stabbed her to death with 14 strokes. She died a martyr of purity and was canonized a saint, and pronounced a model of youth. Maria forgave him before she died, and undoubtedly kept praying for his conversion. Alessandro was sent to prison and gradually his heart began to change. He became truly repentant, and after his release from prison he entered a monastery to work there as a simply, humble laborer. Here was another triumph of divine mercy. Once bent on sinful purposes, a murderer, but changed into a saintly penitent.

1. One of the most appealing characteristics of the good God is His infinite mercy. David sinned deeply, piling offense upon offense: uncontrolled desire, adultery, gross deceit, and then murder. Yet he sincerely repented, did penance, and had the assurance from the Lord his sins were forgiven, ugly and manifold thought they were. The sinful woman in the Gospel had a public reputation of being evil, yet she turned to Christ in sorrow and grief, and the Lord forgave all her sins. This has repeated itself over and over again in the hearts of countless men and women. Indeed, the Lord is all for mercy.

2. All that the Lord asks of the sinner is sincere compunction of heart: the realization and admission that he has done wrong, made a mistake in life, failed in his ideals; but deeply regrets to have offended his Lord and God who has showered such constant blessings on him. Is this difficult? One act of true love of God, and he comes again to take up his abode in our hearts (Jn. 14:23). But there are two enemies of compunction. One is despair. Despair gives up all hope of being forgiven because of the enormity of one's sins or their never-ending frequency. It often gives itself

up to all manner of licentiousness, being unable to unleash itself from the meshes of sin. Judas despaired and ended it all. But what are all the sins of innumerable worlds pitted against the infinite mercy of an infinitely loving God? St. Therese of the Child Jesus stated that if she were guilty of all the sins of the world, she would fling herself into the ocean of God's love and mercy, knowing that He would forgive her. For He is all mercy.

3. The second enemy of compunction is presumption. Such a person rushes head-long into any and every occasion of sin, ruthlessly discarding all precautions, assuring himself that God will always be merciful and not let him sin, or, what is worse, he will always forgive him his sins, so why worry? They blandly enter any movie-house even though they know the showing is foul, or enter massage parlors and similar joints, assuring themselves that they are mature and have plenty of self-control: Such an attitude is so unworthy of the goodness of God who detests evil in every form, and for whom sin is not a playtoy to be tossed around. To act thus is to make a mockery of God's loving-forgiveness and mercy. True compunction, on the contrary, realizes its weakness, its sinfulness, but throws itself on the bosom of the merciful Father, like the prodigal son in the Gospel-parable.

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(June 22nd, 1980)

First Reading: Zechariah 12:10-11. The inspired author of this prophecy introduces the chapter with an oracle proclaiming the victory of God's people over the heathen, after which the messianic age begins, with its manifold blessings of the Spirit. "Pour out" frequently points to the messianic age (cf. Joel 3:1). The gift of the Spirit results in a changed attitude. There is great mourning over an only son and the firstborn among his brothers. In the New Testament, this prophecy is seen fulfilled in Jesus, pierced with a lance (Jn. 19:37; Rev. 1:7). The mourning over his death is compared to another mourning well known to the readers of his time, perhaps over good King Josiah, who met death prematurely in the plains of Megiddo (2 Chr. 35:24).

Second Reading: Galatians 3:26-29. Once a man has accepted Christ fully (faith), no matter what his race or color or standing, he becomes through baptism a child of God. Baptism complements faith, since it publicly manifests the belief of a man. Such a one has put on a new identity, his previous identity having been absorbed

by the new one: that of Christ (cf. Rom. 13:14). All who are incorporated into Christ form one (Greek masculine pronoun) great Body Person of Christ, and as such are Abraham's offspring, for whom the promised blessings were reserved. This is the climax of the first part of the letter, and it loudly proclaims the unity and spiritual equality of all Christians.

Reading of the Good News: Luke 9:18-24. Once the chosen band in the representative person of Peter acknowledges Jesus as the long expected Messiah-King, Jesus accepts it, but first cautions them from publicizing the fact, lest the false expectation of the people regarding a sensational, political Messiah stand in the way of his plans for man's salvation. Now he is ready to disclose to the Twelve what kind of a Messiah he is for the present era, and this was a totally unexpected revelation. Yes, he is the Messiah, but a suffering Messiah, like the suffering Servant of Yahweh in Is. 53. He will be rejected by the very leaders of his people, something incredible to the Twelve, so that they hardly hear his last words about being raised from the dead.

Jesus then lays down the conditions for discipleship for all and everyone who wants to join him: 1) he must be willing to give up his own selfish aim and ambitions. 2) daily take up his cross, that is, willingly suffer whatever the Lord places on his shoulders to bear and 3) follow along the same path that Jesus trod and traced for his disciples, the path of love in total service of his fellowmen. To give in to all one's desires and enjoy life to the full here below will only end in frustration, while he who is willing to give up for Jesus' sake all that this life has to offer, will have it forever (he will save it).

HOMILY: The Challenge of the Cross

Introduction: "You're going to be a cripple for the rest of your life. You'll never play football again". This was told "Rocky" Eleier after a bullet struck him in the thigh in Vietnam, and sharpnel shattered several bones in his legs. But fierce determination, sturdy faith in God and many painful operations plus a gruelling schedule at re-habilitation for many months gave him slow recovery and put him back on the footfall field as a star player. He has discovered the challenge of adversity.—His adversity made him a stronger and a more determined person.

1. The cross was a sign of ignominy and disgrace when it was placed on the shoulders of Christ, but then he made it a symbol of victory and glory. He met the challenge and turned it into a triumph. Today the Cross is the symbol of Christ all around the globe. By it, he showed the world how much God loved it. By it he redeemed

us from the slavery of Satan. By means of it he took away all our sins and opened wide the gates of heaven. Through the cross he himself came to glory. Thus he told the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: "Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and thus enter into glory"? (Lk. 24:26). This lesson he had to impress on the Apostles and on all his followers. The Cross is a challenge. Meet it. It leads to triumph.

2. When the Roman Emperor Constantine was about to challenge his adversary, it is said he had a vision of the cross with the words: In this sign you shall conquer. So he placed those words on his standard and gained the victory. From that time on the Cross has marched across the world in triumph. Constantine gave full liberty to the Church ; it came out of the catacombs and began to plant the cross in every land. The babe at baptism is signed with the cross. The cross is the sign of forgiveness in the sacrament of healing and reconciliation. Every blessing given by the ministers of the Church is accompanied by the sign of the Cross. Even the tombstones of deceased Christians are marked in a military cemetery with the Cross of Christ. And today many young people are beginning to wear a small golden cross around the neck as an emblem of their faith. The Cross is a sign of salvation, of victory.

3. For everyone of us the Cross is a challenge. That is what Jesus tells us in today's gospel-reading. If we wish to follow him, we must take up our cross daily, be it large or small, heavy or light, and follow after Jesus. It is not a wooden cross that we carry but it consists in various disagreeable situations that can meet us at any time. Examine what your cross is. Is it conquering old habits that are incompatible with the Christ-life we live? Is it being patient with those we daily come in contact with? Is it suffering, mental or physical, a lingering ailment, a delicate situation, an annoying "something" in your life? Or is it inner discouragement, darkness of spirit, lack of energy or spirit, that makes God seem so far away? Meet the challenge of the cross. It leads to victory. It has a glorious end: we shall overcome! We shall rise again even though we die, for we share Christ's sufferings, and therefore we shall share his triumph and his glory (Rom. 8:17). In the Cross is peace, in the Cross is salvation, in the Cross is glory!

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL APOSTLES (June 29th, 1980)

First Reading: Acts 12:1-11. King Herod Agrippa I, (grandson of Herod the Great who had massacred the Holy Innocents) won the favor of the Jews by scrupulously following the Law while living

in Judaea (though living elsewhere like a pagan), and desiring to please the Jews he began now to persecute the Christians. After beheading James the Greater (son of Zebedee), he put Peter, the acknowledged leader of the Christians, into prison. But heavenly interference foiled the plan of the king, and the Lord restored Peter to the believing community, manifesting his power over king and Jew alike. This divine act gave Peter assurance for all future trials.

Second Reading: Second Timothy 4:6-8.17-18. Another prison scene. Paul sees his death as a sacrificial offering, like a libation of oil or wine poured out to the divinity. He is not afraid of death. It is the crowning achievement of his life, which he compares to an athlete's match or a race. The Lord crowns with justice all who have him at heart and strive likewise to lead a life pleasing to him. Paul relies entirely on the Lord to rescue him for all hindrances to his service, and finally from death itself.

Reading of the Good News: Matthew 16:13-19. Jesus had asked all, but Peter as chief-representative spoke up in answer. It seems that Matthew in grouping his material here synthesizes two confessions of faith: Peter's confession of the messiahship of Jesus at Caesarea, and the confession of the Early Church (with Peter) after the resurrection. (This is in line with the decree Dei Verbum, 19). A confession of the divinity in such clarity before the resurrection is less probable. In the parallels: Mk. 8:29, and Lk. 9:20, there is at Caesarea only a profession of the Messiahship. Even in Mt. 16:20 which is the end of this scene, there is only reference to the messiahship. Matthew places both confessions here, for in this section (ch. 16-17) he is out to prove the divinity of Christ.

Jesus in turn promises Peter the Headship over his community. He names Peter "Rock" (which is Peter's name in Aramaic), for Jesus is building a new edifice of the People of God on him, one of stability, and the foundation of unity. God's People of Old stemmed from Abraham as rock (Is. 51:1). Church in Greek is *ecclesia* (Hebrew *qahal*) meaning assembly, community. Though used only here and in Mt. 18:16 in all four gospels, it is the common designation for the Christian community in the letters of Paul. It matters little if Jesus used the phrase itself, or if it is a clarification by the Early Church of his mind to form his apostles into the new People of God. They understood this well and transmitted the fact to the Early Church. The new People of God is one (my Church), though Jesus never gave it the title which *Iglesia ni Cristo* claims.

The gates (or jaws) of the underworld can be considered as a figure of speech for death which had no power over Jesus nor will

it win out over the community of believers. Or it can be taken as the hostile powers of evil. They will neither prevail (putting the Church on the defensive) nor hold out putting her on the offensive). She will win in the battle against evil and death itself. The keys symbolize the authority given to the chief steward in the kingdom. To bind and loose can be taken doctrinally for forbidding and permitting something, or disciplinarily, for excluding or absolving someone. Thus, Peter is given a comprehensive mandate with regard to the means of salvation, a strictly divine charge, by which authority exercised on earth is valid in heaven.

HOMILY: Pillars of the Church

Today we honor Peter, the fisherman, from the Sea of Galilee, who was made by Christ the Great Fisherman of the sea of the world, with the authority of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to bring all mankind into the fish-net of the Church. Today we honor Paul the one-time Pharisee, who by a single encounter with the Risen Christ, considered all his learning as rubbish, and left it to be filled with the knowledge of Christ and be the Apostle of the nations, teaching them the one law of love. These two are the two pillars of the Church, who uphold her with the authority of the keys and the sword of the word of God.

It was Peter who had the courage to take the lead in professing Christ as the long-awaited Messiah-King in the name of all his fellow-apostles. On the first day of Pentecost he boldly confessed Christ before all the crowds and then again and again before the leaders of the People. Though he had, under great stress, failed his Master on the night of the Passion, yet now, filled with the Spirit of Christ, he openly bore witness to him as his Savior and Lord, despite the threats, the scourging and even imprisonment.

It was Paul who had pursued the Christians to death, dragging them out of their homes and handing them over to the Jewish authorities, but overcome by Christ on the road to Damascus, and filled with heavenly light, he at once began to confess Jesus as Son of God in the synagogues of the Jews, though they contradicted him and endeavored to kill him. What a glorious witness he bore in those decades following his conversion! Often imprisoned, five times scourged by the Jews, three times beaten, three times shipwrecked, once stoned and left for dead. He encountered many and various dangers on his journeys, but neither the perils of land or sea, nor the opposition of man could stop this fire-brand from carrying the message of Christ to the farthest corners of the Roman Empire.

Those are the men we honor today. Both have fought the good fight to the end and are now crowned with glory before all the world. Of Peter it is said that when they came to crucify him, he begged to be crucified upside down, for he said he was not worthy to be crucified like his Master. Paul was beheaded, and legend has it that three springs sprang out of the ground on the spot, so that it is called "Three Springs" to this day. Peter and Paul have strengthened the faith and love of the Infant Church by their giant lives while they lived and by their gallant victory in death.

We turn to them today to strengthen the Church of today spread all over the world. The enemies of Christ are many, and there are even those within the fold of Christ who weaken the witness to Christ by their false or watered-down teachings, by their permissiveness in the field of morals. To Peter we turn that he may continue to manifest his authority through his successor, the Great White Shepherd in Rome, and show the way to salvation with continued courage and straight forwardness. To Paul we turn that by his intercession many will follow in his footsteps to preach the Good News far and wide, upholding the truth in all things and making known to a tired world the loving-kindness of the Blessed Savior and the riches of his knowledge. May they arouse us to genuine deeds of valor for Christ and his Body-Person, the Church, deeds which they themselves never desisted from accomplishing while on earth. From heaven may they intercede for us.

BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES FOR JULY

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (July 6th, 1980)

First Reading: Isaiah 66:10-14c. A burst of ecstatic joy from the last chapter of Third Isaiah, an unknown poet whose writings were added to those of the great prophet. Exultant joy will fill the Jerusalem of the new People of God, for the Lord has filled her with delight (65:18)). All nations flow to her with abundant offerings. Now she is universal Mother of all peoples, fondling her children, and giving them plentiful nourishment and delight. This image of a loving mother, vividly drawn and elaborated, finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Church of the New Covenant. Suddenly in v. 14, it is the Lord himself who in the new Jerusalem will act as a mother

comforting her children. (This passage gave the impetus to St. Therese of the Child Jesus to initiate her little way of confidence and love).

Second Reading: Galatians 6:14-18. Christ crucified is Paul's sole boast, for that salvific act of Jesus meant new life for men. Crucified with Christ (2:19) Paul is dead to the "world", that is, anything inimical to God's reign in Christ. All the external observances with which his opponents were trying to shackle the Christians were meaningless. Inner transformation into a new creature in Christ by his Spirit alone matters. Those who follow Paul in this, constitute the new Israel of God.

The Latin word "stigmata" in v. 17 has a meaning in present usage which Paul did not have in mind. Rather, he is referring to the scars and marks left by the stoning and scourgings he had endured, branding him as a slave of Christ. As Christ's possession, he is not to be molested. Now he can really glory in the flesh (in contrast to his adversaries glorying in their fleshy circumcision). A final plea for peaceful reconciliation is sounded in a last appeal to them as brothers.

Reading of the Good News: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20 (or: 10:1-9). The mission of the seventy-two disciples prefiguring the universal mission of the Church. Its salient points are:

- 1) For mutual encouragement, they are not sent out alone but in pairs.
- 2) Prayer is enjoined that many laborers be found to gather the harvest.
- 3) Their urgent mission must not be held up by trivialities. Much hostile opposition will be incurred.
- 4) Theirs is a mission of peace, which is bestowed as a blessing. It will only benefit those who receive it properly disposed.
- 5) The laborers deserve their wages in the form of board and lodging, but they are not to be choosy with regard to food and dwelling.
- 6) They are to proclaim the presence of God's reign over men through acceptance of the Master. Non-acceptance will be met with a symbolic act, indicating that they have no further responsibility in their conversion.

The real motive for their joy should be the presence of God's reign (11:20), which puts an end to Satan's reign over men, and, secondly, that they have a share in that reign of God (v. 20). Christ's disciples have power overall diabolical influences.

OUTLINE FOR HOMILY: The Crying Need for Missionaries

Introduction: Father Martin was in the concentration camp at Dachau in Germany in the time of Hitler. Undergoing all that such a situation entailed, he made a vow that if he survived he would go to the missions and would never in his entire life complain about anything. He survived, being released when the Allied troops liberated the prisoners. He volunteered for mission work in difficult sections of India, and all who work with him can attest that he is never heard to complain. His labors and sufferings have so much more meaning for him now.

1. Today more than ever, the Church needs men and women who will bring Christ and the Good News to those millions who do not as yet know him, or know him very imperfectly. While certain countries have closed their doors to Catholic missionaries, other, chiefly the African countries, are begging for priests Brothers, nuns and lay apostles who will volunteer to bring the blessings of Christ and the Good News to thousands who are hungry for God. Conversions in those countries continue by leaps and bounds. It is the youth of today who must respond to the challenge, youth that is willing to forego the comforts of the home-country and meet the challenge that such a calling entails. It will demand sacrifice. Health, talent, and proper motivation will be requisite, but what more glorious calling can there be than to bring the modern world to Christ?

2. That is why the Savior is asking us to pray to the Father in heaven, that he draw many by his magnetic power of the Spirit to the missionary vocation. It is the Spirit of God who implants the seed of a vocation in the heart of the young. Parents and teachers may nourish it, but it is the Spirit who continues to bring it to full flowering under the continued cooperation of the person himself. Now, it is fervent prayer that wins the grace of such a calling. The Lord Himself in the message of today clearly requests such prayers. Will we be deaf to his entreaties? "The harvest is rich but the workers are few: therefore ask the harvest-master to send workers into his harvest". Parents can add a short prayer for missionary vocations in the family evening prayer or after the evening meal. That will go far to inspire those who hear and pray the prayer. Teachers in schools can have such prayers said on given occasions, and the parish priest can have them often added to the general intercessions in the eucharistic sacrifice on Sundays. Did not the Savior say: Ask and you shall receive!

3. In many places the radio is made use of as an excellent means to bring the truths of our holy faith to outlying stations and even

into the individual homes. Others made constant use of the apostolate of the press, and in some cases even of the TV. But we must admit that far more could be done. The entire Church according to Vatican II is a mission-minded People, and everyone must endeavor to bring Christ to his neighbor, each in his own way. Journalists of our daily newspaper can add their contribution, if they have the courage and the zeal. To think that after two thousand years, Christ and his marvellous plan for man's happiness is so little known to the greater number of those on earth is something that ought to set every sincere Catholic thinking. Am I sharing the blessings of the faith with my fellowmen? Am I at least praying often and earnestly as requested by the Lord for missionary vocations?

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (July 13th, 1980)

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:10-14. An exhortation to return to God with our whole heart by listening to his voice as it resounds in the word of God proclaimed to us. It is not difficult to lay hold of God's word, as if it were "way up there" or in some remote place hard to reach. On the contrary, God's word is very near: by listening to it attentively, it enters into our very heart. God is present in his word, and it is up to those who receive it to put it into action.

Second Reading: Colossians: 1:15-20. A Christological passage of highest import, proclaiming Christ as center of the universe, directing all things to their final end, and head of God's new creation, the Church:

1) As perfect man (adam in Hebrew), Christ is the perfect visible representation of God. 2) Thus he holds supremacy over all (as man was told in Genesis to have dominion over all things: 1:28f). His supreme position is given in the threefold relation of the universe to Christ: a) "in him": he is the center of all, bringing all things together in harmony as in Eph. 1:10; b) "through him" he is actively bringing all things into existence and conserving them in it; c) "for him" he is the final goal and perfection of all creation. 4) The Risen Christ is the Head of his Body-Person, the Church, and the beginning of the new creation. 5) In him resides God's "pleroma", that is, the fullness of God's sanctifying powers concentrated in Christ, who in turn concentrates it as the Church of which he is the Head. (The ancients considered the head as imparting all vital influence to the rest of the body). 6) Christ in his supreme sacrifice on Golgotha is the means of reconciliation with God for all created

beings, and the restoration of peace and harmony for the entire universe. And this is he who was the despised Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified man of sorrows!

Reading of the Good News: Luke 10:25-37. Quoting a revealed precept in vv. 25ff, the lawyer was aware that supernatural love of God and neighbor is required to obtain life eternal, but its specific application was not clear to him. Who exactly was his neighbor? Jesus answered by telling this super parable. The picture unfolds in three scenes:

- 1) **Misfortune:** On the lonely road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, a man falls among brigands. The distance is some twenty kilometers with a descent of a thousand meters amid rugged cliffs and deep ravines, often infested with just such outlaws. They beat him up badly, strip him and leave him lying there half dead, covered with blood and dirt, a prey to insects and the heat.
- 2) **Indifference:** Some countrymen come upon him (of the O.T. priestly caste). Unmoved, and uninterested, they steer clear and pass by.
- 3) **Compassion:** A Samaritan stops at once at the sight of the misery, and, forgetting all else, is only intent on alleviating the man's needs.

Note:

- He is a foreigner; on no terms of friendship with the Jew in need.
- He is travelling to Jerusalem, eager to accomplish some business (cf. v. 35).
- Moved to compassion he sacrifices his best articles for the man: wine and oil provide food and condiment, but the wine can act as an astringent, cleansing the wounds, and oil is a soothing, healing salve.
- From his own linens he makes bandages to bind up the wounds.
- He gives him **personal care**, placing him on his own beast of burden (despite the blood and dirt), and carefully steadying him while he walks alongside till they reach the inn. There he watches over him personally until the crisis is over. Then he arranges with the innkeeper for continued care, and promises to make up any extra expenses on his return.

In short, this is an exalted picture of love in action. The Samaritan disregarded every consideration of urgent business, surrounding dangers, national pride and sentiment, as well as personal comfort. He offered every service he could think of with promptness, great

personal care, generosity and genuine love. [In the original Greek, the verbs are compounded with prepositions which intensify the verb-action).

Jesus made it clear that my neighbor is not only he who lives near me or is one of the same nationality (as the Jews thought); any needy person of any country must be regarded as my neighbor. Moreover, true love of neighbor is unselfish and self-sacrificing time, goods, one self. It does all in its power to relieve the necessities of one's fellowmen in need. (Neighbor is a correlated term. The Samaritan acted as a true neighbor because of his actions. The Lawyer is admonished to follow suit).

Homily suggestion: This graphic picture lends itself to speak in detail on the Samaritan who in our Lord's mind represents the ideal Christian; but in the mind of St. Luke evidently the Lord himself who came to earth and found man set upon by Satan and robbed of all he had. But the Lord in turn gave him everything that was his, especially the sacraments, but above all his own personal love, and healed him completely. The parable can be illustrated by the following true incident:

A seminarian was walking along a side road, when he noticed somewhat ahead of him an old man hobbling along. Suddenly a car swept past, swerving for no apparent reason, and hitting the man knocking him unconscious, but never stopping. The seminarian ran up, and saw another car coming. He waved him down. The driver was a business man on his way to the city nearby, but he stopped, took the man in and laid him on his shiny-covered seats, drove him in another direction to the hospital, and after seeing that he was cared for, continued his journey. A perfect stranger in need, another good Samaritan.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (July 20th, 1980)

First Reading: Genesis 18:1-10a. In a conflation of various traditions, the author presents Abraham entertaining with consummate Oriental hospitality, three strangers, one of whom represents the Lord Himself. The simplicity of the divine visit and the intimate conversation remind us of the intimacy of man with God in Paradise, marking Abraham as truly the special friend of God. No other scene in Genesis represents God in so human a manner (anthropomorphism). Climaxing the visit is the renewed promise of a son to Abraham by his wife Sarah.

Second Reading: Colossians 1:24-28. The tremendous mystery of "Christ in us" (v. 27) presupposes such an intimate union of Christ with the Christian, that the sufferings of each member are accounted as sufferings of Christ. Although Christ's salvific work alone was sufficient for man's salvation, yet all Christians till the end of time must share like Paul in Christ's redemptive sufferings, to bring the Body of Christ to full measure. In Paul's case, his sufferings were intimately bound up with his mission of preaching Christ's gospel-message, with its demands of Christian love. This brought him untold sufferings time and again. But he never ceases to preach Christ, for Christ alone is the true glory of mankind.

Reading of the Good News: Luke 10:38-42. The Lord is welcomed into the home of Martha and her sister Mary (who is nowhere identified as the Magdalene). Martha is the active and energetic type, while Mary is quiet and retiring (as can also be seen in Jn. 11:20). Jesus is well aware that bodily needs must be cared for, and surely appreciates Martha's hospitality. Yet he gently chides her **for over-stressing the material side of things.** (That the remonstrance is gentle can be concluded from the double calling of her name which softens the tone). Preference must always be given to the spiritual, for this is the Savior's main aim wherever he goes, and Mary has wisely chosen to be nourished first by Him. Martha's great faith is evident from Jn. 11:24. (Although some manuscripts have "just a few things" referring to a few dishes, instead of "Just one thing" referring to the spiritual, the latter reading is preferable, because Jesus evidently understands it thus at the end of the verse.)

OUTLINE FOR HOMILY: Suffering with Christ (second reading)

(Note: For a homily on the message of the Good News, see Bol. Ecl., June-July 1977, 432: "Troubled about Many Things")

Introduction: Years ago, Bishop Bernard Shiel, Auxiliary of Chicago, did much in the line of social work for youth and the working-man. Once he gave an address in a large auditorium on social justice, simultaneously opposing communistic tendencies which at that time were rapidly increasing in that part of the country. On leaving, he walked down the main aisle. The atmosphere was tense, for many in the audience favored leftist views. Suddenly half way down, an old woman full of resentment at the Bishop's views, coughed up from the depth a mouthful of spittle and spat it directly in his face as he passed. There was a dead silence. The Bishop paused, took out his handkerchief and wiped off the spittle, then without a word, passed on. All who saw it or heard of it were impressed. Like the Master, he was spat upon and did not resist.

1. Suffering comes to everyone in life. Old age suffers bodily ailments, middle age from re-adjustments in life, family troubles, and business worries, as well as deep concern over the new generation. Youth goes through frustrations and disappointments, and seeks a meaning to life which is shared so unevenly by many. The great apostle also suffered much, both physical pain from frequent persecutions, as well as mental anguish from the care of his Christian foundations. But suffering for him had a deep meaning: He was crucified with Christ, and Christ was living in him (Gal. 2:19-20). In Christ he found the necessary strength as well as deep meaning for whatever befall him. It was his share of suffering to be filled up for Christ.

2. According to Paul in today's reading, every Christian is allotted his or her share of suffering as a member of the Crucified. These sufferings are salvific and redemptive, and have a saving value for the whole Body. That is the meaning of "filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ." Christ's sufferings while he was on earth were entirely sufficient for the objective redemption of man, but there remains sufferings for each member of Christ, so that having suffered with him, they may also share his glory (Rom. 8:17). Christ the Lord suffers in each of his members anew and will do so until the end of time. It is a greatly strengthening thought that Christ suffers in us, for his very presence gives courage and motivation to bear whatever our Father in heaven deigns to send us.

3. This is what gives daily stamina to those caring for the sick, the aged, the retarded, the addicts. They see Christ suffering again, and seek to relieve his sufferings. Mother Teresa of India goes out of her way to find the most abandoned and helpless man or woman, for in each and everyone she finds Christ her Lord. For the sick themselves, the conviction that Christ dwells in them and suffers in them is of the greatest help to bear their sufferings bravely and patiently. But every state of life can benefit from this conviction. Husbands and wives, old and young are filled with new motivation and strength when they realize they do not do it alone, but that Christ himself is always with them suffering again in his members so that one day he may be glorified in them.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (July 27th, 1980)

First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32. When the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah comes to the knowledge of God (described in human fashion according to the Yahwistic tradition), divine chastisement

is in order. But Abraham bargains with the Lord in genuine Oriental manner, a delightful scene, which reveals the intimacy of Abraham with God; yet the main issue is a theological one. Will God's justice allow the just to be chastised along with the wicked after the manner of collective punishment? Or, on the contrary, will God's mercy even spare the wicked in favor of a few just ones, should these be found? Here we see the principle of collective punishment mitigated, and the great value of virtuous persons in the midst of the community.

Second Reading: Colossians 2:12-14. In baptism, the Christian, professing his faith in Christ's resurrection, was buried symbolically with Christ and rose in the newness of the Christ-life. (These same thoughts are given in greater detail in Romans 6:3-8). By his victim-death on the cross, Christ relieved man of all his sinfulness, as well as of the Law with all its burdens. He paid the debt.

Reading of the Good News: Luke 11:1-13. One of the finest passages in the Gospels on prayer. Words move but example draws. Fascinated by the Master's prayer-life, the disciples beg to be taught. His response is the prayer now offered untold times daily throughout the world. Luke has five petitions which Matthew has enlarged to the covenant number of seven, a favorite with Matthew (see Mt. 6:9-13.).

Jesus teaches us always to approach God as children approach their father. The first two petitions pertain to God's glory and envisage the blessed day when all creatures will recognize the all-holy God, with his reign fully accomplished in them. The next three regard God's children. "Daily bread" includes all the spiritual and material needs for sustaining their life, not excluding a Eucharistic allusion (in the mind of Luke). Forgiveness of sins in closely bound up with our willingness to forgive those who offended us. "Temptation" is better translated trial or test, and refers to persecution which tests one to the utmost.

In the parable of the importunate friend, Jesus describes a man's embarrassment because of an unexpected midnight visitor. In need of something to put before the guest, he goes to his close friend for provisions. The initial refusal is quite understandable for it involves a lot of trouble. To open the door with its large wooden pegs or iron bolts would have caused much disturbance, and would easily have awakened the rest of the family, sleeping on mats on the floor in the same room. Yet, **by persistent pleading**, the friend in need wins out and gets all he needs for his guest. The point of comparison is obviously perseverance in prayer and the determination not to give up despite apparent refusal will assuredly

obtain the desired results. Jesus has evidently the same meaning in mind with the words: Ask and you shall receive etc. Yet to offset the objection that we do not always receive what we ask for, Jesus follows this up with another parable.

The child who asks for wholesome food will not be given harmful objects by a loving father. Man often asks God for what he thinks he needs, but in reality it may be harmful for him. So the prayer is heard by God granting what is useful, wholesome and good for the one asking. God's supreme gift to man is the Holy Spirit and he wants us to ask for this Gift of gifts.

OUTLINE FOR HOMILY: Heard for the better.

Introduction: A young business man prayed fervently to be able to purchase an office room for his business in a certain building. He was about to take over when the owner demanded full payment first. This he could not do at the time. Disconsolate at first, and wondering why his prayer had not been heard, he kept on praying and trusting anyway, that the Lord would not let him down. Two weeks later, the office-room he had wanted to procure burnt in a fire to the ground. Had he moved in, he would have lost all his belongings and savings. God knew best. He understood why God had delayed hearing his prayers.

1. What father will give his child strong alcoholic drink even if he asks for it? He knows it is harmful for the child's stomach at that age. What mother will give her baby the bottle of bright red medicine intended only for adults, just because the child has spotted the bottle and keeps demanding to have it? Instead, father and mother will give what they know is nutritious and in no way harmful for their child. Will the all-loving Father of us all, whom Jesus taught us to address with that intimate title in the "Our Father", be less anxious to keep his children in good spiritual health? Jesus taught us to ask from him our daily bread, something which is nutritious and makes for good growth. We can be sure that God knows all our needs, for he is all-knowing, all-wise and all-loving. He created each of us for himself and his divine Providence daily leads us to our final and happy goal. In asking for our daily bread, we ask for that which will sustain us sufficiently both physically and spiritually, and Our Father in heaven knows best what to give us.
2. But there is need of persevering in prayer, pleading over and over again. Abraham the friend of God could keep requesting the Lord in the first reading to spare the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, because of the innocent people within their walls. He is depicted as bargaining with the Lord in a truly human fashion, to

show that God listens to the pleas of those who love him. Moses did the same for his people when God wished to reject them. Totally selfless was his prayer. Disregarding any personal advantage, Moses pleaded with the Lord to spare them with one motive after the other, till the Lord granted his request (Ex.32:11-14; Num. 14:13-20). Zechariah and Elizabeth prayed long and fervently for a child, and only when all seemed hopeless because Zechariah was old and Elizabeth sterile (Luke 1:18f), was their prayer heard. But then how wonderful! Not only were they granted a male child as they longed for, but the greatest of all the prophets, John the Baptist! The parents of St. Therese of the Child Jesus had many girl-children but prayed ardently for a boy whom they wanted to see a priest of God. Their sorrows was great when the boys died already in infancy. Yet God heard their prayer in a much more remarkable way: they were given a child who would be the inspiration of all priests, seminarians and religious, and the patroness of all missionaries, St. Therese, the Little Flower of Jesus.

3. We ought not overlook the proper disposition necessary for our prayer to be heard. In the Our Father, Jesus wants us to acquire the virtue of forgiveness for wrongs done to us, if we hope to obtain God's mercy and favor. Perhaps this is one reason why the prayers of some are not heard. They are harboring resentment and a grudge against others and are unwilling to forgive injuries suffered. Let them beg the Father in heaven to bestow his Spirit of healing, as is mentioned in the last part of today's Good News, and the Holy Spirit knows well how to heal those wounds and bring about reconciliation. Then the heart is ready to receive the other gifts that God has prepared for it, or for which it is pleading. Will not an all-loving Master more readily grant the requests of his servants when he sees them living in peace and harmony with each other?

L I F E T O D A Y

The Christian Cultural Magazine that will monthly bring to you select reading on relevant topics treated by a carefully selected group of well-known personalities from the world of journalism, art, entertainment and theology.

Apart from other features of interest you will find in our fixed sections articles on:

- * **Family Life:** education of children, marital problems...
- * **Contemporary Ethical Issues:** cloning, abortion, test-tube babies, organ transplatation...
- * **Art Appreciation:** movies, music, performing & entertainment arts...
- * **The Bible**
- * **Filipiniana**
- * **Profiles on Persons and Institutions**
- * **Reflection Time:** short timely meditations
- * **Life of the Church:** events, Church movements...
- * **Modern Living**

There are pages like **Letters to the Editor** and **Our Readers Ask** meant for you. We are open to your comments and questions, in the hope of always improving the quality of our publication. Share with us this joy! Subscribe now. We shall not disappoint you.

OFFICES: LIFE TODAY

183 Blumentritt
San Juan, Metro Manila
Philippines

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 323
Greenhills, Metro Manila
Philippines

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Philippines: 1 year — P50.00
2 years — P80.00

Foreign: 1 year — \$15.00
2 years — \$27.50