



# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

## THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH IS CHRIST GIFT

Pope John Paul II

## DECLARATION ON EUTHANASIA

Sacred Congregation  
for the Doctrine of the Faith

## INAESTIMABILE DONUM

Sacred Congregation  
for the Sacraments and Divine Worship

## THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS AND EVANGELIZATION IN ASIA TODAY

Fausto Gomez-Berlana, O.P.

## IN SEARCH OF THE CHURCH

Marcos Ruiz, O P.

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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## **EDITORIAL**

# **The Philippines, A Rosarian Nation**

When on one day of the current month of October I took the pen to write a few paragraphs for the Editorial of the *BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS*, I could not help but think of the Rosary, because, as May is dedicated to the "Flowers" of Mary, June to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and November to the Poor Souls, so October has been set aside to honor the Virgin Mary in her favorite devotion, the Holy Rosary.

And to write about the Rosary in the Philippines we do not have to beg materials from abroad, because here at home we have a large supply of them. Through the preaching and example of the early missionaries who in a period of over fifty years of evangelization brought the largest portion of the Archipelago under the sweet yoke of Christ, the devotion to the Rosary took deep roots in the minds and hearts of the Filipinos, and the old Chronicles are full of reports of favours and graces granted by Our Lady in response to the prayers and supplications of this her beloved people.

Through her Rosary Our Lady rescued some from sure death, for others she obtained the grace of conversion, blessed with children barren women, protected sea-travellers from the dangers of stormy seas, rice-fields from the inroads of the locust, houses from fire, towns from the pillaging of moslem raiders and the Islands from external aggressors, as History abundantly proves with countless individual cases.

Well known to everyone is the incident when Mother and Child left their niche in Santo Domingo church to make a trip to the coast of Mindoro to save from eternal death a Spanish soldier who, made a heap of putrefaction and a swarm of worms, had remained miraculously alive until a priest arrived to receive his confession, thus opening to him the gates of Paradise. Or the five naval victories of 1646, obtained by two lonely galleons from by far superior Dutch forces; victories which, officially declared as miraculous by the Manila Cathedral Chapter, gave origin to the present devout and colorful celebrations of "La Naval" Novena and Procession.



What was the response of the Filipino people to these favours of Mary? The Jesuit historian, Pedro Murillo Velarde, in his *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas*, fol. 7, gives us a clear and consoling answer: "The devotion to the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin is most unusual in Manila. Not only is there a procession through the streets at night, during which it is sung, in the greater number of houses (if not in all) it is recited publicly, and in some it is repeated two or three times in the day. It has several times given me unbelievable joy as I walk through the streets to hear the Rosary of Mary recited aloud night and day. It is mainly from this that God grants his favours to these Islands, through the intercession of his Mother. And I believe it will be difficult to find a Spaniard, an Indio or a Kafir who does not bring the Rosary and does not recite it daily, even if contrarywise his life is not too Christian".

The Dominican historian Vicente de Salazar repeats the same concepts with almost identical words, and then he adds: "There is something in this city (Manila) which most likely has no similar anywhere in the world, and it is that at any hour of the day and of the night one hears the Rosary of Mary being alternately recited, now in one house now in another..."

About the Pangasinanes Father Aduarte states: "They like very much the devotion of the Rosary and for this reason, after having finished their daily tasks, they grasp it in their hands, praying and contemplating the mysteries of that day".

Now, since History is "Magistra vitae" as Cicero was wont to say, what lesson must we derive from the teachings of the past? "History repeats itself", and in our times we are witnessing its repetition in the Moslem threat from the South, in possible social and political upheavals from within, and in dangers of infiltration of foreign ideologies from abroad. And, as the Rosary proved a powerful instrument of national stability in by-gone times, so it will also prove the same in ours, provided we pray it with that frequency and devotion that our forefathers did.

Pablo Fernández, O.P.

## THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S GIFT AND AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION OF APOSTOLIC SERVICE

*John Paul II has sent the German Episcopal Conference the following letter with regard to questions recently discussed and referred to as the case of Prof. Hans Küng.*

To the venerable Brothers of the German Episcopal Conference  
Venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. The ample documentation which you have published with regard to certain theological affirmations of Prof. Hans Küng, bears witness with what care and good will you endeavoured to clarify this important and difficult problem. Also the latest publications, both the pastoral letter read in the churches on 13 January 1980, and the detailed "Erklärung" published at the same time, are an expression of your responsibility as pastors and teachers, in keeping with the nature of your office and your episcopal mission.

In expectation of the approaching feast of Pentecost, I wish to strengthen you in your task as pastors in the spirit of divine love and truth, and to thank you for all the efforts you have made, over the years, with regard to this problem, in collaboration with the Holy See, in particular with the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The tasks of the latter — always essential for the life of the Church — seem particularly difficult and full of responsibility today. The *Motu proprio* "Integre servandae", which already during the Second Vatican Council specified more precisely the sphere and the procedure of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, stresses the necessity of collaboration with the Episcopate. This is quite in harmony with the *principle of collegiality*, reaffirmed by the Council itself. This collaboration was carried out in a particularly intense way in the case in question. There are many reasons why the Church of our time must show herself to be more than ever a Church of conscious and effective collegiality among bishops and pastors. In such a Church there can take place even more fully what St. Irenaeus said about the Roman See of Peter, indicating it as the centre of the ecclesial community, which must gather and unite the individual local churches and all the faithful (cf. *adversus haereses*: P.G. 7),



In the same way the Church of today must be — more than ever before — the Church of a *real dialogue*, such as indicated by Paul VI in his fundamental encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* at the beginning of his pontificate. The exchange which dialogue implies, must lead to meeting in truth and justice. In dialogue the Church tries to understand man better and thereby also her own mission. She brings him the knowledge and truth revealed to her in faith. Therefore it does not contradict the essence of this dialogue that the Church should not be merely the one that seeks and receives, but also the one that gives, on the basis of a certainty which in such a conversation grows even more and is deepened, but can never be taken away. On the contrary, it would be contrary to the essence of dialogue if the Church were to suspend her own conviction and renounce the knowledge that has already been given to her. Furthermore, the dialogue that bishops carry out with a theologian who teaches the faith of the Church in the name of the Church and charged by her to do so, has a particular character. It is based on different premises from those of the dialogue which takes place with men of different convictions in the common search for a ground of agreement. Here it is a question above all of clarifying whether the person who teaches by order of the Church actually corresponds, and wishes to correspond, to this order.

\* \* \*

With regard to the teaching authorization of Prof. Küng, it was a question above all of asking the following questions: does a theologian who no longer accept completely the doctrine of the Church, still have the right to teach in the name of the Church and in the basis of a special mission received from her? Can he himself still wish to do so, if some dogmas of the Church are contrary to his personal convictions? Can he himself still wish to do so, if some dogmas of the Church are contrary to his personal convictions? And under these circumstances can the Church — in this case her competent authority — continue to oblige him to do so?

The decision of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, taken in common agreement with the German Episcopal Conference, is the result of the honest and responsible answer to the above questions. At the root of these questions and the way of answering them, there is a fundamental right of the human person, that is, the right to truth, whose protection

and defence was at issue. Certainly, Prof. Küng has declared insistently that he wishes to be and remain a Catholic theologian. In his works, however, he shows clearly that he does not consider some authentic doctrines of the churches definitive and binding for himself and for his theology and consequently, on the basis of his personal convictions, he is no longer in a position to carry out the mission which he had received from the bishop on behalf of the Church.

The Catholic theologian, like every scientist, has the right to free analysis and research in his own field; naturally in the way that corresponds to the very nature of Catholic theology. But when it is a question of communicating, orally or in writing, the results of his researches and reflections, it is necessary to respect in a special way the principle formulated by the first Synod of Bishops in the year 1967 with the expression, "*paedagogia fidei*".

It may be fitting and correct to set forth the rights of the theologian, but it is also necessary at the same time to take into due consideration his special responsibilities. Nor must *the right and the duty of the magisterium* to decide whether or not something corresponds to the Church's doctrine of faith and morality, be forgotten. The testing, approval or rejection of a doctrine belongs to the prophetic mission of the Church.

### **Preserving fidelity to Christ and the Gospel**

2. Some question and aspects connected with the discussion about Prof. Küng, are of a fundamental kind and of more general significance for the present period of the post-conciliar renewal. I would like, therefore, to deal with them somewhat more thoroughly.

In the generation to which we belong, the Church has made an enormous effort to understand better her nature and the mission entrusted to her by Christ with regard to man and the world, especially the modern world. She did so by means of the historic service of the Second Vatican Council. We believe that Christ was present in the assembly of Bishops, that he operated in them by means of the Holy Spirit, promised to his disciples on the eve of his passion, when he spoke of the "Spirit of truth" who would teach them every truth and would remind them of everything they had heard from Christ himself (cf. Jn. 14:17-28). From the work of the Council there arose the *programme of the inner renewal of the Church*, a wide and



at the same time courageous programme, based on deep awareness of the true mission of the Church, which is by its very nature missionary.

Even if the post-conciliar period is not free from difficulties (as has been the case now and then in the history of the Church), we believe, nonetheless, that Christ is present in it, the same Christ who sometimes let the Apostles, too, experience storms on the Lake which seemed to be leading them to shipwreck. After the night's fishing when they had caught nothing, he transformed this failure into an unexpected abundant draught, when they cast their nets on the Lord's word (cf. Lk. 5:4-5). If the Church wishes to do justice to her mission at this stage of her history, which is unquestionably a difficult and decisive one, she can do so only by listening to the word of God, that is, by obeying the "word of the Spirit", as it has reached the Church by means of Tradition and, directly, through the magisterium of the last Council.

In order that this work, which is difficult and "humanly" very arduous, can be carried out, special faithfulness to Christ and his Gospel is necessary, because he alone is "the way". Therefore only by *preserving fidelity* to the established signs and by continuing perseveringly along the way that the Church has followed for two thousand years, can we be sure that we shall be sustained by that *power from above* which Christ himself promised the Apostles and the Church as proof of his presence "to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20).

If here is something essential and fundamental in the present stage of service of the Church, it is the particular orientation of souls and hearts to the fullness of the mystery of Christ, the Redeemer of man and of the world and, at the same time, faithfulness to that image of the nature and mission of the Church as it is presented, after so many historical experiences, by the Second Vatican Council. According to the express doctrine of the Council, "every renewal of the Church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 6). Any attempt to replace the image of the Church, as derived from the nature and mission of the Church herself, with another one, would inevitably take us away from the sources of light and the power of the Spirit, which we need so much precisely today. We must not labour under illusions, as if another — more "laicized" — model of the Church could meet more adequately the requirements of a greater presence of the Church in the world and of greater

comprehension for the problem of man. That can be done by a Church that is deeply rooted in Christ, in the sources of her faith, hope and charity.

The Church must also be very humble and at the same time certain that she remains in the same truth, in the same doctrine of faith and morality, which she received from Christ, who has provided her, in this sphere, with the gift of a specific "infallibility". Vatican II inherited from Vatican I the doctrine of Tradition in this connection, confirmed it and presented it in a wider context, namely, in the context of the mission of the Church, which, thanks to participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, has itself a prophetic character. In this connection and closely linked with the "sense of the faith" in which all the faithful participate, that *"infallibility" has the character of a gift and a service.*

\* \* \*

If anyone understands it in a different way, he moves away from the authentic vision of the faith and detaches the Church, in actual fact, even if, perhaps, unconsciously, from the One who "loved" her as her bridegroom and gave himself for her. When Christ endowed the Church with everything indispensable to carry out the mission entrusted to her, could he have withheld from her that gift of certainty about the truth professed and proclaimed? Could he have withheld this gift above all from those who, after Peter and the Apostles, inherit as pastors and teachers a special responsibility towards the community of the faithful? Precisely because man is fallible, Christ could not — if he wished to preserve the Church in the truth — leave her pastors and bishops and above all Peter and his successors without that gifts by means of which he guarantees infallibility in the teaching of the truths of faith and the principles of morality.

So we profess infallibility, which is a gift entrusted by Christ to the Church. We cannot fail to profess it, if we believe in the love with which Christ loved his Church and loves her incessantly.

We believe in the infallibility of the Church not in consideration of any man, but of Christ himself. We are convinced, indeed, that also for the one who participates in a special way in the infallibility of the Church, that infallibility is essentially and exclusively a condition of the service which he must



discharge in this Church. "Power", in fact, cannot be understood and exercised anywhere, much less in the Church, but as service. The example of the Master is decisive in this regard.

\* \* \*

We must be deeply concerned, on the other hand, when *faith in this gift of Christ is Questioned in the Church*. In this case there would be cut simultaneously the roots from which there springs the certainty of the truth professed and proclaimed in the Church. Although the truth about the infallibility of the church, may indeed seem a less central truth with a lower position in the hierarchy of the truths revealed by God and professed by the Church, it is, however, in a way the key to that certainty with which the faith is professed and proclaimed, as well as to the life and behaviour of the faithful. For if this essential foundation is shaken or destroyed, even the most elementary truths of our faith begin at once to disintegrate.

It is a question, therefore, of an important problem in the present post-conciliar period. If the Church is to undertake the work of renewal, she must have a special certainty in the faith, which, while it is renewed in accordance with the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council, remains in the same truth which she received from Christ. Only in this way can she be sure that Christ is present in her bark and steering it firmly through even the most threatening storms.

### **Church cannot renounce truths she proclaims**

3. Anyone who takes part in the history of our century and is aware of the different trials that the Church is going through within herself during these first post-conciliar years, knows about these storms. The Church, which has to face them, must not be affected with uncertainty in the faith and by relativism in truth and morality. Only a Church *deeply consolidated in the faith* can be a *Church of authentic dialogue*. For dialogue requires, indeed, a special maturity in the truth professed and proclaimed. Only this maturity, that is, certainty in the faith, is able to resist the radical negations of our time, even when they use the various means of propaganda and pressure. Only a mature faith can be an effective advocate of true religious freedom, freedom of conscience and all human rights.

The programme of the Second Vatican Council is a courageous one. Therefore it requires in its implementation special confidence in the Spirit who spoke (cf. Rev. 2:7) and an equally fundamental confidence in the power of Christ. This dedication and confidence must be, corresponding to our time, as great as those of the Apostles, who, after the Ascension of Jesus, "with one accord devoted themselves to prayer . . . together with Mary" in the Upper Room of Jerusalem Acts 1:14).

This confidence in the power of Christ certainly calls also for *ecumenical effort for the unity of Christians*, which was started by the Second Vatican Council, provided we understand it as it was presented by the conciliar decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*. It is significant that this document does not speak of a "compromise" but of meeting in a still more mature fullness of Christian truth: "The manner and order in which Catholic belief is expressed should in no way become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren. It is of course, essential that the doctrine be clearly presented in its entirety. Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism which harms the purity of Catholic doctrine and obscures its genuine and certain meaning" (n. 11; cf. n. 4).

So, from the ecumenical point of view of the union of Christians, it cannot be demanded that the Church should renounce certain truths that she proclaims. This would be contrary to the way that the Council indicated. If the Council itself, to reach this purpose, emphasizes that the Catholic faith must be expressed more deeply and more precisely, it also indicates thereby the task of the theologian. Very significant is that passage of the decree *Unitatis Redintegration* in which, dealing directly with the Catholic theologian, it stresses that "Catholic theologians . . . searching together with separated brethren into the divine mysteries", should do so "with love for the truth" (n. 11). I have already referred above to the "hierarchy" or order of the truths of a Catholic doctrine, of which theologians must be aware, especially "when comparing doctrines with one another". The Council refers to this hierarchy "since they (i.e. the truths) vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith" (ibid).

In his way ecumenism, this great heritage of the Council, can become an increasingly mature reality, but only on the way of a great commitment of the Church, inspired by the certainty of the faith and by *confidence in the power of Christ*, by which pioneers in this work have been characterized from the start.

**Loving our brother**

4. Venerable and dear Brothers of the German Episcopal Conference!

We can love Christ only when we love our brothers: one and all of them. Therefore this letter also, which I am writing to you in connection with the recent events regarding Prof. Hans Küng, is determined by love of this brother of ours.

To him, I would like to repeat once more what has already been expressed on another occasion: we continue to hope that it may be possible to arrive at such a meeting in the truth proclaimed and professed by the Church, and that he can again be called a "Catholic theologian". This title necessarily presupposes the true faith of the Church and readiness to serve her mission in the way that has been clearly defined and put into practice in the course of the centuries.

Love demands that we should seek the meeting in truth with every man. Therefore we do not cease to ask God for such a meeting particularly with that man, our brother, who as a Catholic theologian, as he would like to be and remain, must share special responsibility with us for the truth professed and proclaimed by the Church. Such a prayer is, in a certain sense, the fundamental word of love for man, our neighbour, for through it we find him in God himself, who as the only source of love is at the same time, in the Holy Spirit, the light of our hearts and our consciences. It is also the first and deepest expression of that concern for the Church in which everyone and particularly her pastors must participate.

In this communion of prayer and common pastoral solicitude I implore for you, for the imminent feast of Pentecost, the abundance of the gifts of the Divine Spirit and I greet you in the love of Christ with my special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 May, the feast of Christ's Ascension, in the year 1980, the second of my pontificate.

JOANNES PAULUS PP. II

## **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF BISHOPS REGARDING CULTURE AND THE GOSPEL**

*Pope John Paul received on 20 May the Bishops of Japan present in Rome on their "ad limina" visit. After an address of homage by Cardinal Joseph Satowaki the Holy Father delivered the following address.*

Dear Brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Your presence here today near the tomb of the Apostle Peter evokes many thoughts in our hearts.

1. This is a special moment of ecclesial unity, as we celebrate our oneness in Jesus Christ and in his Church. You come as pastors of the Church in Japan, bringing with you the hopes and joys, the challenges and problems of your Catholic people. At the same time this is a moment when the Church in Rome respectfully greets in your persons the entire Japanese people, of whom you are illustrious and noble sons. All of you remember with what faithful attention, with what great love Paul VI welcomed Japanese visitors and pilgrims during all the years of his pontificate. Individuals and groups, Christians and non-Christians, religious leaders and representatives of various walks of life came to see him week after week, month after month. For all of them he had a gesture of cordial greeting or a word of esteem and friendship. I too have had the honour of receiving many visits from your fellow-countrymen, and I wish to attest publicly how much their presence is appreciated at the Vatican.

\* \* \*

2. This *ad limina* visit, venerable Brothers, is also a celebration of faith: the faith of the whole Church in Japan — the faith of which you, in union with the Successor of Peter, are guardians and authentic teachers. On my part today I wish to render homage to this faith, which through missionary effort was implanted by God as his in the hearts of the faithful. This gift of faith was generously accepted and genuinely lived. It became the object of the witnessing of Paul Miki and his martyr companions, who went to their death proclaiming the names of Jesus and Mary, and who by their martyrdom confirmed the faith as an everlasting heritage in Japan. By the grace of

God and the help of his Blessed Mother, this Catholic faith was, moreover, preserved throughout generations by the Japanese laity who maintained by the instinct of faith their unbreakable attachment to the See of Peter.

And today this faith is still expressed in action, nurtured by prayer and offered freely to all who may wish to embrace the Gospel. Through their faith, manifested by fraternal love and by the consistency of their lives, the Christian people of Japan are called to give witness to Jesus Christ in their families, in their neighbourhoods, and in all the milieux in which they live; they are called to communicate Jesus Christ to anyone who may wish to know him or embrace his message of salvation and life.

\* \* \*

3. Our own episcopal ministry of faith: a ministry that presupposes faith and is at the service of faith — a faith to be lived and communicated. Everything we do is aimed at proclaiming the mystery of faith, and at helping our people to live deeply their vocation of faith.

\* \* \*

4. Precisely by reason of the central dimension of faith we see the great value that prayer has in the Church: faith is kept alive and is fortified by prayer. By prayer, hearts are opened to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to the message and action of Christ's Church. Hence, we know that fidelity to prayer is an essential element of the Church's life. In this regard Japan has been blessed with contemplative vocations, with religious who carry on Christ's loving praise of his Father. And in this contemplative aspect of the Church's life in Japan is there not an excellent element of dialogue with your non-Christian brethren, who in their own ancient traditions have given a place of prominence to contemplation? Is not the desire to be united with God in purity of heart one of those elements in which the teaching of our Saviour Jesus Christ is so naturally inculturated into the lives of so many of your people?

\* \* \*

5. It is a great credit to Japan how generation of Christians, steeped in their own culture, have been able to contribute by their activities to the uplifting of society. The relatively small Christian community in your land has served well in the



fields of social assistance, science and education. Through schools and universities the Christian message has come into contact with the venerable traditions of your people. Zealous Christians who have realized the need to bring the Gospel values into their native culture have begun by giving the upright witness of their own lives. In the midst of their community, when Christians show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, when they share the life and destiny of their brothers and sisters and show solidarity with all that is good and noble, and at the same time give expression to their faith in higher values and to their hope in a life yet to be unfolded in God — then they are fulfilling a task of initial evangelization with regard to culture, a task consistent with their vocation and the obligations that flow therefrom (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21).

What a lofty role it is for the Bishops of the Church to sustain all the members of the community in their common efforts on behalf of the Gospel, encouraging them to be able to explain the hope that is theirs (cf. 1 Pt. 3:15). In God's providence the primary witness of life must be coupled with an explicit proclamation of the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Christ (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 22). The encounter between the Gospel and culture can take place only on the condition that the Church faithfully proclaims and lives the Gospel. Here too the Bishops are called to exercise a special responsibility.

\* \* \*

6. On this occasion, dear Brothers in Christ, it is my hope to encourage you to stand fast in your ministry of faith. The universal Church has been deeply enriched by the contribution of the Church in Japan. The *pusillus grex* has been a credit to the grace of Christ the Saviour and it continues to give praise to his Father. The future is in the hands of Jesus. It is he, Jesus, who is the Lord of history; it is he who definitively decides the destiny of his Church in each generation. In the preparation of the Easter candle on Holy Saturday we proclaim: "All time belongs to him and all ages; to him be glory and power through every age". Our response to the will of the Lord Jesus for his Church is one of absolute trust coupled with diligent labour, knowing that he will ask us for an accounting.

\* \* \*

7. Our ministry of faith has its origin in Jesus Christ and leads to him and through him to the Father. Despite all obstacles and difficulties we must constantly call our people to the

holiness of life that is found in Christ alone: *Tu solus sanctus*. In a particular way the Christian family of Japan should be the object of our pastoral care. In this "domestic Church" the catechesis of children must be effectively begun, and the evangelization of society must take place at its root. The great love of God for his people and Christ's faithful covenant with his Church must be evident in the family as a community of love and life. I exhort you, Brethren, to make every effort to create in families those healthy conditions of Christian living that favour vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Keep constantly before the young the full challenge of Christ's love and truth, including his invitation to take up the cross and follow him.

\* \* \*

8. The fraternal unity that springs from faith in Jesus Christ must be lived by the entire Church, but in an exemplary way it should be evident in the life of the presbyterium of each diocese. Our ministry of faith requires that we be closely united with our priests, and they with us, in proclaiming Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world and in living his message of redemptive love. All the forces of the Gospel must indeed unite to give credible witness to the fellowship that is ours with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In concluding, I ask you all to carry back to Japan, to all your beloved priests, religious, seminarians and laity, the expression of my own pastoral love in the heart of Jesus Christ. In the words of Saint Paul: "Greetings to those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all" (Tit. 3:15).

POPE TO THE BISHOPS OF INDONESIA  
ON "AD LIMINA" VISIT

**AWARENESS IN LOCAL CHURCHES  
OF MYSTERY OF CATHOLIC UNITY**

*On the Monday, 26 May, Pope John Paul received in audience a group of Bishops from Indonesia on their "ad limina" visit. After an address of homage by the President of the Indonesian Episcopal Conference, Most Rev. F. X. Sudartanto Hadisumarta, Bishop of Malang, the Pope addressed them as follows.*

Venerable and dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

1. In the name of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, you and I share, in different ways, a common pastoral responsibility for the people of God in Indonesia. This common pastoral responsibility is willed by Christ and is incumbent on us inasmuch as we are Bishops of the Catholic Church, successors of the Apostles and members of the Episcopal College.

It is this common pastoral responsibility that gathers us together today in the service of the Church, for we are eager to see the light of Christ shine on the face of the Church. We are eager to see the Church as the sacrament of salvation penetrate ever more deeply into the fabric of Indonesian society and play a part in the different aspects of the life of your people. I know with what laudable patriotism you have supported the *Pansacila* or Five Basic Principles of Indonesia's State philosophy, and how you have endeavoured to show the love of Christ to all brethren without any distinction whatsoever. Like my predecessor Paul VI, who went personally to Indonesia to confirm the faith of the pastors and people, and to encourage all of you in hope and perseverance, I too declare my ecclesial solidarity with you in your ministry, as you build up the community of faith and consolidate your people in their Christian vocation

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2. As we assemble here today we draw strength from our Catholic unity, of which our pastoral role is one aspect in the mystery of Christ's Church. It is this Catholic unity that clarifies our pastoral role in its various dimensions; it gives us insights into the deepest truths of our apostolic activities.

Your local Churches are individual expressions of the one redeemed people of God, delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins (cf. Col. 1:13-14). The people of whom you are the pastors are called to live the new life of Christ, giving expression to it in their customs and culture, and faithfully manifesting its original character in their daily existence. In this way they are able to enrich the whole Body of Christ by their unique contribution.

In effect, it is the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church that subsists in your individual Churches. And it is the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic faith that is the great inheritance of your people, and that all of us as Bishops are charged to proclaim "in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). As Successor of Peter, I shall be called to give a special accounting "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is the judge of the living and the dead" (2 Tim. 4:1) for the manner in which I respond to the charge, laid upon me by Christ, to be the guarantor of the purity of the faith of the whole Church and to fulfill worthily the role of the Roman Pontiff as "the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of the Bishops and of the multitude of the faithful" (*Lumen Gentium*, 23).

\* \* \*

3. The ecclesial communion that we share and foster brings us immense consolation and joy in our ministry as Bishops of the Catholic Church. We are aware of being, together with our faithful, the one Church of Jesus Christ, united in him and living by his Holy Spirit.

Our communion is first of all a communion of faith. It is the apostolic faith that unites us, an apostolic faith that the Spirit of truth assists the Magisterium in transmitting intact and pure from one generation to the next. In this regard, as Bishops, we must constantly commit ourselves anew to the full profession of the Catholic faith, which transcends by far the insights of our human wisdom and theological reasoning. Only the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of Jesus can sufficiently guarantee our faith, and this he does through the Magisterium which we are called to accept and in turn to proclaim to others.

Ours is also a communion of love — a love that has its origin and pattern in the Holy Trinity. We have been the object of God's love, and this love unites us all together in the commu-

nity of the Church. Among the tasks of a Bishop, how important it is for him to reflect the love of Jesus the Good Shepherd on a personal basis. At every moment of our lives as pastors, there is someone who needs our love, someone who deserves our love. Our priests, in particular, have a special title to this love. They are our friends, our brothers and our sons in Jesus Christ. For the entire flock our love is manifested in understanding and in generous, persevering service of their needs — especially their need for the word of God in all its purity and power.

\* \* \*

Our communion is a communion of prayer, in which we all draw strength from the whole praying Body of Christ. The activity of prayer is very much a part of the life of the Church, uniting us with the living and the dead in the Communion of Saints. The saints of God are our intercessors. In particular, the Mother of Jesus, who is the Mother of the whole Body, intercedes for all who have received life in her Son. Legions of faithful Christians fulfill an ecclesial role of inestimable value by praying for the Church and her mission. We count on all these prayers, and are especially grateful for the contribution of the sick and the suffering.

Our communion involves the solidarity of the universal Church. The local Churches are all concerned for each other, since it is the one Catholic Church that subsists in all of them. Our hierarchical communion is an expression of the bonds of a single Episcopal College that unites us in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. By collegiality the pastors of the Church in Indonesia bring their solidarity to the whole Church and all the other pastors of the Church bring their solidarity to the local Churches in Indonesia. In all of this, the Holy See endeavours to exercise a role of service in coordinating activities and services beneficial to all. Above all, the Holy See is committed to the service of unity and truth, in charity. In accordance with the will of the Lord, the Successor of Peter strives to remain the servant of all.

In living this communion of faith and love, of prayer and solidarity, let us do everything, beloved Brethren, to point the awareness of the local Churches to the great mystery of Catholic



unity. From this Catholic unity your people have received so much; to it they bring their own distinctive contribution, which is the incarnation of the Gospel in their lives and culture.

\* \* \*

4. Venerable Brothers, let us always hold up to our people a supernatural message of hope, founded on salvation in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and communicated through his Church. It is Jesus Christ who beckons us to come to him in his Church, and through him to the Father, in the Holy Spirit. It is Christ who urges us to lead our people forward along the path of faith. It is Christ who invites us to open ourselves with all our limitations and our sins to his immense mercy. In the hope of mercy we present ourselves before "Christ Jesus our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1). In hope we consecrate to him our being and all our ministry. To him we must direct our local churches; we must speak about him to our priests, religious and laity; we must proclaim his person and his promises, his Kingdom and his Coming. This hope gives great encouragement to our ministry and to our lives; it sustains us and urges us on. In the words of Saint Paul: "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

Dear Brethren: in the love of Christ, in the communion of his Church, in the shared responsibility of our pastoral mission I embrace all the faithful of your local Churches. I also send my greeting to the civil authorities and to all your fellow-citizens, to all who make up the one family of your vast country. May God bless Indonesia and your own ministry at the service of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II FOR MISSION SUNDAY 1980

*With the approach of the next World Mission Sunday, which will be held on 19 October 1980, the Holy Father has addressed the following message to all the members of the People of God.*

Venerable Brothers,  
Beloved Sons and Daughters of the Catholic Church!

My recent trip to the African continent has again emphasized for me the necessity and the urgency of missionary activity, which is essentially qualified as a commitment to announce to the whole world the salvation of man in Jesus Christ, who died and rose so that he might be the Lord of the living and of the dead (cf. Rom. 14:9). On the basis, therefore, of this direct experience, I desire to dedicate the customary message for Mission Sunday to a renewed reflection on the permanent exigency of such activity.

What is at present, one may ask, the situation of the Church in the world? Leaving out the situation of the West, where more than elsewhere "there are in motion", as I pointed out in the homily given last year on the above-mentioned occasion, "various forms of anti-evangelization", and limiting myself to the area of the missionary world as commonly understood, it is evident that, after two thousand years of Christianization, the Gospel of the Lord is very far from being known and disseminated, in its integrity, among all men. Certainly such situations depend on a variety of causes, linked at times to socio-political conditions of the various nations; yet, among these one may not neglect to mention the scarcity of those dedicated to the work of evangelization. Unfortunately, the judgment pronounced by St. Francis Xavier, the "prince of missionaries", remains true even in our day: "Some do not become Christians simply because there is a dearth of those who make them Christians" (*Epist.*, I, Rome 1944, p. 166).

### **1. The Church "mission incarnate", dynamically open to the world**

In the face of this objective dearth the Church may not be silent nor remain peaceful, ignoring the needs of so many millions of our brothers who await the announcement of the

message of salvation: "God", recalls St. Paul, "wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). And the truth is Christ, the Redeemer of the world, who "penetrated in a unique unrepeatable way into the mystery of man" and must become "the one direction of our spirit, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart", Because for all men he has poured out his blood on the cross, because "each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption". (Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, nos. 7, 8, 13). An attitude of abdication on the part of the Church would therefore be in opposition to the mission confided to her, that is, to reveal Christ to the world and to speak to the conscience of all humanity about its mystery, "to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption" (ibid., no. 10).

The command addressed by the risen Christ to his disciples. "Go, preach..." (cf. Mk. 16-15; Mt. 28:19) efficaciously establishing the image and the function of the Pilgrim Church, expresses the missionary dynamism that is intrinsic in her nature. incessantly moved by the Spirit, she is perennially "sent" to the nations to transmit to them the inexhaustible source of that living water, that flows from the word and the work of the Lord.

That same term "mission" — as my venerable predecessor, Paul VI, already emphasized in his missionary message of 1964 — "recalls to mind that kind of movement that characterizes the life of the Church: she comes from Christ, is sent by him, is urged and accompanied by him; she carries him with herself, preaches him, communicates him, transmits him; through her, Christ reaches men, breaks through the boundaries of nations, spans the centuries".

Evangelization, or rather missionary activity, therefore, corresponds to the specific vocation of the Church which, always respecting liberty, encounters men of today who still "in umbra mortis sedent" (Lk. 1:79); one can in fact say that *the Church is mission incarnate*. Not in vain did the Council explicitly affirm: "The Pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of the Father" (Decree *Ad Gentes*, no. 2).

As the Church, the depositary of the Good News, cannot help speaking, so she must of necessity continue sending today, no less than in other times, apostles and missionaries who know how to speak men of the transcendent and liberating salvation, leading them to the knowledge of truth —in full fidelity to the

Spirit; who by means of the sacraments, beginning with the "gate" of baptism, incorporate them into Christ in living communion with his mystical body; who ultimately make them aware of the authentic meaning of their dignity as creature, modelled in the image of God, and then enlighten them regarding the true significance of their existence in the world. It is thus that the Church works efficaciously, so that the salvific plan of God be realized.

## **2. The Missions, instruments of evangelization and centres of human promotion**

In the light of these considerations, the missions show themselves still necessary today, and irreplaceable to the point that, without them, the realization of this plan and the expansion of the Kingdom to the utmost limits of the earth would not even be conceivable. Without the missions, the new civilization, founded — in the sign of Christ — on justice, peace and love, could not come into being and develop, because it is the mission that the new man, conscious of his dignity and of his transcendent destiny as a redeemed creature, is formed.

In the missions, the forge of evangelical ferment, the heart of the universal Church beats with all its solicitude for the authentic and integral good of man. But they are, at the same time, centres of human promotion, because, if on the one hand, the Church, in virtue of the principle of charity that animates her, cannot remain insensible to the material necessities of the brethren, on the other hand, evangelizing and assisting man to understand himself in Christ, she promotes the civic conscience and social progress as well. The affirmation of the concluding document of the Puebla Conference seems very apropos here: "The highest service to the brethren is evangelization, which disposes him to recognize himself as a son of God, liberates him from injustices and integrally promotes his human progress". (no. 1145)

Even there, where the preaching of the Word is hindered, the simple presence of the missionary, with his testimony of poverty, of charity, of sanctity, already constitutes an efficacious form of evangelization, and often creates the prerequisites for constructive dialogue. Again, therefore, I am pleased to use this occasion to commend and to express my deep gratitude to the missionaries who, often at the cost of immense sacrifices and among difficulties of every species, sow the seed of the

Word from which the Church develops and takes root in the world. And the most consoling fruit of this, their heroic and indefatigable labours, is the marvellous flowering of young and fervent Christian communities, from whose rich soil spring priestly and religious vocations which are the hope of the Church of tomorrow.

Yes, the missionaries are indispensable labourers for the Lord's vineyard; and the recently established Churches themselves, though developing their own indigenous clergy, still feel the need of their presence and of their energy, to be able to profit from the riches of their centuries-old traditions and of the maturity of the older Churches that they bring with themselves. And thus it is, that among the local Churches, there is a fruitful exchange of ideas, of initiatives and of works, which is like a fertile osmosis for the Universal Church.

### 3. Cooperation and the Pontifical Mission-Aid Societies

For such reasons I desire to express my sincere satisfaction with every form of missionary cooperation which the ecclesial communities can devise and establish with a generous apostolic spirit. I know well that in many dioceses, that form of collaboration which has been so highly recommended by my predecessor of venerable memory, Pius XII, in his Encyclical *Fidei Donum* is actively promoted. The benefits of such *ad tempus* ministerial dedication are twofold: The priests who dedicate themselves to this, in addition to offering an evident service to the missionary Churches, also, on returning to their home dioceses, bring back the treasures of their experiences, contributing in this way to the work of animation, which is of great benefit in arousing among the faithful themselves, missionary awareness and the will to support the cause of evangelization.

Still on the theme of cooperation, it is hardly necessary to repeat, that it would be a grave mistake to identify this exclusively with financial help, although necessary for assisting the great and at times indescribable miseries of so many of our brothers. Financial assistance must be joined with the absolutely indispensable premise, that of *prayer*. It is necessary to pray for vocations, to pray for the missionaries, for the brothers to be evangelized; prayer is necessary, likewise, that the nations of the world that enjoy a high level of civilization and well-being



may open their hearts to the immense needs of the less privileged nations, in one accord following the basic orientation of universal solidarity in order to bring about intelligent programming and planning of assistance that will serve to combat these grave discriminations, inequalities and injustices that constitute one of the greatest scandals of our time.

To prayer must be united that precious and efficacious element for touching the heart of God, the spontaneous offering of one's own sufferings in union with Christ for the benefit of the brethren. And finally, I desire to recall the importance of the *Pontifical Mission-Aid Societies* for purposes of cooperation. On the coming World Day for the Missions, all are invited to reflect on the role that the Pontifical Mission-Aid Societies carry out within the whole ecclesial community, as an apt instrument of missionary animation and sensitization of the People of God (cf. Decr. *Ad Gentes*, no. 38).

To missionaries and to all those who in diverse forms and methods spend their energies for the diffusion of the Gospel, I impart with profound and fervent gratitude my comforting Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican, 25 May, Solemnity of Pentecost, in the year 1980, the second of the Pontificate.

JOANNES PAULUS PP. II

## DECLARATION ON EUTHANASIA

### Introduction

The rights and values pertaining to the human person occupy an important place among the questions discussed today. In this regard, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council solemnly reaffirmed the lofty dignity of the human person, and in a special way his or her right to life. The Council therefore condemned crimes against life "such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful suicide" (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 2).

More recently, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has reminded all the faithful of Catholic teaching on procured abortion.<sup>1</sup> The Congregation now considers it opportune to set forth the Church's teaching on euthanasia.

It is indeed true that, in this sphere of teaching, the recent Popes have explained the principles, and these retain their full force;<sup>2</sup> but the progress of medical science in recent years has brought to the fore new aspects of the question of euthanasia, and these aspects call for further elucidation on the ethical level.

In modern society, in which even the fundamental values of human life are often called into question, cultural change exercises an influence upon the way of looking at suffering and death; moreover, medicine has increased its capacity to cure and to prolong life in particular circumstances, which sometimes give rise to moral problems. Thus people living in this situation experience no little anxiety about the meaning of advanced old age and death. They also begin to wonder whether they have the right to obtain for themselves or their fellowmen an "easy death", which would shorten suffering and which seems to them more in harmony with human dignity.

A number of Episcopal Conferences have raised questions on this subject with the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Congregation, having sought the opinion of experts on the various aspects of euthanasia, now wishes to respond to the Bishops' questions with the present Declaration, in order to help them to give correct teaching to the faithful entrusted to their care, and to offer them elements for reflection that they can present to the civil authorities with regard to this very serious matter.

The considerations set forth in the present document concern in the first place all those who place their faith and hope in Christ, who, through his life, death and Resurrection, has given a new meaning to existence and especially to the death of the Christian, as Saint Paul says: "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8; cf. Phil. 1:20).

As for those who profess other religions, many will agree with us that faith in God the Creator, Provider and Lord of life — if they share this belief — confers a lofty dignity upon every human person and guarantees respect for him or her.

It is hoped that this Declaration will meet with the approval of many people of good will, who, philosophical or ideological differences notwithstanding, have nevertheless a lively awareness of the rights of the human person. These rights have often in fact been proclaimed in recent years through declarations issued by International Congresses;<sup>3</sup> and since it is a question here of fundamental rights inherent in every human person, it is obviously wrong to have recourse to arguments from political pluralism or religious freedom in order to deny the universal value of those rights.

# I

## The value of human life

Human life is the basis of all goods, and is the necessary source and condition of every human activity and of all society. Most people regard life as something sacred and hold that no one may dispose of it at will, but believers see in life something greater, namely, a gift of God's love, which they are called upon to preserve and make fruitful. And it is this latter consideration that gives rise to the following consequences:

1. No one can make an attempt on the life of an innocent person without opposing God's love for that person, without violating a fundamental right, and therefore without committing a crime of the utmost gravity.<sup>4</sup>

2. Everyone has the duty to lead his or her life in accordance with God's plan. That life is entrusted to the individual as a good that must bear fruit already here on earth, but that finds its full perfection only in eternal life.

3. Intentionally causing one's own death, or suicide, is therefore equally as wrong as murder; such an action on the part of a person is to be considered as a rejection of God's sovereignty and loving plan. Furthermore, suicide is also often a refusal of love for self the denial of the natural instinct to live, a flight from the duties of justice and charity owed to one's neighbor, to various communities or to the whole of society — although, as is generally recognized, at times there are psychological factors present that can diminish responsibility or even completely remove it.

However, one must clearly distinguish suicide from that sacrifice of one's life whereby for a higher cause, such as God's glory, the salvation of souls or the service of one's brethren, a person offers his or her own life or puts it in danger (cf. Jn. 15:14).

## II

### Euthanasia

In order that the question of euthanasia can be properly dealt with, it is first necessary to define the words used.

Etymologically speaking, in ancient times *euthanasia* meant an *easy death* without severe suffering. Today one no longer thinks of this original meaning of the word, but rather of some intervention of medicine whereby the sufferings of sickness or of the final agony are reduced, sometimes also with the danger of supressing life prematurely. Ultimately, the word *euthanasia* is used in a more particular sense to mean "mercy killing", for the purpose of putting an end to extreme suffering, or saving abnormal babies, the mentally ill or the incurably sick from the prolongation, perhaps for many years, of a miserable life, which could impose too heavy a burden on their families or on society.

It is therefore necessary to state clearly in what sense the word is used in the present document.

By euthanasia is understood an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may in this way be eliminated. Euthanasia's terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used.

It is necessary to state firmly once more that nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a foetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it, either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action. For it is a question of the violation of the divine law, an offence against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity.

It may happen that, by reason of prolonged and barely tolerable pain, for deeply personal or other reasons, people may be led to believe that they can legitimately ask for death or obtain it for others. Although in these cases the guilt of the individual may be reduced or completely absent, nevertheless the error of judgment into which the conscience falls, perhaps in good faith, does not change the nature of this act of killing, which will always be in itself something to be rejected. The pleas of gravely ill people who sometimes ask for death are not to be understood as implying a true desire for euthanasia; in fact it is almost always a case of an anguished plea for help and love. What a sick person needs, besides medical care, is love, the human and supernatural warmth with which the sick person can and ought to be surrounded by all those close to him or her, parents and children, doctors and nurses.

### III

#### **The meaning of suffering for Christians and the use of painkillers**

Death does not always come in dramatic circumstances after barely tolerable sufferings. Nor do we have to think only of extreme cases. Numerous testimonies which confirm one another lead one to the conclusion that nature itself has made provision to render more bearable at the moment of death separations that would be terribly painful to a person in full health. Hence it is that a prolonged illness, advanced old age, or a state of loneliness or neglect can bring about psychological conditions that facilitate the acceptance of death.



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Nevertheless the fact remains that death, often preceded or accompanied by severe and prolonged suffering, is something which naturally causes people anguish.

Physical suffering is certainly an unavoidable element of the human condition; on the biological level, it constitutes a warning of which no one denies the usefulness; but, since it affects the human psychological makeup, it often exceeds its own biological usefulness and so can become so severe as to cause the desire to remove it at any cost.

According to Christian teaching, however, suffering, especially suffering during the last moments of life, has a special place in God's saving plan; it is in fact a sharing in Christ's Passion and a union with the redeeming sacrifice which he offered in obedience to the Father's will. Therefore one must not be surprised if some Christians prefer to moderate their use of painkillers, in order to accept voluntarily at least a part of their sufferings and thus associate themselves in a conscious way with the sufferings of Christ crucified (cf. Mt. 27:34). Nevertheless it would be imprudent to impose a heroic way of acting as a general rule. On the contrary, human and Christian prudence suggest for the majority of sick people the use of medicines capable of alleviating or suppressing pain, even though these may cause as a secondary effect semiconsciousness and reduced lucidity. As for those who are not in a state to express themselves, one can reasonably presume that they wish to take these painkillers, and have them administered according to the doctor's advice.

But the intensive use of painkillers is not without difficulties, because the phenomenon of habituation generally makes it necessary, to increase their dosage in order to maintain their efficacy. At this point it is fitting to recall a declaration by Pius XII, which retains its full force; in answer to a group of doctors who had put the question: "Is the suppression of pain and consciousness by the use of narcotics... permitted by religion and morality to the doctor and the patient (even at the approach of death and if one foresees that the use of narcotics will shorten life?)", the Pope said: "If no other means exist, and if, in the given circumstances, this does not prevent the carrying out of other religious and moral duties: Yes".<sup>5</sup> In this case, of course, death is in no way intended or sought, even if the risk of it is reasonably taken; the intention is simply to relieve pain effectively, using for this purpose painkillers available to medicine.

However, painkillers that cause unconsciousness need special consideration. For a person not only has to be able to satisfy his or her moral duties and family obligations; he or she also has to prepare himself or herself with full consciousness for meeting Christ. Thus Pius XII warns: "It is not right to deprive the dying person of consciousness without a serious reason".<sup>6</sup>

#### IV

#### **Due proportion in the use of remedies**

Today it is very important to protect, at the moment of death, both the dignity of the human person and the Christian concept of life, against a technological attitude that threatens to become an abuse. Thus some people speak of a "right to die", which is an expression that does not mean the right to procure death either by one's own hand or by means of someone else, as one pleases, but rather the right to die peacefully with human and Christian dignity. From this point of view, the use of therapeutic means can sometimes pose problems. In numerous cases, the complexity of the situation can be such as to cause doubts about the way ethical principles should be applied. In the final analysis, it pertains to the conscience either of the sick person, or of those qualified to speak in the sick person's name, or of the doctors, to decide, in the light of moral obligations and of the various aspects of the case.

Everyone has the duty to care for his or her own health or to seek such care from others. Those whose task it is to care for the sick must do so conscientiously and administer the remedies that seem necessary or useful.

However, is it necessary in all circumstances to have recourse to all possible remedies?

In the past, moralists replied that one is never obliged to use "extraordinary" means. This reply, which as a principle still holds good, is perhaps less clear today, by reason of the imprecision of the term and the rapid progress made in the treatment of sickness. Thus some people prefer to speak of "proportionate" and "disproportionate" means. In any case, it will be possible to make a correct judgment as to the means by studying the type of treatment to be used its degree of complexity or risk, its cost and the possibilities of using it, and

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comparing these elements with the result that can be expected, taking into account the state of the sick person and his or her physical and moral resources.

In order to facilitate the application of these general principles, the following clarifications can be added:

— If there are no other sufficient remedies, it is permitted, with the patient's consent, to have recourse, to the means provided by the most advanced medical techniques, even if these means are still at the experimental stage and are not without a certain risk. By accepting them, the patient can even show generosity in the service of humanity.

— It is also permitted, with the patient's consent, to interrupt these means, where the results fall short, of expectations. But for such a decision to be made, account will have to be taken of the reasonable wishes, of the patient and the patient's family, as also of the advice of the doctors who are specially competent in the matter. The latter may in particular judge that the investment in instruments and personnel is disproportionate to the results foreseen; they may also judge that the techniques applied impose on the patient strain or suffering out of proportion with the benefits which he or she may gain from such techniques.

— It is also permissible to make do with the normal means that medicine can offer. Therefore one cannot impose on anyone the obligation to have recourse to a technique which is already in use but which carries a risk or is burdensome. Such a refusal is not the equivalent of suicide; on the contrary, it should be considered as an acceptance of the human condition, or a wish to avoid the application of a medical procedure disproportionate to the results that can be expected, or a desire not to impose excessive expense on the family or the community.

— When inevitable death is imminent in spite of the means used, it is permitted in conscience to take the decision to refuse forms of treatment that would only secure a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life, so long as the normal care due to the sick person in similar cases is not interrupted. In such circumstances the doctor has no reason to reproach himself with failing to help the person in danger.

### Conclusion

The norms contained in the present Declaration are inspired by a profound desire to serve people in accordance with the plan of the Creator. Life is a gift of God, and on the other hand death is unavoidable; it is necessary therefore that we, without in any way hastening the hour of death, should be able to accept it with full responsibility and dignity. It is true that death marks the end of our earthly existence, but at the same time it opens the door to immortal life. Therefore all must prepare themselves for this event in the light of human values, and Christians even more so in the light of faith.

As for those who work in the medical profession, they ought to neglect no means of making all their skill available to the sick and the dying; but they should also remember how much more necessary it is to provide them with the comfort of boundless kindness and heartfelt charity. Such service to people is also service to Christ the Lord, who said: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40).

*At the audience granted to the undersigned Prefect, His Holiness Pope John Paul II approved this Declaration, adopted at the ordinary meeting of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and ordered its publication.*

Rome, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5 May 1980.

FRANJO CARD. SEPER  
*Prefect*

✠ JEROME HAMER, O.P.  
*Tit. Archbishop of Lorum*  
*Secretary*

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Declaration on Procured Abortion*, 18 November 1974: AAS 66 (1974), pp. 730-747.

<sup>2</sup> Pius XII, *Address to those attending the Congress of the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues*, 11 September 1947: AAS 39 (1947), p. 483; *Address to the Italian Catholic Union of Midwives*, 29 October 1951: AAS 43 (1951), pp. 835-854; *Speech to the members of the International Office of military medicine documentation*, 19 October 1953: AAS 45 (1953), pp. 744-754; *Address to those taking part in the IXth Congress of the Italian Anaesthesiological Society*, 24 February 1957: AAS 49 (1957), p. 146; cf. also *Address on "reanimation" 24 November 1957*: AAS 49 (1957), pp. 1027-1033; Paul VI; *Address to the members of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid*, 22 May 1974: AAS 66 (1974), p. 346; John Paul II: *Address to the Bishops of the United States of America*, 5 October 1979: AAS 71 (1979), p. 1225.

<sup>3</sup> One thinks especially of Recommendation 779 (1976) on the rights of the sick and dying, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe at its XXVIIth Ordinary Session; cf. Sipeca, No. 1, March 1977, pp. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> We leave aside completely the problems of the death penalty and of war, which involve specific considerations that do not concern the present subject.

<sup>5</sup> Pius XII, *Address of 24 February 1957*: AAS 49 (1957), p. 147.

<sup>6</sup> Pius XII, *ibid.*, p. 145; cf. *Address of 9 September 1958*: AAS 50 (1958), p. 694.

SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS AND  
DIVINE WORSHIP

**"INAESTIMABILE DONUM — INSTRUCTION  
CONCERNING WORSHIP OF THE  
EUCCHARISTIC MYSTERY**

**Foreword**

Following the letter that Pope John Paul II addressed on 24 February 1980 to the Bishops and, through them, to the Priests, and in which he again considered the priceless gift of the Holy Eucharist, the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship is calling to the Bishops' attention certain norms concerning worship of this great mystery.

These indications are not a summary of everything already stated by the Holy See in the documents concerning the Eucharist promulgated since the Second Vatican Council and still in force, particularly in the *Missale Romanum*,<sup>1</sup> the Ritual *De sacra Communione et de cultu Mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*,<sup>2</sup> and the Instructions *Eucharisticum Mysterium*,<sup>3</sup> *Memoriale Domini*,<sup>4</sup> *Immensae Caritatis*,<sup>5</sup> and *Liturgicae Instaurationes*.<sup>6</sup>

This Sacred Congregation notes with great joy the many positive results of the liturgical reform: a more active and conscious participation by the faithful in the liturgical mysteries, doctrinal and catechetical enrichment through the use of the vernacular and the wealth of readings from the Bible, a growth in the community sense of liturgical life, and successful efforts to close the gap between life and worship, between liturgical piety and personal piety, and between liturgy and popular piety.

But these encouraging and positive aspects cannot suppress concern at the varied and frequent abuses being reported from different parts of the Catholic world: the confusion of roles, especially regarding the priestly ministry and the role of the laity (indiscriminate shared recitation of the *Eucharistic Prayer*, homilies given by lay people, lay people distributing communion while the priests refrain from doing so); an increasing loss of the sense of the sacred (abandonment of liturgical vestments, the Eucharist celebrated outside church without real need, lack of reverence and respect for the Blessed



Sacrament, etc.); misunderstanding of the ecclesial character of the liturgy (the use of private texts, the proliferation of unapproved Eucharistic Prayers, the manipulation of the liturgical texts for social and political ends). In these cases we are face to face with a real falsification of the Catholic liturgy: "One who offers worship to God on the Church's behalf in a way contrary to that which is laid down by the Church with God-given authority and which is customary in the Church is guilty of falsification".<sup>7</sup>

None of these things can bring good results. The consequences are — and can not fail to be — the impairing of the unity of faith and worship in the Church, doctrinal uncertainty, scandal and bewilderment among the People of God, and the near inevitability of violent reactions.

The faithful have a right to a true Liturgy, which means the Liturgy desired and laid down by the Church, which has in fact indicated where adaptations may be made as called for by pastoral requirements in different places, or by different groups of people. Undue experimentation, changes and creativity bewilder the faithful. The use of unauthorized texts means a loss of the necessary connection between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*. The Second Vatican Council's admonition in this regard must be remembered: "No person, even of he be a priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority".<sup>8</sup> And Paul VI of venerable memory stated that: "Anyone who takes advantage of the reform to indulge in arbitrary experiments is wasting energy and offending the ecclesial sense".<sup>9</sup>

### a) The Mass

1. "The two parts which in a sense go to make up the Mass, namely the liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected that they form but one single act of worship".<sup>10</sup> A person should not approach the table of the bread of the Lord without having first been at the table of his word.<sup>11</sup> Sacred Scripture is therefore of the highest importance in the celebration of Mass. Consequently there can be no disregarding what the Church has laid down in order to ensure that "in sacred celebrations there should be a more ample, more varied and more suitable reading from sacred scripture".<sup>12</sup> The norms laid down in the Lectionary concerning the number of readings, and the directives given for special

occasions are to be observed. It would be a serious abuse to replace the word of God with the word of man, no matter who the author may be.<sup>13</sup>

2. The reading of the Gospel passage is reserved to the ordained minister, namely the deacon or the priest. When possible, the other readings should be entrusted to a reader who has been instituted as such or to other spiritually and technically trained lay people. The first reading is followed by a responsorial psalm, which is an integral part of the liturgy of the word.<sup>14</sup>

3. The purpose of the homily is to explain to the faithful the word of God proclaimed in the readings, and to apply its message to the present. Accordingly the homily is to be given by the priest or the deacon.<sup>15</sup>

4. It is reserved to the priest, by virtue of his ordination, to proclaim the Eucharistic Prayer, which of its nature is the high point of the whole celebration. It is therefore an abuse to have some parts of the Eucharistic Prayer said by the deacon, by a lower minister, or by the faithful.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand the assembly does not remain passive and inert: it unites itself to the priest in faith and silence and shows its concurrence by the various interventions provided for in the course of the Eucharistic Prayer: the responses to the Preface dialogue, the *Sanctus*, the acclamation after the consecration, and the final *Amen* after the *Per Ipsum*. The *Per Ipsum* itself is reserved to the priest. This *Amen* especially should be emphasized by being sung, since it is the most important in the whole Mass.

5. Only the Eucharistic Prayers included in the Roman Missal or those that the Apostolic See has by law admitted, in the manner and within the limits laid down by the Holy See, are to be used. To modify the Eucharistic Prayers approved by the Church or to adoption other privately composed is a most serious abuse.

6. It should be remembered that the Eucharistic Prayer must not be overlaid with other prayers or songs.<sup>17</sup> When proclaiming the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest is to pronounce the text clearly, so as to make it easy for the faithful to understand it, and so as to foster the formation of a true assembly entirely intent upon the celebration of the Memorial of the Lord.

7. *Concelebration*, which has been restored in the Western Liturgy, manifests in an exceptional manner the unity of the priesthood. Concelebrants must therefore pay careful atten-

tion to the signs that indicate that unity. For example, they are to be present from the beginning of the celebration, they are to wear the prescribed vestments, they are to occupy the place appropriate to their ministry as concelebrants, and they are to observe faithfully the other norms for the seemingly performance of the rite.<sup>18</sup>

8. *Mater of the Eucharist.* Faithful to Christ's example, the Church has constantly used bread and wine mixed with water to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The bread for the celebration of the Eucharist, in accordance with the tradition of the whole Church, must be made solely of wheat, and in accordance with the tradition proper to the Latin Church, it must be unleavened. By reason of the sign, the matter of the Eucharistic celebration "should appear as actual food". This is to be understood as linked to the consistency of the bread, and not to its form, which remains the traditional one. No other ingredients are to be added to the wheaten flour and water. The preparation of the bread requires attentive care, to ensure that the product does not detract from the dignity due to the Eucharistic bread, can be broken in a dignified way, does not give rise to excessive fragments, and does not offend the sensibilities of the faithful when they eat it. The wine for the Eucharistic celebration must be of "the fruit of the vine" (Lk. 22:13) and be natural and genuine, that

9. *Eucharistic Communion.* Communion is a gift of the Lord, given to the faithful through the minister appointed for this purpose. It is not permitted that the faithful should themselves pick up the consecrated bread and the sacred chalice; still less that they should hand them from one to another.

10. The faithful, whether religious or lay, who are authorized as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist can distribute Communion only when there is no priest, deacon or acolyte, when the priest is impeded by illness or advanced age, or when the number of the faithful going to communion is so large as to make the celebration of Mass excessively long.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, a reprehensible attitude is shown by those priests who, though present at the celebration, refrain from distributing Communion and leave this task to the laity.

11. The Church has always required from the faithful respect and reverence for the Eucharist at the moment of receiving it.

With regard to the manner of going to Communion, the faithful can receive it either kneeling or standing, in accordance

with the norms laid down by the Episcopal Conference. "When the faithful communicate kneeling, no other sign of reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament is required, since kneeling is itself a sign of adoration. When they receive Communion standing, it is strongly recommended that, coming up in procession, they should make a sign of reverence before receiving the Sacrament. This should be done at the right time and place, so that the order of people going to and from Communion is not disrupted".<sup>21</sup>

The *Amen* said by the faithful when receiving Communion is an act of personal faith in the presence of Christ.

12. With regard to Communion under both kinds, the norms laid down by the Church must be observed, both by reason of the reverence due to the Sacrament and for the good of those receiving the Eucharist, in accordance with variations in circumstances, times and places.<sup>22</sup>

Episcopal Conferences and Ordinaries also are not to go beyond what is laid down in the present discipline: the granting of permission for Communion under both kinds is not to be indiscriminate, and the celebrations in question are to be specified precisely; the groups that use this faculty are to be clearly defined, well disciplined, and homogeneous.<sup>23</sup>

13. Even after Communion the Lord remains present under the species. Accordingly, when Communion has been distributed, the sacred particles remaining are to be consumed or taken by the competent minister to the place where the Eucharist is reserved.

14. On the other hand, the consecrated wine is to be consumed immediately after Communion and may not be kept. Care must be taken to consecrate only the amount of wine needed for Communion.

15. The rules laid down for the purification of the chalice and the other sacred vessels that have contained the Eucharistic species must be observed.<sup>24</sup>

16. Particular respect and care are due to the sacred vessels, both the chalice and paten for the celebration of the Eucharist, and the ciboria for the Communion of the faithful. The form of the vessels must be appropriate for the liturgical use for which they are means. The material must be noble, durable and in every case adapted to sacred use. In this sphere judgment belongs to the Episcopal Conference of the individual regions.

Use is not to be made of simple baskets or other recipients meant for ordinary use outside the sacred celebrations, nor are the sacred vessels to be of poor quality or lacking any artistic style.

Before being used, chalices and patens must be blessed by the Bishop or by a priest.<sup>25</sup>

17. The faithful are to be recommended not to omit to make a proper thanksgiving after Communion. They may do this during the celebration, with a period of silence, with a hymn, psalm or other song of praise,<sup>26</sup> or also after the celebration, if possible by staying behind to pray for a suitable time.

18. There are of course various roles that women can perform in the liturgical assembly: these include reading the word of God and proclaiming the intentions of the prayer of the faithful. Women are not however permitted to act as altar servers.<sup>27</sup>

19. Particular vigilance and special care are recommended with regard to Masses transmitted by the audio-visual media. Given their very wide diffusion, their celebration must be of exemplary quality.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of celebrations that are held in private houses, the norms of the Instruction *Actio Pastoralis* of 15 May 1969 are to be observed.<sup>29</sup>

### **b) Eucharistic worship outside Mass**

20. Public and private devotion to the Holy Eucharist outside Mass also is highly recommended: for the presence of Christ, who is adored by the faithful in the Sacrament, derives from the Sacrifice and is directed towards sacramental and spiritual Communion.

21. When Eucharistic devotions are arranged account should be taken of the liturgical season, so that they harmonize with the liturgy, draw inspiration from it in some way and lead the Christian people towards it.<sup>30</sup>

22. With regard to exposition of the Holy Eucharist, either prolonged or brief, and with regard to processions of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Congresses, and the whole ordering of Eucharistic piety, the pastoral indications and directives given in the Roman Ritual are to be observed.<sup>31</sup>

23. It must not be forgotten that "before the blessing with the Sacrament an appropriate time should be devoted to readings of the word of God, to songs and prayers and to some silent prayer".<sup>32</sup> At the end of the adoration a hymn is sung and a prayer chosen from among the many contained in the Roman Ritual is recited or sung.<sup>33</sup>

24. The *tabernacle* in which the Eucharist is kept can be located on an altar, or away from it, in a spot in the church which is very prominent, truly noble and duly decorated, or in a chapel suitable for private prayer and for adoration by the faithful.<sup>34</sup>

25. The tabernacle should be solid, unbreakable, and not transparent.<sup>35</sup> The presence of the Eucharist is to be indicated by a tabernacle veil or by some other suitable means laid down by the competent authority, and a lamp must perpetually burn before it, as a sign of honour paid to the Lord.<sup>36</sup>

26. The venerable practice of genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament, whether enclosed in the tabernacle or publicly exposed, as a sign of adoration, is to be maintained.<sup>37</sup> This act requires that it be performed in a recollected way. In order that the heart may bow before God in profound reverence, the genuflection must be neither hurried nor careless.

27. If anything has been introduced that is at variance with these indications it is to be corrected.

Most of the difficulties encountered in putting into practice the reform of the liturgy and especially the reform of the Mass stem from the fact that neither priests nor faithful have perhaps been sufficiently aware of the theological and spiritual reasons for which the changes have been made, in accordance with the principles laid down by the Council .

Priests must acquire an ever deeper understanding of the authentic way of looking at the Church,<sup>38</sup> of which the celebration of the liturgy and especially of the Mass is the living expression. Without an adequate biblical training, priests will not be able to present to the faithful the meaning of the liturgy as an enactment, in signs, of the history of salvation. Knowledge of the history of the liturgy will likewise contribute to an understanding of the changes which have been introduced, and introduced not for the sake of novelty but as a revival and adaptation of authentic and genuine tradition.

The liturgy also requires great balance, for, as the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says, it "is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church that she be both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it. She is all these things in such a way that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine, the visible likewise to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, which we seek",<sup>39</sup> Without this balance, the true face of Christian liturgy becomes obscured.

In order to reach these ideals more easily it will be necessary to foster liturgical formation in seminaries and faculties<sup>40</sup> and to facilitate the participation of priests in courses, meetings, assemblies or liturgical weeks, in which study and reflection should be properly complemented by model celebrations. In this way priests will be able to devote themselves to more effective pastoral action, to liturgical catechesis of the faithful, to organizing groups of lectors, to giving altar servers spiritual and practical training, to training animators of the assembly, to enriching progressively the repertoire of songs, in a word to all the initiatives favouring an ever deeper understanding of the liturgy.

In the implementation of the liturgical reform great responsibility falls upon national and diocesan Liturgical Commissions and Liturgical Institutes and Centres, especially in the work of translating the liturgical books and training the clergy and faithful in the spirit of the reform desired by the Council.

The work of these bodies must be at the service of the ecclesiastical authority, which should be able to count upon their faithful collaboration. Such collaboration must be faithful to the Church's norms and directives, and free of arbitrary initiatives and particular ways of acting that could compromise the fruits of the liturgical renewal.

This Document will come into the hands of God's ministers in the first decade of the life of the *Missale Romanum* promulgated by Pope Paul VI following the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council.

It seems fitting to recall a remark made by that Pope concerning fidelity to the norms governing celebration: "It is a



very serious thing when division is introduced precisely where *congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*, in the Liturgy and the Eucharistic Sacrifice, by the refusing of obedience to the norms laid down in the liturgical sphere. It is in the name of Tradition that we ask all our sons and daughters, all the Catholic Communities, to celebrate with dignity and fervour the renewed liturgy".<sup>41</sup>

The Bishops, "whose function it is to control, foster and safeguard the entire liturgical life of the Church entrusted to them",<sup>42</sup> will not fail to discover the most suitable the glory of God and the good of the Church.

Rome, 3 April 1980, Holy Thursday.

*This Instruction, prepared by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, was approved on 17 April 1980 by the Holy Father John Paul II, who confirmed it with his own authority and ordered it to be published and to be observed by all concerned.*

JAMES R. CARDINAL KNOX  
*Prefect*

VIRGILIO NOE  
*Assistant Secretary*

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ed. typica altera, Romae 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. typica, Romae 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Sacred Congregation of Rites, 25 May 1967: AAS 59 (1967), pp. 539-573.

<sup>4</sup> Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 29 May 1969: AAS 61 (1969) pp. 541-545.

<sup>5</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, 29 January 1973: AAS 65 (1973), pp. 264-271.

<sup>6</sup> Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 5 September 1970: AAS 62 (1970), pp. 692-704.

<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2-2, q. 93, a. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 22, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Paul VI, Address of 22 August 1973: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 August 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 56.

- <sup>11</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 56; cf. also Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 21.
- <sup>12</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 35.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, 2, a.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 36.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes* 2, a.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Circular Letter *Eucharistiae Participationem*, 27 April 1973: AAS 65 (1973), pp. 340-347, 8; instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, 4.
- <sup>17</sup> *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 12.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 156, 161-163.
- <sup>19</sup> Cf., *ibid.*, 281-284; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, 5; *Notitiae* 6 (1970), 37.
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Immensae Caritatis*, 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 244 c, 246 b, 247 b.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 241-242.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, end of 242.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 238.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, nos. 288, 289, 292, 295; Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, 8; *Pontificale Romanum, Ordo Dedicationis Ecclesiae et Altaris*, p. 125, no. 3.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 56 j.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction *Liturgicae Instaurationes*, 7.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 20; Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, Instruction *Communio et Progressio*, 23 May 1974: AAS 63 (1971), pp. 593-656, no. 151.
- <sup>29</sup> AAS 61 (1969), pp. 806-811.
- <sup>30</sup> Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communione et de cultu Mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, 78-80.
- <sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 82-112.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 97.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani*, 276.
- <sup>35</sup> Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communione et de cultu Mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, 10).
- <sup>36</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, 57.
- <sup>37</sup> Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De sacra Communione et de cultu Mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, 84.
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*.
- <sup>39</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2.
- <sup>40</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries *In ecclesiasticum futurorum sacerdotum formationem*, 3 June 1979.
- <sup>41</sup> Consistorial Address of 24 May 1976: AAS 68 (1976), p. 374.
- <sup>42</sup> Second Vatican Council, Decree *Christus Dominus*, 15.

## ON KEEPING THE EUCHARISTS IN PRAYER ROOMS

Apostolic Nunciature  
Manila, Philippines  
N. 5205

30 June, 1980

Your Excellency:

On June 10, 1980, this Apostolic Nunciature transmitted to the Sacred Congregation for Divine worship your letter N. 056/80, dated June 3, in which you inquired about the norms regulating the so-called "prayer rooms".

Answering with the letter N. 984/80, June 20, 1980, the Prefect of the said Congregation, His Eminence James Cardinal Knox, has instructed me to communicate to Your Excellency the following:

"Please bring to the consideration of His Excellency Msgr. Cirilo R. Almario that, in conformity with Can. 1256, & 1, n. 2 of the Code of Canon Law, the diocesan Ordinary may permit the keeping of the Most Blessed Sacrament only in the *Main Oratory* (*oratorium principale*) of the religious and pious Houses, of ecclesiastical Colleges and institutes, while, on the other hand, for the chapels and oratories, as in the specific case of the "Prayer rooms", the keeping of the Blessed Eucharist is permitted only by an *apostolic indult* in conformity with Can. 1256, & 2, of the same Code.

"In order eventually to obtain the above-mentioned indult, it will be necessary that the Ordinary submits a request to this Sacred Congregation accompanied with a written testimony in which guarantee is given about the suitability of the place where the Most Holy Sacrament is intended to be kept and about its perfect conformity with the liturgical norms."

In transmitting this information to Your Excellency, I avail of the opportunity to renew the assurances of my prayerful best wishes and sentiments of fraternal esteem.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) ✠ BRUNO TORPIGLIANI  
*Apostolic Nuncio*

His Excellency  
Monsignor CIRILO ALMARIO, D.D.  
Secretary General, Catholic Bishops'  
Conference of the Philippines  
Intramuros, Manila

## **PASTORAL LETTER ON THE NEW AUXILIARY BISHOP**

To the Venerable Members of the Clergy  
Religious and People of God of the  
Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan

On July 1, 1980, at the Cathedral in Dagupan, you will be witnesses to a solemn and colorful ceremony the like of which took place in Pangasinan almost half a century ago when Mons. Mariano Madriaga, received his episcopal ordination in Lingayen. The event will be the fulfillment of a longfelt need of the Archdiocese, namely, to have an Auxiliary Bishop.

To prepare yourselves for this happy and significant occasion, let me, your Pastor, address and share with you my thoughts on the election of our new Auxiliary.

### **A Need Fulfilled**

For the past several years, our Archdiocese, the third largest in the country, has been in need of an Auxiliary Bishop. The vastness of its area, the great number of its inhabitants who approximate to two million necessitate the initiation of so many and varied apostolates. It does remain obvious that a bishop, alone and unaided, would teeter under the burden of all the episcopal duties incumbent upon and demanded from him by the good of souls.

Appointed as the coadjutor to this See eight years ago. I was well aware of the urgency of the situation. Since my accession as Archbishop Ordinary upon the resignation of my Venerable Predecessor, it has always been my desire to have an Auxiliary. Accordingly, I frequently asked the Holy See for this purpose.

Last week, after several years of waiting, it has finally pleased the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, to appoint my much needed Auxiliary who, I am happy to announce, is His Excellency, the Most Reverend JESUS CABRERA, the Parish Vicar of the Cathedral in Dagupan.

### **The New Bishop-Elect**

The Bishop-elect is the fifth native of Pangasinan and the third Diocesan priest from the Province to be elevated to the episcopacy. He is the second Auxiliary Bishop to be named for the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, the first having been The Most Reverend Francisco Cruces in 1968. He is the second Bishop to come from the levitical town of Mangaldan in eight years.

Whereas it has always been the prerogative of the Holy Father to appoint anyone he deems fit for the episcopacy, his decision of choosing one from the ranks of the local clergy brings home his ever solicitous concern for the good of our own Archdiocese. It is needless to say that one who has been indigenized, inculturated, and conscientized in the local situation can well integrate and find himself at home in the same situation.

Having known him for the past several years, I have no doubt whatsoever that Msgr. Cabrera is the right choice of the Holy Father and his promotion will be a welcome news to the Clergy and the People of God in the Archdiocese. He has served as a dedicated assistant priest in Urdaneta and Malasiqui; as an active Director of the Catholic School of the latter town; as a beloved Rector of seminarians both in Baguio and in the Minor Seminary in Binmaley; as a hardworking Parish and Episcopal Vicar in Dagupan while at the same time acting as the Archdiocesan Director of Vocations.

### **An Occasion of Joy and Gratitude**

As the Psalmist would sing in joy and jubilation "we give thanks to the Lord for He is good!" (Ps. 136).

God, the Father of all gifts, "who feeds the birds of the sky, who clothes the grass in the field" (Mt. 6:26 ff), "who gives good things to those who ask him" (Mt. 7:11 ff) does not forget the welfare of his People in their time of need and lavishes upon them his graces. To us the People of God in Pangasinan, the appointment of Msgr. Cabrera is a gift and being so it demands our act of gratitude.

As we welcome our new pastor, as we accept him and as we envision and promise a mutual working-together in the future, we take all these as our humble efforts to say "thank you" to God.

Similarly, we are in duty bound to thank the Holy Father who was God's instrument in giving us the grace of having Msgr. Cabrera

as our bishop. Our appreciation also goes to the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency, The Most Reverend Bruno Torpigliani, for all his efforts and cooperation in giving us our new bishop.

### Vicar General

Pursuant to the provisions of Vatican II on the pastoral office of bishops, let me take this early opportunity to announce my decision to name Bishop Cabrera as our Vicar General.

The pre-eminence of the Lord's flock by reason of which an Auxiliary is appointed (Cfr. **Christus Dominus**, n. 25), demands unity in the government of the diocese as well as the preservation of the episcopal dignity (Cfr. **Ecclesiae Sanctae**, n. 13, par. 1). Hence, "the diocesan bishop should appoint his auxiliaries as vicars general or at least as episcopal vicars" (**Christus Dominus**, n. 26).

The rationale behind the preceding provision is easily understandable for the old rule is not free of every inconvenience. In the law of the Code (Cfr. c. 368, par. 1) the Vicar General enjoys the same jurisdiction throughout the diocese over spiritual and temporal matters which the common law grants to the diocesan bishop; he is the alter-ego of the bishop. Now, the Auxiliary is constituted in an office which he can, at times, exercise independently of the Vicar General in that the Auxiliary depends **only** on the authority of the diocesan bishop (Cfr. **Christus Dominus**, n. 26). Consequently, if the Auxiliary is other than the Vicar General complication can arise in the government of the diocese.

### Our Congratulations, Expectations and Assurances

To Msgr. Cabrera we extend our heartfelt congratulations and prayerful wishes for a successful ministry. While his episcopal dignity brings him honor, we too are well cognizant of the fact that it carries along grave responsibilities. But it is our hope and aspiration that he will live up to them.

We look up to him as the preacher of the faith leading new disciples to Christ; as the teacher endowed with the authority of Christ, imparting to the people the faith they must believe and incarnate in their lives, bringing forth from the treasury of revelation the new and old alike (Cfr. Mt. 13:52); and we exhort him to let that faith bear fruit while he vigilantly wards off any errors which threaten the flock (Cfr. **Lumen Gentium**, n. 25).

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He is the high priest from whom all the faithful under his care derive and maintain their life in Christ (**Sacrosanctum Concilium**, n. 41).

Finally, as the vicar and ambassador of Christ we ask him to use his sacred power for the edification of his flock in truth and holiness, constantly remembering that he who is greater should become the lesser and he who is more distinguished, the servant (Cfr. Lk. 22:26-27) (Cfr. **Lumen Gentium**, n. 27).

As he fulfills his task, may the works of St. Paul to Bishop Timothy always give him courage and consolation: "Accept the strength that comes from the grace of Jesus Christ... Put up with your share of difficulties like a good soldier of Jesus Christ... Remember the good news 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead' on account of which I have my own hardships to bear even to be chained like a criminal" (II Tim. 2 ff).

We assure him of our help and our prayers that he will be a real pastor of souls and be an inspiring model for all of us to follow.

✠ (Sgd.) **FEDERICO G. LIMON, S.V.D., D.D.**  
Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan

Dagupan City  
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# THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS AND EVANGELIZATION IN ASIA TODAY

Fausto Gomez-Berlana, O.P.

On December 7, 1979, the International Mission Congress ended with the Mission-Sending Rite of missionaries from the Philippines to different countries of Asia and the World. The conferring of the mission mandate and Cross on sixty-three Filipino missionaries was a fitting symbol of the renewed sense of mission spearheaded by the first International Mission Congress held in Asia.

## 1. THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS

Over two hundred participants coming from every continent of the world and some forty countries, met in Manila from December 2, 1979, to reflect on: *The Good News of God's Kingdom to the Peoples of Asia*. Six cardinals, hundreds of bishops, priests, religious men and women, and representatives of the laity shared experiences, worked and prayed together to become more fully aware of the task of evangelization in Asia today.

The Congress was convened in the Philippine capital on the occasion of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the dioceses of Manila. It was sponsored by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and by the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies of the Philippines. His Eminence, Agnello Cardinal Rossi, Prefect of said Sacred Congregation, was the Papal legate to the Congress, and Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila, its graceful host. Bishop Gaudencio Rosales, National Director of the Philippine Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, acted as Convenor and Director of the IMC, with Fr. Catalino G. Arevalo, SJ as Executive Secretary of the Theological Conference.

The general public keenly realized the importance and relevance of the Congress for every Christian in Asia, through the colorful, prayerful and innovative liturgical celebration and through the *public lectures*. On December 3, 1979, Bishop Patrick D' Souza of India spoke on *Important Tasks of Evan-*

*gelization Today*, stressing the evangelization of cultures and the "close links" between evangelization and integral human development; on December 4, Stephen Cardinal Kim, Archbishop of Seoul, spoke on *Jesus' Evangelization: Pauperes Evangelizantur*, centering on poverty as "a crucial component" of Jesus' evangelization and on the Church as "reflection" of the Good News, that is Jesus; on December 6, Vicente Cardinal Tarancon, Archbishop of Madrid, spoke on *The Holy Spirit and the Church, in Mission Perspective*, focusing on the different manifestations of the Spirit and on the presence and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, in the actual moment of the Church.

We had the privilege to participate in the International Mission Congress. We see our six-day experience greatly enriching particularly for its excellent organization and dynamics, its theologico-pastoral orientation, its prayerful milieu. Among these three areas of achievement, we single out, without any doubt, the prayerful structure of the IMC.

Prayer — at times spontaneous, at times prepared — was the framework of the Congress: prayer at the workshops, prayer at the general assemblies, and liturgical and eucharistic prayer to close every day of the Congress (specially beautiful and meaningful were the Indian Mass, the Chinese Mass, and the Pilipino Mass): "There is today an undeniable thirst and hunger for prayer and contemplation. We see this all around us, but especially among the laity, especially among the young. Surely this is a major sign of the presence and action of the Spirit. There is the longing to hear and reflect on the Word of God, especially with others in a community of prayer" (*IMC Message*, n. 10).

Our main concern here is the theologico-pastoral dimension of the IMC. Content-wise, participants to the IMC discussed, reflected upon and shared ideas and experiences on *The Good News of God's Kingdom... to the Peoples of Asia*; hence, the central theme of the Congress really was: *Evangelization in Asia Today*. What are the tasks of evangelization in Asia as we begin the decade of the 80's?

To answer that basic question, the Theological Conference of the Congress divided its theme into nine crucial areas of concern for evangelization in Asian context, developed in the nine workshops of the Congress: *Theology for Mission* (I), *Local Asian Churches and the Task of Mission* (II), *Dialogue with Other Religious Traditions of Asia* (III), *The Gospel, the Kingdom of God, Development and Liberation* (IV), *Basic*

*Christian Communities and Local Ministries in Asia* (V), *Prayer, Spirituality and Formation for Mission* (VI), *Co-responsible Evangelization* (VII), *Mission and Education* (VIII), and *Media and Evangelization* (IX).

The *Consensus Papers* of the nine workshops will soon be published with the *Message of the Delegates of the International Mission Congress to the Peoples of Asia*. This beautiful message sums up the content of the Congress thus: "The discussions of the 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 an adequate media-ministry.

A more thorough-going renewal is called for in 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 lifestyle of our clergy and other leaders, in the hierarchy of values we set for ourselves and our communities, and the like" (Nn. 18-20).

## 2. EVANGELIZATION IN ASIAN CONTEXT

The Church of Christ is essentially centered on *mission*: the mission of proclaiming the Good News of God's Kingdom to the world. She takes her origin from the mission of Jesus and the mission of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the decree of God the Father (AG, 2).

### 2.1 *Evangelization, Universal Dimension*

The mission of the Church was defined by Jesus when He said: "Go, therefore, and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19),

"preach the Good News to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). The mission of the Church is *evangelization*, and the task of mission is the task of evangelizing: "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity; she exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious resurrection" (EN, 14).

Evangelization is centered on Jesus Christ; it is "a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ... salvation is offered to all men" (EN, 27; cf. 22). It includes the proclamation of the Word, the communication of divine life through the sacraments, and the prophetic manifestation — through Christian commitment — that the Kingdom of God has already begun.

The missionary activity, the evangelizing task of the Church — that is, of the People of God, of all Christians — is multifaceted. It includes many and different activities and not all its activities possess the same density of evangelization. This is specifically *religious* (GS, 42; EN, 32): its nucleus is composed of specifically salvific-religious activities, such as preaching, liturgico-sacramental celebrations, catechesis: however, to be *integral*, the task of evangelization includes necessarily other important activities connected with human and social promotion (EN, 31), with "the concrete, personal and social life of man" (EN, 29) — without these, evangelization would be incomplete (cf. *Pre-Puebla Documents*, Vision Pastoral de America Latina, b. 4).

The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation (LG, 1, 9). She strives to proclaim the Gospel to all nations (AG, 1), to all men: *man is the way for the Church*, "the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission", because man has been redeemed by Christ, and "because with man — with each man without any exception whatever — Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it" (RH, 14).

In her evangelizing mission, the Church opts for man and only for man (all men: those who do not believe; and those who believe, but live as if they did not believe, or they did not believe enough; cf. EN, 51-58); however, preferentially, she opts for the poor man (AG, 12; GE, 9; GS, 57; EN, 12): "True evangelical commitment is a commitment to the most needy" (John Paul II, *Speech at Puebla*, III, 3); a real sign of authentic evangelization is the "the preferential love and care towards the poor and the needy" (*The Puebla Documents*, n. 382).

The proper *effect* of evangelization is the conversion of man to Jesus: it is *metanoia* — the radical change of mind and heart (EN, 10) —, initiated in the personal conscience (EN, 18) and projected towards the transformation of the whole man (Cf. *Pre-Puebla Documents*, b. 4); it is *integral*, that is, *Christian liberation*: the Church seeks to convert “both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu” (EN, 18; cf. 19).

## 2.2 *Contextualized Evangelization*

The Asian Church, as a “local” Church, (a Church inserted in a concrete human and cultural space, cf. AG, 5), is a “place” of incarnation of the universal Church; she is a Church “incarnate in a people, indigenous and inculturated” (FABC, 1974, n. 12). Evangelization in Asian context is contextualized evangelization, that is an evangelization which reads from faith the Asian socio-cultural reality, to discern and carry out its evangelizing mission.

In broad lines, evangelization in Asia presents an enormous challenge to the local Church (a tiny minority: less than 2.3%) by reason of its vast population (55% of mankind), of its pattern of rapid growth, of its multitudes of poor peoples, (80% of its total population), and of the high proportion of young people in the population (nearly 2/3). Moreover, its different and great *established religions* make the work of direct evangelization really difficult. In the Philippine Church, evangelization, or re-evangelization is a task with some different tones — the Philippines is the only Christian Asian country —; but, basically, it should also take up the challenges of evangelization in Asian context (cf. EN, 54, 56). In this context, what are the main tasks of mission in Asia today?

The focus of evangelization in Asia continues to be the building up of the local Church which — in order to be fully built up — must engage “in dialogue with the local cultures, in life-dialogue and solidarity with the masses of the poor and oppressed in the region, in dialogue with the religious traditions of our Asian neighbours” (*Consensus Paper*, Workshop-I). Consequently, the main thrusts of evangelization in Asian context are: the dialogue between Christian faith and Asian cultures, faith and main religions; and the commitment to integral development and Christian liberation; moreover, in the evangelizing tasks, the active participation of the laity is needed as well as an evangelizing education.

(1) *Inculturation*. According to Paul VI, "what matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way as it were by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots)" (EN, 20). Cultures — as general frameworks in which men, groups of men, express their vitality and dynamism — are evangelized, redeemed through a *process of inculturation*.

Inculturation is "a creative embodiment of the Word in the local Church," a "discovery of the 'seeds of the Word' which lie hidden in the given cultures and living traditions"; furthermore, "*successful inculturation* demands from those involved in the process mature freedom in the Spirit which is characterized by docility and trust in His guidance. This implies the willingness to take risks and profit by mistakes, to be open to correction and be willing to dialogue with others in sincere openness" (*Consensus Paper*, W-II).

The dialogue between faith and culture is a dialogue for mutual enrichment; it includes "giving" as well as "receiving" (Synod of Bishops, 1977, *Message*, n. 5). Through evangelization, cultures are "renewed, elevated, and perfected by the active presence of the Risen Lord, center of history, and His Spirit" (*The Puebla Documents*, n. 407; cf. EN, 18, 20, 23; GS, 58, 61). In the process of inculturation "a people receive the Word, make it the principle of their life, values, attitudes and aspirations; in this way, they become the body of Christ in this particular place and time — a local Church" (*Consensus Paper*, W-II.).

(2) *Interreligious Dialogue*. The dialogue between Christian faith and Asian cultures is specifically a dialogue between faith and the great *established religions* of Asia; in truth, 'dialogue is a primary means and way for *inculturation*. We discover the seeds of the Word in other religions and we become open to and ready for a process of change. It makes us listen to others so that we can understand how they see us as Christians within the context of the Church's message and her structures" (W-III).

Our world is rapidly changing; it is difficult for men to follow this frantically rapid pace. Against "future shock," men need to rediscover the deeply religious dimension of human life; moreover, "in a world of divisions and conflicts, at times triggered off by certain aspects of religion, dialogue becomes urgent for harmony and peace" (W-II).

The interreligious dialogue will certainly foster in us Christians the *contemplative dimension* of Christian faith — a dimension that permeates the holy writings of the “living faiths” of Asia and the lives of their religious masters. In this context, the *Consensus Paper* of Workshop VI stresses that “popular piety and folk religiosity must be taken seriously, examined and fostered”; likewise, “the growing interest among our people to be gathered in prayer groups.”

(3) *Human Development and Christian Liberation*. Evangelization is linked very strongly with human development: “the action for justice and the tasks of human development form an *essential part* of the evangelizing mission of the Church” (John Paul II, *Speech at Puebla*, III, 2). Pope Paul VI said to the Pan-Asian Bishops at the University of Santo Tomas on November 28, 1970; “One of the aspects of the present adaptation of missionary activity... is the importance it accords to the action of development; the Church must offer her assistance for promoting a ‘fuller humanism’; that is to say, the full development of the whole man and of every man (PP, 42): it is a logical consequence of our Christian faith.”

The *purpose of mission* “is to proclaim salvation to the whole man and to all men. It is not simply to convert people to an organized religion nor win them to membership in an institutional Church. It is rather to convert people to authentic human values and to deepen and fulfill these values in Christ so that the people who are evangelized may come to form the community which is his Church” (*Consensus Paper*, W-IV).

To fulfill her evangelizing task, the local Church of Asia, must become the Church of the poor, “for most of Asia is made up of multitudes of the poor” — “poor in that they are deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to create a truly human life for themselves. Deprived because they live under oppression, that is, under social, economic and political structures which have injustice built into them” (FABC, 1974, n. 19).

In this aspect — as in many others —, the verbal, message is totally clear; but what is it, if not linguistic ritual, when the Church, the People of God, does not practice it: *from Words to action: that seems to be the only theme worthy of our serious missionary responsibility* (W-IV). An immense new orientation to mark the new course of the Third World missions is “the firm commitment to poverty as an essential ingredient



for a credible proclamation of the Gospel, receiving everything from the Father" (P. D'SOUZA, *Keynote Address to IMC*, p. 27). As Cardinal Kim said in one of the public lectures of the Mission Congress: "The Church must know poverty experientially and existentially; not by researching on poverty, not by studying the poor, not by interviews or statistics, but by being poor."

What to do? We must, first of all, "rid ourselves more and more thoroughly of that ecclesiocentric attitude which puts institutional interests above the needs of our fellow human beings. An Asian Church which is more concerned with the operation and preservation of its structures, institutions, buildings, offices, bureaucracy than with self-sacrificing love and service especially of the poor can never be a credible sign of Christian liberation and development" (W-IV).

(4) *The Emergence of the Laity*. The task of mission is the task of the whole people of God — not only of priests and religious —, a People with different ministries but with a common task, the task "of proclaiming the Good News to all creation" (Mk. 16:15). This "basic apostolicity and missionary character of the Church implies collegiality and co-responsibility" (cf. LG, 32-33; AG, 2). The lay people have a specific role in bringing the Word of God into all areas of life. They are specially called to transform from within the professional, economic, educational and family life through their witness of and their struggle for justice" (*Consensus Paper*, W-VII).

The sacerdotalism "that has been emphasized in the Church for so long has resulted in reducing the Church in effect to a priestly system without a genuine people. The priestly ministry swallowed up all other ministries in the Church." "We have to confess that there is still hardly any lay participation in the decision-making of the Church" (*Consensus Paper*, W-V.).

The lay men and women are co-responsible in the tasks of evangelization: to promote the spirit of co-responsibility, and, in particular, to form lay leaders, the *small Christian communities* appear as excellent means (be they *charismatic*, *basic* or *popular*).

The basic Christian communities "appear to be the future form of Christian witness in our secularized and non-Christian communities" (W-VI). What is a basic — grassroots ecclesial — Christian community? It is "a *visible community* of the

disciples of Christ gathered together and embodying the Spirit of their master; it is a community of person in authentic interpersonal relationship with a mutual sense of belonging and concern, in a fellowship open and extending to all, and in an outreach of humble service; it is a *community of faith, hope and love* in its function of effective witness and humble service" (W-V).

In a wider perspective, all the local Churches are co-responsible in the universal Church's task of evangelization: every local Church, according to its possibilities, must share whatever its gifts are for the needs of other Churches, for mission throughout mankind, for the life of the world (*IMC Message*, n. 14). Thus, each local Church is co-responsible with its sister Churches everywhere, Rome being the foundation and center, for the building up of the Kingdom of God throughout the world (*Consensus Paper*, W-VII).

Workshop VII makes two other important points. One, regarding *material aid* to the "third world" churches by "the Churches of the affluent world". "An area of special concern is the financial assistance to the poorer Churches by those which are better off;" however, in the granting and acceptance of such assistance, "it is important that the growth towards self-reliance of the receiving Church be safeguarded." The other point concerns *missionaries*: "Missionaries from sister Churches are not only living signs of the universality of the Church and the exercise of co-responsibility but because of their different cultural and Christian background, they enrich and fruitfully challenge the local Church: the local Church should welcome, accept and help integrate them into her life."

(5) *Evangelizing Education*. Authentic education is a cultural mediation that leads to human development and liberation; Christian education is education for evangelization, that is, *evangelizing education*: humanizing, personalizing and liberating education carrying with it an essential relation to the mystery of Christ. For the Church of Asia, the Catholic schools constitutes privileged places to import an education that evangelizes — it evangelizes culture and educates in the faith.

Workshop VIII concludes its *Consensus Paper* thus: "The task of evangelization in Asia today includes necessarily a humanizing, liberating and evangelizing education. In general, authentic evangelization is education, for it humanizes and liberates man, helping him 'grow in humanity' (PP, 15, 17);

specifically, evangelizing education is an indispensable component of integral evangelization (cf. *The Puebla Documents*, nn. (013-ff). The local Church of Asia needs to foster an evangelizing education to become more fully incarnate, indigenous and inculturated; likewise, to bring man and society towards a fuller development and liberation. She needs particularly the Catholic schools and universities as well as non-formal education modes to fulfill her mission."

### 3. THE FRUITS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONGRESS

A good friend of mine commented after the Congress: "I heard that the Congress did not come out with anything new." Personally, we think that some points stressed in the Congress are new, particularly in connection with the so-called "grass-roots Christian communities", the co-responsibility of evangelization, the emerging role of the laymen in evangelization, and evangelizing education. Nevertheless, even if we would grant that theologically, the Congress did not come out with any theological breakthrough (what Congress does?), we strongly maintain that the Mission Congress was and will be considered as historical in many ways: it was the first of its kind in Asia; it was a high example of prayerful and fraternal gathering of cardinals, bishops, priests, religious men and women, and some lay persons; it was an enriching sharing of experiences and ideas. This was also the common feeling of the participants.

Still, even granting that the IMC may be considered a real success, what counts most will not be the resulting texts but the fruits it helped achieve in the Christian communities of Asia. As Archbishop Mario Ngulunde of Tanzania put it: "The Congress was excellent in many ways; however, the real test of its success will be in the follow-up."

Before the Manila Synod of October 1979, a survey was made to assess the Christian situation of the Catholics of Manila. The survey included one question on Mission. Most of those asked from the laity had little awareness of the mission of the Church. This Congress might help the Catholics of Manila and the Filipino Christians to regain a new sense of mission; it will help them, if there is a real follow-up of the Congress' thrusts and recommendations. Will there be such a follow-up in the Philippines? We hope so! Nevertheless, the real positive answer can only be given by every Filipino Catholic, particularly by our pastors, spiritual leaders, and theologians.

With the IMC participants and observers, our bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders must really try to reawaken in themselves and in all Catholics a strong sense of mission and a renewed sense of commitment to the urgent talks of evangelization in Asia today: "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 past mission theories, nor to past mission methods, nor to the 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" (*IMC Message*, n. 21).

At the closing of the IMC, Cardinal Sin spoke of the important mission of the local Church of the Philippines in the Evangelization of Asia: "Let it not be said for long — he said — that the Philippines is the only Christian country of the Far East, for it would mean, perhaps, that the Philippine Church and the Filipino Catholics had not fulfilled their mission of helping the sister Churches of Asia in particular, in the *proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom to all the Peoples of Asia*". In this context, the Mission-sending Rite that ended the IMC was a positive symbol of the renewed sense of mission of the Philippine Catholic Church.

## IN SEARCH OF THE CHURCH

(Published in Life Today, June 1980)

By Marcos Ruiz, O.P.

By this title we do not mean that the Church has disappeared, so that we have to look for it to find it again. We are all conscious of its presence in our midst and of our being part of it. Our Lord Himself stated that, once founded by Him, nothing or nobody would be able to destroy his Church (Mt. 16, 18).

Nevertheless, we do observe that many people, not only the non-believers who look at it from outside, but even those believers who love it, among them the faithful, the priests, the theologians, puzzle over the Church. They all ask questions like: What is the Church or how should it be? How build up the Church today? Is Church the same as Gospel? Why are there so many "patterns" of the Church today, some of which have already spread throughout many countries?

In answer to these questions, we are publishing this series of articles that hopefully may help our readers to be informed on present-day Church movements, and also to form a personal criterium on this phenomenon of our times.

In this first article, we want to touch on something that could be the hidden, even if sometimes unconscious motivation of this anxiety existing in the Church today. We are referring to what has been called "the transition from a Church of christianity to a more evangelical Church". Vatican II has mean a real awakening of the ecclesiastical conscience throughout the world. It has revived vision of the Church as "the people of God" and "the community of the faithful". In the old christian countries, as for example the European countries, catholic action and other lay movements brought about during the past years a pastoral eminently missionary in character as different from the traditional pastoral of christianity. This gave a stature of maturity to the laity and to the commitment of the christian in temporal affairs. On the other hand, the phenomenon of "protest", inside and outside the Church, and the search more vivid everyday, to "live in groups" point towards a come-back to the Church as a "concrete community" and not to the theoretical entity to which one claims to belong through the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism.

We shall first analyze some of the characteristics of the so-called "Christianity Church". Then we shall see the alternative offered today to this centuries-old experience of the christian faith in search of a more christian and evangelical church.

### 1. *Christianity Church*

"Christianity Church" refers to the Church as manifested in the European countries since the IV century, with the conversion of Emperor Constantine down to the present century. In the so-called "mission countries", like ours, the Church developed little by little, after the shape of the European countries where the missionaries came from.

What are the characteristics of this Church?

a) This Church is seen more as a group of people than as a community. The group does not necessarily consist of a big number of persons, although it may be so. Even more, when predicated of the Church, this could embrace the whole or the majority of the total population of the nation. We have a "mass or group Church" when vertical relationships are predominant in it: people-God, people-priest, over the historical approaches: the faithful among themselves, who form a true community of brethren by their common faith in the same God and Father. In the group (mass), the individual is overlooked, while in the community his presence or absence is quickly noticed. The Church understood as a mass of persons is inclined to identify itself more with the society where it is rooted, than to affirm itself as something totally different from it in order to serve as leaven in in the transformation of that society.

b) In the Christianity Church faith has more to do with ethics and moral issues than with a *personal encounter* with Christ whom the believer consciously accepts in a given moment of his life, and after whom he strives to shape his own existence. It seems evident that in our traditional Church a progressive catechetical instruction leading the faithful to an everyday deeper encounter with Christ and with the others, considered brothers in the Lord is lacking. This is more painfully true when, referred to the adults. An adult and mature faith would lead the christian to take personal choices in the face of the various events of life. He would present to the world the reason for his hope. With this faith-encounter-with-Christ christian would gradually overcome many of the superstitions

easily detected in our religious circles. It is said that the ideas of many christians about heaven, hell, God and saints, prayer and providence bring them closer to the primitive tribes than to the normal twentieth century man.

c) As a consequence of all this, the *worship* of the Church today is for many believers more an aggregate of *religious rites* than a truly christian celebration. This is another characteristic of the Church under analysis. And yet there is a step to be taken from the purely religious to the specifically christian. This is clearly seen in the cultural manifestations. The christian sacraments and sacramentals are signs and realities of the incarnate God and the community where the presence of the Lord is real. Owing to a lack of solid formation in their faith and to all too vertical approach to adoration during the sacramental celebrations, many christian have not come to be aware of the practical implications of the sacraments. Today, when the critique of religion has already achieved a status of maturity, when the ecumenical movement has widened the religious horizon for all people, we should ask ourselves if it is convenient to to entrust the christian sacraments to the service of a mere religious conscience.

d) Finally, the lack of a clear conscience about the implications of participating in the sacraments brings many christians to a lack of *commitment in their lives*, not only at a personal, but also at a social level. For many believers, faith is still an aggregate of pious actions disconnected from the real life of the world in which they live. They risk through their faith to be converted into angels instead of becoming wholly human. Christianity leads towards incarnation, to the encounter with God in the world where He has incarnated in Christ, and to the preparation of His kingdom until He will come again. The Gospel is not an empty world, strange to life. Rather it is the yeast in the mass, the salt in the food, the powerful force capable of transforming the world. A christian conscious of his faith, must constantly assume his role of being present in the world as a messenger of God, just like Christ.

## 2. Towards a more Evangelical Church

One hears about a new stage in evangelization that will affect those countries traditionally christian as well as the christians of the mission countries. Under the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church is, through a process of renewal, striving, to go back to the Gospel, in order to get rid of all that



throughout the centuries may have blurred the Lord's image which the Church must show to the world. As Pope Paul VI wrote in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n: 13) before evangelizing, the Church today needs to be evangelized again. From being the society of the baptized, the Church should through a personal act of faith pass to become the *community of the converted*. The Church should not be an abstract project, but a concrete christian community practically involved in the world, and active in continuous attitude of mission.

What characteristics would this Church have?

a) In the first place, this Church should be formed as a *community* and not just a group of persons or as a mass of people. The first fruit of the evangelical word is to build up the community. This does not mean that the whole Church, at a universal, or even national, diocesan or parochial level will have to be *experienced* as a community. From the psychological point of view, this would be impossible. The idea is rather that authentic christian communities be formed within the Church to give it shape and personality. Communities where the signs of the presence of the Lord *love and unity*, be fully visible and real, so that the world may believe (cfr. Jn. 17, 21). Father Chénu, a French Dominican theologian, put it this way: "One of the essential causes why our society is actually passing through a profound crisis of faith, is that the signs of faith are not given with due clarity in our midst. One cannot speak of God and Christ if the signs of their presence are not simultaneously given". It has always been like that in God's pedagogy: side by side of the word goes the fact or the event where the word reveals itself efficaciously. Side by side of the testimony of confession we have the testimony of one's life. That is why the Church's first effort is to bring the believers to live the Word in which they believe together with the signs, love and unity, that accompany it, and make the christian community.

b) As a normal sequence to this, the Church desirous to be built as a community must give much importance to *evangelization and to catechetical instruction*, instead of limiting itself to exercise a pastoral fundamentally sacramental. The sacraments should always be preceded by the catechetical instruction, so that their meaning may be properly understood, and their efficacy be greater. The catechetical instruction, on the other hand, should not leave out the adults. It should rather be continued into adulthood. Though it can be greatly aided during infancy, faith is not inherited. It is rather the

personal encounter that happens or is strengthened above all during one's maturity. This faith finds its fulfillment, is signified and celebrated in the sacraments. That is why these are rightly called "sacraments of faith". However, priority should be given to evangelization, that prepares this personal encounter between man and the risen Christ, in whom the believer finds the meaning of his life and his death. Because of this, the believer accepts Christ and will try to understand Him better while living in a christian community where the signs of the Holy Spirit, signs of the living presence of the Lord, are manifested. The believer will be ready to give reason for his faith and hope, because he will have experienced the encounter with God in Christ, and at any moment he can point out his community that will corroborate his own testimony.

c) The Church should make an effort to restore the *true meaning of the christian worship*. Even in those places where the only way of expression of one's natural religious faith is the christian worship, the religious and christian manifestations should not be confounded. We said before that christianity is something more than just a religion. It is a revelation. It is the *Good News* even for the naturally religious man. That is why the christian worship cannot be considered simply religious. The Father is more than an idol, and Christ more than the victim to placate God. Our altar is more table than altar, and our sacrifice is more of a covenant, obedience and communion than offering of victims. The christian priesthood is not confined to the temple, rather it stretches out to all human activities. The true christian temple is not built of inanimate stones, but upon the faithful who form the living community wherein the Spirit of the Risen Lord dwells. The Sacraments and all those acts that form the christian worship should be the expression of this faith, the encounter with this God, and with this community. Not to approach them in this spirit would be to deprive them of their fundamental meaning, to view them from a purely religious level,

d) Lastly, the same sacraments bring the believer to a *commitment in life*. The commitment with reality, whether at a personal or social level, is essential to the believer and to the christian community. The Church has always seen it that way. However, this awareness appears more vividly felt today, when everything is measured by the degree of its efficacy. This explains why during the past years so many of the official documents of the Magisterium of the Church have touched on this aspect. It should be noted that one of the most important

of these documents is to be found in Vatican II itself (*Gaudium et Spes*). Following this teaching of the Church, sometimes anticipating it, many groups (movements) of militant christians all over the world have faced the problem of christian commitment in the world. For a christian, this commitment is essential. But as something that springs from his faith in the gospel and his reception of the sacraments, especially that of the Eucharist. It should never be a commitment inspired in other systems or philosophies, no matter how logical they appear to be. This is the reason why the christian's activity should always be judged from the light of the Word of God, to which mention must be made in the celebration of worship.

These are, we believe, the background ideas to understand this Church in search of itself, manifested today in many and various forms in the different countries of the world. Many of the Christian movements existing in the Church today are animated, unconsciously perhaps, by these criteria of renewal we have just delineated. That is why we have limited ourselves to pinpointing those aspects that can be common to all or some of these movements or christian communities, before we deal with each one of them in particular. This we shall do in the following issues of our magazine.

# HOMILETICS

## BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES FOR OCTOBER

By

Herman Mueller, S.V.D.

### TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES (October 5, 1980)

"The power of faith" is the topic of today's liturgy. The first reading concludes with "the just man, because of his faith, shall live" (Hab. 2:4). And the gospel takes up the theme by emphasizing faith and personal faithfulness to Christ. — The second reading has a topic of its own (Timothy shall have confidence in Christ's spirit, who is a Spirit of "power, love and self-control") unless one stresses one point and thus makes it fit in with the theme: "Don't be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord" (2 Tim. 1:8).

#### **First Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4**

According to content the writing of Habakkuk is similar to that of the prophet Jeremiah. Thus he was active around 605-600 B.C. He experienced the rise of the Chaldaean and Neobabylonian empire and saw the danger coming from this for Judah. The prophet in today's reading cries out against the injustices that he and his people are suffering from the hand of these foreign conquerors. How long will Yahweh let this go on happening and will not intervene? God's people have sinned, it is true, but is God to punish and slaughter them by the might of people who are worse sinners than themselves?

The Lord gives Habakkuk the answer. God will intervene, but at his time and with his speed. In spite of all appearances the final outcome will be the triumph of justice. God allows time for the evil man to falter, but he also gives the just man time to prove his justice by fidelity. "The just man, because

of his faith, shall live" (Hab. 2:4). The man who is patient and persevering will win out. "Faith" (*'emunah*) means here steadfast loyalty, holding on in obedience to Yahweh's law, even when it apparently pays no dividends. In the long run only the faithful, the just man will win by his faith, by his life-giving fidelity.

This key verse of Habakkuk is taken up by Hebr. 10:38; where it comes close to the meaning in the Book of Habakkuk. But in Gal. 3:11 and Rom. 1:17 Paul contrasts faith in Christ with the works of the Jewish law: Only a person who believes in Christ (not in the law of Moses) will be saved.

### **Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:6-8. 13-14**

Paul has come to the end of his life. He is in prison. He is oppressed but not depressed. Thus he encourages his favorite disciple Timothy to revive in himself the gift which he received by the laying on of hands of Paul, by his ordination. Whenever we are in crisis, we have to go back to the origin of our vocation and remind the Lord and ourselves of this origin. After all, Timothy has received the Holy Spirit by a special title in this ordination (2 Tim. 1:6).

And this gives him four qualities of any good teacher and man of God: (1) courage, (2) power to cope with things, (3) love, especially love for brethren, and (4) self-discipline, self-control (2 Tim. 1:7).

Thus Timothy has no reason to be ashamed, neither of Christ, nor of Paul who is in chains; Timothy rather will give testimony to Christ, and will also suffer for the gospel in the power of God (2 Tim. 1:8). Loyalty to the gospel brings trouble to Paul, brings him into jail. But the gospel is also power at the same time, power to live when life seems to be intolerable, power to master circumstances.

Timothy shall take Paul as model of sound preaching. He shall guard the deposit of faith. He is able to do so with the Holy Spirit in his heart.

### **Reading of the Good News: Luke 17:5-10**

The pericope consists of two parts: The word about faith (Lk. 17:5-6) we find in similar and slightly different words in other contexts also in Matthew and Mark. Mt. 21:20-22 =

Mk. 11:20-26 report how Jesus cursed a fig tree which did not bear fruits although it was not the fig season and how this fig tree right away (Mt.), resp. the next morning (Mk.) had withered up. The disciples were dumbfounded about such power of the Lord. But Christ could only tell them: "If you trust and do not falter, not only will you do what I did to the fig tree, but if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' even that will happen" (Mt. 21:21).

Luke's word on faith in today's gospel, how faith of the size of a mustard seed could even uproot a sycamore tree and transplant it into the sea" (Mt. 17:20 is connected with the attempt of the disciples to cast out a demon without success. And when they ask him why they did not succeed, the Lord tells them: "Because you have so little trust. I assure you, if you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you would be able to say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there and it would move. Nothing would be impossible for you" (Mt. 17:20). Here again, faith can move mountains.

In both cases the faith produces miracles: makes a fig tree wither and casts out a demon. In Luke, that faith the size of a mustard seed could make a sycamore, which is famous for its many and deep roots and which is supposed to become six hundred years old, be uprooted (something unbelievable) and even make it grow on in the sea, which is even more unheard of. Miracle or not miracle: What the Lord wants to say, faith has enormous power to do the unthinkable.

The second half of today's pericope (Lk. 17:7-10) is proper to Luke and seems to be without logical connection with the preceding verses. In the Orient a slave belongs completely to his master and has to serve him all the time without expecting thanks and reward. Thus when the master would come home from his field work, the slave would first have to serve his master at table and only then he himself could eat. That every master would take for granted without losing a word of thanks to the slave. It would be the slave's duty. The application seems hard to us: "It is quite the same with you who hear me. When you have done all you have been commanded to do, say, 'We are useless servants. We have done no more than our duty.'"

As usual, the gospel speaks in extremes. Jesus only wants to attack the smugness of the Pharisees who try to make a claim for reward in their observance of the law. That God is not

unthankful Luke brings out in Lk. 12:37 and 22:27: Jesus is the servant who serves the servants, which reverse of roles would have been completely impossible in ancient times.

What seems to be without connection with the word about faith speaks in the long run about faith, after all: Faith is a gift, and so is the efficacy of faith. Thus if we have served the Lord in faith faithfully, we have no claim on reward since the efficacy, the faithfulness is also God's gift.

## HOMILY

### THE POWER OF FAITH

1. *Faith* is the source and center of all religious life. By faith we respond to the plan which God works out for us in time. *We surrender our whole person*, we are going out of ourselves to gain Christ. Faith we often call "belief". And "belief" is etymologically connected with "love". Christ therefore addresses himself to our deepest level, where we are a living "I" and where we experience the other as a living "You", the level where truth is inseparable from our striving after goodness, where knowledge is not a cold light and love not a blind urge. Knowledge is full of love and love has a vision. And this unity is effected by faith, since God gives the vision and which the love which we accept by embracing God, by embracing Christ in faith.

2. There are many aspects of faith. Today's liturgy, and in particular St. Luke stresses only the one or the other. For Luke *faith means often acceptance of God's word*. Faith comes from hearing the word of God. After all, we do not only hear something about Christ, but we hear Christ himself, who enkindles our faith. It all depends on our receptivity, if we are footpath, people too busy to really listen, people who are always on the go and are busybodies, if we are rocky ground, people without depths, shallow people, if we are briars, i.e., people who are stifled by the cares and riches and pleasures of life or if we are good, deep fertile ground, i.e., people willing to listen to let the word sink in deep (Lk. 8:12-13).

The first Christians were different. When Peter and John were arrested, after they had preached to the crowd, "despite this, many of those who heard the speech believed.



The number of the men came to about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). — In Cyprus. Paul had caused the magician Elymas to be blind for a time. "When the governor saw what had happened, he believed, so impressed was he by the teaching about the Lord" (Acts 13:12). — In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas entered the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way as to convince a good number of Jews and Greeks that they believed" (Acts 14:1). — Similarly "many of (the people in Baroea) came to believe, as did numerous influential Greek women and men" (Acts 17:12) after they had studied the Scriptures each day, and Paul and Silas had preached the gospel. — Most Athenians, however, knowing everything better, were too proud and sophisticated to bow to the gospel. Yet "a few did join (Paul), however, to become believers. Among these were Dionysius, a member of the court of the Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and a few others" (Acts 17:34).

3. *Faith can make the impossible come through.* This fact the Lord demonstrates with some comparisons: Faith can move mountains (Mt. 21:21). Of course, not in the literal but in the figurative sense. Faith could even make a fig tree wither over night (Mt. 21:21). Faith can uproot a sycamore tree, proverbial for its many deep roots, six hundred years old and make it grow even in the ocean. In short, faith is dynamic and accomplishes unbelievable things. We only have to think, how Christianity has changed the face of many pagan nations, has made civilized people out of savages, had educated them all through the centuries. How fast have these nations caught up and are still catching up in Africa, in New Guinea and elsewhere.

4. *Greater things to be done in faith* the Lord had promised *his disciples*. "I solemnly assure you, the man who has faith in me will do the works I do, and greater far than these" (Jn. 14:12). Greater because of the greater external splendor, and greater because the activity of the apostles will not be limited to Palestine any longer as the activity of Jesus was, and because all restrictions will be taken away from Jesus. He is no longer the wanderer on earth, but the exalted Son of God and thus will foster all the works of his disciples.

Somewhere in Mindanao Pater's son was struck by the motorcycle of Tanque's son and died. But no charges were made to the police. Pater said to himself: 'No petitions could bring my son back to life. Why should I charge the poor father and son whom I know quite well.' Tanque offered to pay, but Pater politely refused. Thus Tanque just took care of the

funeral expenses. But Pater called the son of Tanque and said: Since you killed my son, you are going to take his place. All the love that I had for him I will extend to you." Only faith could accomplish something like this.

5. *Faith* accomplishes the impossible and is dynamic also *in everybody's private life*. It is not absolutely clear, but it is possible and even likely that Luke intended this saying "Lord, increase our faith" (Lk. 17:5) also to be extended to the preceding request of the Lord to *forgive one's brother* even seven times a day (Lk. 17:3). There shall be no limit to our willingness to forgive. As often as the brother asks for forgiveness we must be willing to forgive him. That certainly needs strong faith; otherwise we are not ready to forgive. Faith is dynamic also here.

6. Faith will also enable us *not to be ashamed of the Lord* but to confess Him before men (2 Tim. 1:8). It is easy to be a Christian when the Church is equated with progress, when everybody agrees with her and her teaching. But we are inclined to be ashamed if she is coined old fashioned, backward. Yet, the cause of Christianity has always won by some courageous few who were not ashamed of the Lord and the Church.

7. Such *dynamic faith is a gift* which only God can give. Aware of this fact we will praise the Lord for his goodness to us and the efficacy of our faith and faithfulness given by him without demanding reward from him. A man who demands something will usually be disappointed. A man who does not expect anything will receive more than he ever would expect. The Lord himself will serve that servant, as he after all does at every Eucharistic banquet.

## TWENTY-EIGHT SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(October 12, 1980)

Today's liturgy speaks about *gratitude* and the *rarity* of thankfulness (gospel and first reading): Naaman thanked the prophet Elisha for healing him from leprosy. But only one of the ten healed lepers, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus for his cure. — The second reading, as usual, has a theme of its own: "Hold firm to the gospel!" Timothy (and we) are told.

### First Reading: 2 Kings 5:14-17

Today's first reading brings only the concluding part of the cure of Naaman. He was the army commander of the king

of Aram, highly esteemed and respected by his master, for through him the Lord had brought victory to Aram. But valiant as he was, the man was a leper. This remark seems to indicate that it was leprosy not in the progressive form, where parts of the body start rotting and falling off, but only one of the many skin diseases. Bad and annoying enough, in any case. A slave girl, captured in a raid in Israel, being the servant of Naaman's wife, gives Naaman the advise to go to the prophet in Samaria, i.e., Elisha. When Naaman finally gets there and Elisha asks him to wash seven times in the Jordan, then he would be healed, Naaman is very angry and disappointed. He had expected a great act and word of power. And now he shall wash in such a small and insignificant river, the Jordan, which could not compete with the rivers Abana and Pharpar of Damascus. But since his servants remind him that the prophet had asked only something simple and easy to do and with faith in God's word he plunges himself into the Jordan seven times and is healed.

Naaman's thankfulness is impressive. He acknowledges the God of Israel who has worked this miracle through his prophet, and he urges Elisha to accept a gifts of thanks. But the prophet refuses to accept a gift. What he has accepted as a gift from God he has only handed on to others. The miracle was not his merit.

Since Naaman has been converted to Yahweh he wants to worship him alone in future. To make that easier, he wants to take along two mules' burden of earth, so as to have little Israel in Aram, as it were. The invisible God acts in visible signs and sacraments. Before Naaman had refused to accept such a visible sign of God's saving help: the washing in the Jordan. Now he wants to take some soil of Israel along as sign of Yahweh's saving help and his presence.

### **Second Reading: 2 Timothy 2:8-13**

Paul is in prison, presumably shortly before his death. But his imprisonment reminds him only of Christ's maltreatment and death which was the first part of his resurrection. The gospel is the message of the dying and risen Lord.

An apostle can be imprisoned, yes, but the word of God can never be chained. The apostle is allowed to preach even in prison and he enjoys it. Even more, such maltreatment will even foster the progress of the gospel. Cyprian would later

formulate it this way: "The blood of martyrs is the seed of new Christians." Every missionary, every messenger, has to be ready to face such suffering for the gospel's sake.

The reading ends with a hymn, used probably during the liturgy, of four parallels, where the fourth has an unexpected turn to stress God's faithfulness:

If we have died with him, we shall live with him.

If we hold out to the end we shall also reign with him.

If we deny him he will deny us.

If we are unfaithful he will still remain faithful,  
for he cannot deny himself.

If we are unfaithful, God will not be unfaithful to us, as one would expect from the parallelism. But he will always be faithful because that's his nature.

### **Reading of the Good News: Luke 17:11-19**

This pericope is proper to St. Luke, which the evangelist places in the Travel Narrative (Lk. 9:51-18:14) without telling when and where the incident took place. Somewhere between Samaria and Galilee Jesus meets in a village ten lepers. Lepers were forbidden to live in cities, but could live in villages, separated, cut off, from the other people. Besides, they were excluded from the religious services, thus cut off from God, as it were. And for themselves they were a burden too, having the somber outlook that the state of health would become worse and worse till they finally would die isolated and lonely. A picture of misery.

They respect the law (Lev. 13:45) and keep distance from the healthy people. To make themselves heard they shout from a distance: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Lk. 17:13). For them, Jesus is the only hope of healing. The Lord answers the request indirectly by testing their faith further: He sends them to the priests who alone could declare if somebody had been cleansed from leprosy and was again allowed to participate in the religious services (Lev. 14:3). As usual, Jesus observes the law of Moses. And on the way to the priests the miracle of being cleansed from leprosy happens.

All ten were healed. But only one, a Samaritan (disaster binds people together and these lepers did not make the other-wise strict distinction and separation between Israelites and

Samaritans) returns and thanks the Lord. One would and could have expected that the Jews would have thanked, but instead a (by the Jews) hated Samaritan does it. Jesus underlines that faith was the reason for being healed.

## HOMILY

### RARITY OF GRATITUDE

1. It is human to lament and to complain. Hardly is a baby born then it cries. And if it would not cry right away, the nurse would spank it on the behind so that it would cry and everybody would say: "Thanks be to God, its' a normal child, it cries." Smiling comes much later.

2. As a matter of fact, God inspired one third of all the psalms (some fifty of hundred and fifty) as lamentation psalms. That human he was he adapted himself to us. The Jews had many reasons to complain: (1) There was first the unclear picture of life hereafter, which God made clearer only with the second century B.C. in the later Wisdom Books and the Book of Daniel. They know somehow man survives and goes to a place, called Sheol. But what survives is more a shadow called Rephaim, than a dynamic person. And in Sheol are good and bad people alike. That life was really not attractive and not be looked forward to. Qohelet 9:4 sums it up: "A live dog is better than a dead lion", i.e., it is better to be an ordinary person here on earth than a king (a lion is the king among the animals, a dog a despised animal) after death. Because what we have now we know. What we get later (so they believe at that time) nobody knows.

(2) There was the unclear picture about the meaning of suffering during the early centuries before Christ: Jews believed that God would reward the good ones here on earth and punish the bad ones already here on earth. Thus when somebody was suffering it was because he was punished for his sins. Slowly, however, the Israelites realized that this often enough is just not true. This is the main problem of the Book of Job. The answer given is: Leave it up to God, he knows what he is doing. Thus suffering, sickness was plenty of reason for lamentation.

(3) The administration of justice was often enough arbitrary and one was not sure what the outcome of a case would

be. The story of the wicked judges and Susanna is a good example in question (Dan. 13). Another reason for complaint.

3. For us Christians (1) the picture of life hereafter has become clearer with Christ's resurrection. (2) We know that suffering shall be participation in the suffering of Christ. (3) And the administration of justice hopefully has improved, although that might be different from country to country and place to place. And yet, one can doubt, if we complain less than the Israelites.

4. If it is human to lament and to complain, it is *divine to thank*, it is rare to thank. And that is so surprising and sometimes hurting as it was surprising and hurting for the Lord, when only one of ten lepers came back and thanked him. Apparently they took (as we all do) things for granted. Complaint, criticism comes so natural that we only have to open our mouth, and there it is. To thank we have to make a special effort. And that effort we seldom make. It is revealing to see that in most languages "to thank" is a derivated verb form, not a primary verb form. "To thank" comes from "to think." And since we apparently think very little or at least not enough, we thank very little or at least not enough. We should train ourselves to think more and thus to thank more often.

5. Thank wants to be expressed, must not be taken for granted and must not be silent either. How often do parents have to remind a child, after it has received a piece of candy, or anything sweet from a visitor or a friend: "What do you say? Say 'thank you'." How seldom do teachers or superiors hear a word of thanks. How seldom does a husband thank his wife for the cooking, the washing and the many daily chores. How seldom does a wife thank a husband for the envelope with the salary he brings home every week. And then we are surprised if the relationship cools off and slowly becomes strenuous. And if a partner is reminded of his duty to thank, he easily may answer: "What do you want, if I do not complain I am satisfied with my partner. And that's enough thanks." But this kind of reasoning is a fallacy. Thanks has to be expressed, with people dear to us even more than with people less close to us.

6. Albert Schweitzer in his book *The Teaching of Reverence for Life* (New York-Chicago-San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, p. 41-42) puts it this way: 'We must all did ourselves to be natural and to express our unexpressed gratitude. That will mean more sunlight in the world, and more

strength for the good... There is much water flowing underground which does not well up from springs. We can take comfort from that. But we ourselves should try to be water that finds its way to a spring, where people can gratefully quench their thirst. Thoughtlessness is to blame for the paucity of gratitude in our lives. Resist this thoughtlessness. Tell yourself to feel and express gratitude in a natural way. It will make you happy, and you will make others happy... Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstandings, mistrusts, and hostility to evaporate."

7. How much more shall we be thankful to God who does us so many favors every day. The Mass should be such a school of learning how to thank. We call it Eucharist, sacrifice of thanksgiving. In the Gloria we say: "We give you thanks for your glory." The Preface begins: "It is our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ." During the consecration the priest recalls that Jesus took bread and gave thanks to His heavenly Father. Likewise, when he took the cup. — In the Eucharistic Prayer we say: "We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you."

### TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 19, 1980)

The liturgy of today speaks about *persevering prayer*, of *confidence* in prayer, first reading and in the gospel. — The second reading has a topic of its own (as usual): Timothy and we are told: "Hold on to what you have learned and believed, for Scripture is inspired and good for everything."

#### First Reading: Exodus 17:8-13

The incidence reported in today's first reading is in some way strange or myterious and a little superstitious. But there are happenings in the Old Testament which are reported more for the symbolic than for the historical value which remains obscure and should not be pressed.

The Amalecites were an old and powerful people (Num. 24:20; Gen. 14:7), living in the south of Canaan till the borders of Egypt (Num. 13:29. 1 Sam. 15:7). The Jews encountered them on the way from Egypt to Mt. Sinai and were attacked by them at Rephidim. Joshua acted as Moses' general. Joshua



and his men did the fighting, the acting, Moses the praying because he was convinced this was God's war, a war for the survival of Israel and God alone could win it. When Moses got tired stretching out his arms in prayer Aaron and Hur would support his arms, and thus the Israelites won the war while Moses was praying. It could look, to be true, as if the whole success was due to the mechanic posture of Moses' body, and this would be a little superstitious. But the author certainly in a dramatic way wants to underline the persistence in prayer of Moses, and this is certainly the reason why the pericope has been chosen for today's liturgy.

### **Second Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2**

Here we have probably one of the finest texts concerning the importance of Scripture. Timothy is encouraged to hold on to what he has learned and believed from and in Scripture. Scripture shall remain intact and undefiled. After all, Scripture gives us salvation, if we believe in Him present there, Jesus Christ. Scripture is no mere human word, (that it is also) but God's word. It is inspired, God is its author. And thus it is good for dogmatic and moral teaching, in short, for everything.

Thus Timothy shall preach it true and undefiled by not adding nor omitting anything, without fear, in season and out of season, telling people the truth, God's truth, which always will make free, if people like it or not.

### **Reading of the Good News: Luke 18:1-8**

Here we have another pericope proper to Luke. He more than the other evangelists (in Lk. and in Acts) speaks about prayer, and in particular about confidence in prayer and persistence. He did so already in Lk. 11:9-13, the famous chapter on prayer.

The administration of justice was not always in good hands then as now. But here in the parable is a particular case, probably a judge of Herod or a Roman judge, because among the Jews one man could not constitute a court. There were usually three judges, one chosen by the accuser, the other by the defendant, and one independent judge. And as we see several times in the Old Testament (cf. Dan. 13), the ordinary Jewish disputes were taken before the elders. Judges, however, paid by magistrates appointed by Herod or the Romans were notorious,

even more than those among the Jews in Ex. 23:6; Deut. 16:19; Sir. 5:8; Is. 10:2. They were supposed to be the champions of the helpless, down-trodden, widows, orphans, poor, and the foreigners and should look to it that they would receive their right (Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Is 1:17; Jer. 22:3).

The judge in the parable is a real devil, as he describes himself well in the monologue: He does not fear God nor man. He has no interest whatsoever to settle the case in favor of the woman. She most likely cannot pay him bribery, she does not have influential friends either who could influence the judge. She has only one weapon: persistence. She keeps on asking and pestering the judge till he finally gives her what she wants, not because he likes her or cares for her, but because he wants to get rid of an annoying petitioner. She could even, as one would forgive a woman, give him a black eye or knock him over the head, although that Greek expression *hypopiazlein* most likely wants to be taken in a figurative sense: "lest she come to nag me forever" instead of "lest she hits me under the eye".

The Lord draws the conclusion from this parable and the behavior of the unjust judge and the persistent widow: If such an unjust judge who does not care for people gives a confident and persistent woman her right, how much more will God who cares and loves give us what we need, if we only persevere in our prayer.

There is however one condition: we must figure with God's delay. For us it may be a long delay, in God's eyes it is never a long postponement.

Lk 18:8b is probably an ending which did not belong in here, but after Lk 17:22-37: "Will the Son of Man (that expression is not used in Lk 18:1-8 but in Lk 17:22) find faith on earth, when he comes (for the parousia)?" As it stands now it can only mean: "Can the Son of Man find people who in spite of the delay have trust in him that he will grant the petition?"

## HOMILY

### THE POWER OF CONFIDENCE

1. Trust, confidence is one of the finest and most necessary qualities in our human relationship. If a new official, mayor, a teacher comes we want to find out, if we can trust him and

have confidence of service we look for an evaluation of ourselves or any of above persons, the finest compliment is not: "He was very intelligent, he got things done, he worked hard", but "He trusted us and we trusted him". "Thank you for your trust in me" is a word we will never forget.

2. Parents often try hard to give children all their wishes. They shall have a better life than the parents had. So the parents save money to get the children through high school and if possible even through college. They try to manage giving them some pocket money as well. And yet, sometimes there is the complaint: "I cannot trust my father because he does not trust me." "I would never dare asking my mother because she is too strict." The finest material accomplishments mean very little without the awareness that one is trusted, that one can open up with confidence. This feeling we want above everything else.

3. Our relationship with God shall be similar. Humanly speaking, what he wants more from us than anything else is confidence in Him. And that confidence will accomplish everything. In that sense it is closely related to the faith that moves mountains, as we saw on the 27th Sunday. If we do not accomplish more in our life, it's because we do not expect enough from God. But then we must not blame God, but ourselves.

Luke is the evangelist of that great confidence in God. It's amazing to see how human Christ can be. He compares himself with an unjust judge who does not care for God and man, who apparently was used to accept bribery, and since this widow, who is always the picture of loneliness and poverty cannot provide any bribery and does not have any influential friends either, he turns a deaf ear to her. But finally he gives in because of her persevering petitions. "So you must get on God's nerves!" the Lord says. After all, if such a rascal of a judge gives a widow her right only because she keeps on knocking, how much more will God who loves us and cares for us give us what we need. This we must not doubt for one minute.

4. We must only persevere in praying, "day and night" (Lk. 18:7), "without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). This, of course, has to be taken with a grain of salt. Nobody could and should pray literally day and night, hour and minute-wise, for twenty-four hours, at least not with lips. We all know what persevering is without breaking it down into hours and minutes. But how often do we give up? We make good resolutions to pray perseveringly, but we do not keep resolutions.

5. Confidence in God requires that we pray without ceasing. And one main reason is: God often enough *delays* his answer and help. "Will he (God) long delay over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily" Jesus says in Lk. 18:7. That is God's language and God's measure for whom thousand years can be as one day (2 Petr. 3:8). Even for us time measurements can be relative according to the mood we are in. Fifteen minutes during a painful operation can seem to be "an eternity" and some joyful hours pass as fast some few minutes.

We have to persevere in prayer, we have to pray always, not just when we are in the right mood, as sometimes people say. Otherwise we must not be surprised if we do not get what we want.

6. This delay also means that God does not always give us what we ask for, because we do not know what is good for us. That sentence we often tell children, but do not fully realize that it is also true for us. God always hears our prayer and grants us what we need, but not always the way we asked something. No prayer is said in vain. No confidence will be disappointed. Lourdes is a place where many people asked for a particular healing but did not get it. But going home unhealed bodily they were overjoyed spiritually experiencing the spiritual care of God.

7. That persevering prayer also will have as effect that we get to know God really and thus develop a greater confidence in him. To know is to love and to love is to know. In the supernatural realm we cannot separate them. The theology we study, we must practice in confident prayer; and the confident, loving prayer will increase our theological knowledge of God.

8. All what we have said about God and our relationship to him we can also apply to our relationships with one another. Why do we often not have confidence in somebody and do not trust him? Is it really because he is all that bad we think he is? That judge in the parable was a rascal, and yet that widow still believed he would be capable to grant her something good. And she had success. Do we dialogue enough, do we communicate enough with one another? To be man means to express ourselves in our word, spoken and written. Doing so we get to know one another and can love one another, can have confidence in one another. Our distrust comes often from a prejudice and a lack of true or full knowledge of somebody. As long as we keep on communicating, asking, there is hope; and

things cannot go completely wrong. But as soon as we out of distrust stop talking to one another, alienation and separation will take place.

9. After all, the widow took the judge as he was and got what she wanted. We have to take people as they are in order to make them better, in order to get what we want.

### THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES

Today the liturgy presents us some reflections on *the prayer of the humble*, in the first reading and in the gospel. — The second reading, as usual, has a theme of its own: For the Apostle at the end of his life remains the reward of a winner.

#### First Reading: Sirach 35:12c-14. 16-18b

As we have seen the Book of Sirach is a collection of proverbs full of life experience, not always arranged in a logical fashion, but in a psychological one, following certain catchwords. In 34:18-35:24 we hear something about true worship. The outstanding sentence is: "He who serves God willingly is heard . . . *The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds.* (35:16-17). God does not make distinctions among people. He does not only hear those who have an official ministry of prayer. It must be absence of formalism and an attitude of generous service that makes God inclined to listen. The person praying may be a widow or an orphan, people often subjected to injustice. As long as a person gives himself completely and wholeheartedly to God, God will hear him.

#### Second Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18

This is the last time 2 Timothy is used; the letter comes to an end and with this also St. Paul's sentiments before his death are revealed: He is on the point of being sacrificed as a libation. He had reminded "I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:1). He had done just this, and thus could continue: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on a merited crown awaits me . . . and all who have looked

for his appearing with eager longing." — Happy are we, if we can say the same at the end of our life. And St. Paul certainly did not make easy demands on himself.

The Apostle, however also experienced what the Lord had gone through during his trial: "At the first hearing of my case in court, no one took my part. In fact, everybody abandoned me" (4:16). And as the Lord prayed for forgiveness for his enemies, because they did not know what they were doing (Lk. 23:34), Paul prays: "May it not be held against them" (4:17).

The Lord has made the unbelievable possible: In spite of Paul's imprisonment he has been able to continue preaching the word of God even to the nations. And the Lord will see him through.

### Reading of the God News: Luke 18:9-14

Again we have a parable proper to Luke. The Lord condemns the self-righteousness of the Pharisees and justifies the simple people despised by them.

A Pharisee and a tax collector went to the Temple to pray. The Pharisee outwardly was praising the Lord, and what prayer would be more fitting. But in reality he did not praise so much the Lord but himself for all the good he had done, or better for all the bad he had not done, as so many other people did: e.g., extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and tax collectors. In short, he enumerates virtues of omission of wrong doing, and then goes over to works of supererogation:

The Law required a fast once a year, on the Day of Atonement; the Pharisee fasts twice a week, Monday and Thursday. The Law demanded tithes only from the main products, the Pharisee tithes even the least insignificant things. Conspicuously absent are the virtues of justice, kindness and mercy. There is no word about them.

The tax collector, on the other side does not even dare to look at himself, he looks at the Lord and asks for pardon and mercy. He has nothing what he could offer the Lord but his sins. And these sins the Lord shall take away.

And so it happens, the tax collector goes home justified by the Lord, his sins are forgiven. The Pharisee, however goes home unjustified. He did not even think that he had done something wrong. How then could the Lord forgive him any sins. His error, his blindness, was that he did not see himself for what he was.

We may think the prayer of the Pharisee sounds quite exaggerated. Yet similar prayers are reported from other sources: A Jewish Prayer Book runs: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast not made me a Gentile. Blessed are Thou . . . who has not made me a slave. Blessed are Thou . . . who has not made me a woman."

Or in the Talmud (Berakoth, 28b) we find a prayer of Rabbi Nehunia ben Hanakaneh, which he prayed daily on leaving the Rabinical school:

I thank thee, Yahweh my God, that thou hast given me my lot with those who sit in the house of learning, and not with those who sit at the street-corners. For I rise early and they rise early. I rise early to study the words of the Torah and they rise early to attend to things of no moment. I weary myself and they weary themselves: I weary myself and profit thereby while they weary themselves to no profit. I run and they run: I run toward the life of the age to come and they run toward the pit of destruction.

## HOMILY

### THE DANGER OF TRYING TO BE BETTER THAN OTHERS AND THEN NOT EVEN BEING GOOD — THE DANGER OF PHARISEEISM

1. This parable is probably one of the most known parables and most easy to understand. Our sympathies go with the tax collector and we condemn the Pharisee, saying within ourselves: "Thanks be to God, I am not like him." And with this we prove to ourselves that we are Pharisaic too, and that the danger to be one is much more subtle than we think. There is something of a Pharisee in everybody.

2. The Pharisees really wanted to do God's will faithfully and to be really good. They did not want to become what we now call "Pharisaic" but became so gradually. They were not satisfied in being ordinary pious Jews, but wanted to do more for the Lord. Slowly they added to the ten commandments many other regulations and commandments so that in the course of time they came up with some 613 positive and negative commandments.



3. It will not be easy to see the exact connection between Pharisees and the "monks of Qumran". But it goes to show that there was another group of pious Jews who was not satisfied in being good; they wanted to be better and do more for the Lord. From the findings at Qumran we know that they had a postulancy, novitiate, that they lived a life of poverty, celibacy and obedience; in short, they are called "monks of the Old Testament". We can ask ourselves, why they did not join Jesus Christ?

4. Being placed in front of such a mountain of works of piety a person slowly might congratulate himself for all he does, as the Pharisee does in the parable: "God I thank you." And then he enumerates all the works of supererogation: the fasting twice a week, instead of doing it just once a year, the tithing of anything and everything instead of the grain, wine and oil and the firstlings of herd and flock (Deut. 14:23). Outwardly the Pharisee prays, but in reality he is talking to himself. Nobody can genuinely place himself in the presence of the Lord and still congratulate himself on his own piety. Then piety becomes a barrier between God and man.

Slowly then and almost unnoticed the Pharisee instead of being better than the others is not even good, becomes plainly arrogant. A danger that exists for all of us who want to do a little more for the Lord as a religious or as a priest. And then instead of relying on God we try to rely on our own human strength which can never be enough.

5. Hand in hand with such works of supererogation and the accompanying self-complacency goes the looking down on others who do not do as much as we do: 'I thank you, Lord, that I am not like other men' (Lk. 18:11). But what do we actually know about the conditions of other people, about their interior fight for being good, their attempts of working for the kingdom! The mere fact that they do not have the same routine as we have does not prove they do less than we do.

6. We should never compare ourselves with others, for either we look down on them, if we have the impression that we are doing better and more, or we become jealous, if we have the impression that we cannot compete with them. And both attitudes do not do us any good. If we want to compare ourselves with somebody, we should look up, to the Saints, to the Lord. And we will see, how much short we fall, for we are only beginners compared with them. Such comparisons will keep us on our toes.

7. We started with the idea that somebody can try to be better than others, and winds up with not even being good, as the Pharisee in the parable. He went home not justified by the Lord, because he was blind about his own shortcomings and saw only his good works. He was too much himself and too little the Lord. The tax collector did not even dare looking at himself, but knew how sinful he was and asked for God's mercy, always looking at the Lord. We have to look at the Lord in our life, to expose ourselves. Then our shortcomings slowly will be overcome by the sunlight of Christ.

**COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED  
THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
(November 2, 1980)**

The whole Mystical Body of Christ is intimately united in the bonds of love. On the Solemnity of all Saints (November 1) the pilgrim Church looks up to those who have reached their heavenly goal in order to be encouraged by them in the words of St. Augustine: "If all these smaller and bigger Saints could make it, why not I!"

With equally great piety the pilgrim Church from the first centuries on has cultivated the memory of the dead, particularly by praying for them on November 2. Abbot Odilo of Cluny celebrated that day for the first time in 998 in all monasteries of the congregation of Cluny.

Today every priest is privileged to celebrate three Masses for the dead (the Sunday Masses are not said today). Any of the readings in the lectionary for Masses of the dead may be chosen. One may follow this proposal:

1. 2 Macc. 12:43-45 / Rom. 8:31b-33, 37-39 / Jn. 14:1-6
2. Wisd. 4:7-15 / 1 Thes. 5:1-11 / Jn. 6:51-58
3. Is. 25:6, 7-9 / 1 Cor. 15:20-24a, 25-28 / Mt. 25:31-46

**HOMILY**

**DYING AND LIVING IN CHRIST**

For the benefit of a homily (homilies) here are some main ideas of above nine readings:

**I. Is. 25:6.7-9 God will wipe away tears from all faces**

Years ago, when somebody died, everything was black: the clothes we wore, the liturgical vestments. It was not too uncommon that somebody was crying at the funeral itself. After all, somebody dear to us had left us for good, and life would not be the same any more without him.

Of late, we have learned that death is only the transition to the resurrection. We may even sing the "Alleluja" at the end of the Requiem Mass or the "Gloria" within the Mass.

All this is well, provided that we do not suppress genuine sorrow in our hearts, otherwise something breaks. Death does not come naturally to us; by nature we want to go on living and death destroys life. The normal reaction is therefore sorrow, deep pain. And we must allow ourselves and our relatives to express their feelings freely, even as Christians, even as believers. Only when we have wept can God wipe all tears from our faces. A stone face may be impressive for the public, for the media, but it is not genuine.

**II. 2 Macc. 12:43-45 He made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin**

Commemoration of all the faithful departed reminds us of purgatory. Only people with a mortal sin on their conscience will go to hell; those who are free from any stain of sin and temporal punishment will go to heaven; but those who still have to make up some venial sins or some temporary punishment will go to purgatory. The name is not biblical but the fact is as we clearly see in 2 Macc. 12:43-45. Judas the Maccabean took up a collection for those soldiers killed in action that sacrifices should be offered for them in the Temple of Jerusalem. He believed that atonement could be made for these dead through these sacrifices.

We do the same for our departed relatives, when we pray for them and have Masses said for them. On the Solemnity of all Saints and on the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, or on the Sunday preceding or following November 2, one plenary indulgence may be gained by visiting a church or oratory and by praying the Our Father and the Creed, and a prayer for the intention of the Holy Father. This indulgence may be gained from midday of the preceding day to midnight of the day intended.

By the way, 2 Maccabees is one of the seven deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament which we Catholics accept as inspired books, the Protestants, however do not accept as inspired.

**III. 1 Thes. 5:1-11: The Lord will come like a thief at night be ready!**

We do not know, how we will die or when we will die, how early or how late. The Lord, often enough, comes like a thief at night, unexpected. So the only conclusion from this can be that we try to be ready at any time so that we are not taken by surprise.

**IV. Wisd. 4:7-15: Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years**

It is always a great sorrows and disappointment if somebody dies at an early age. Why did he have to die so soon! How much could he have still accomplished had God given him many years! All questions that bother us.

Wisd. 4:7-15 answers this question with the masterful sentence: "Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years." All other thing being equal, a long age is a great blessing in which somebody can do much for God's kingdom. But on the other hand, it depends how well somebody uses his time. Thus it can happen that somebody accomplishes more in a short time than somebody else in many years.

**V. Rom. 8:31b-35.37-39: Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ**

In all the uncertainties of our life, whether we die early or late all that counts is, if Christ is on our side or not. If he is for us, nothing can really come between us and him. Since the Father has given his Son for us, with His Son He has given us everything he could give us. All we have to do is cling on to Him.

**VI. 1 Cor. 15:20;24a.25-28: In Christ we have risen**

One of the greatest experiences of Paul was his vision before Damascus. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me" (Acts 9:4). In a flash Paul realized, that in persecuting the Christians

he was persecuting Christ himself; such was the intimate union between Christ and his Christians. That same union holds good between the risen Lord and our own resurrection too: Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. In Him we have already risen from the dead, for He is the head and we are the members.

**VII. Jn. 14:1-6: There are many rooms in my Father's House**

It was sad news when the Lord told his disciples that he would have to leave them and die. And yet, it was good news at the same time. His departure would be necessary so that he could go and prepare a room for everybody. "There are many rooms in my Father's house. And I am going to prepare you one" (Jn. 14:2). There can be no room for us in our Father's house, unless we die.

**VIII. Mt. 25:31-46: "Inherit the Kingdom. I was hungry and you gave me food"**

We often would like to know what will happen at our death, what will happen at the last judgment. How can we be sure that we will make it? Of all the many possible questions the Lord might ask us at the last judgment. Mt. 25:31-46 singles out the one which will be asked: What we did in our life in favor of charity or what we failed to do. Those who hear the words: "Inherit the kingdom" (Mt. 25:34) are surprised to hear these words, only to learn: "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40). And those on Christ's left side are equally surprised to hear: "Out of my sight, you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41) and learn: "As often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it for me" (Mt. 25:45). Our charity for the least of Christ's brethren will be the guarantee that we will inherit the kingdom.

**IX. Jn. 6:51-58: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I am going to raise him up on the last day**

Everything is well that ends well. The grace of perseverance is an undeserved grace which God gives as a free gift. And yet in the discourse on the institution of Holy Eucha-

rist the Lord encourages us to receive Holy Communion regularly as a means of perseverance: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood *has* eternal life already now." And with necessity the Lord is going to raise such a person up on the last day.

**FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA**  
**THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**(November 9, 1980)**

It has been men's desire that God may live in our midst. The Lord selected special signs of his presence: the ark, the tent, the temple. When Solomon dedicated the temple, he prayed: "Can it indeed be that God dwells among men on earth? If the heavens and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this temple which I have built" (1 Kgs. 8:27). God's presence would be a sacramental presence, i.e., a presence symbolized and effected by a visible sign. And slowly the sign would no longer be a material object, but the people themselves. Our Blessed Lady would be the living Ark of the Lord and even more through his death and resurrection, Christ, because the true and perfect temple (Jn. 2:21).

Nevertheless, the church will also remain a visible building as a special sign of the pilgrim Church on earth, reflecting the Church dwelling in heaven. For the Christians in Rome the Lateran Basilica has been the "mother and head of all churches of the city of Rome and of the whole world," as the inscription on the front of the basilica reads. St. John Lateran whose anniversary of dedication we celebrate today is the Pope's cathedral.

The following readings are proposed for today:

**First Reading: 1 Kgs. 8:22-23.27-30**

David was an ideal king in many ways. First he selected the capital for his united kingdom. That other tribes would readily agree, he did not select Bethlehem, the main city of the tribe of Benjamin, David's tribe, but he conquered Jerusalem, the city of the Jebusites and made it his capital, the city of David. No political unity would last without religious unity. Thus David wanted to build a temple for the Lord. But since he would be still busy fighting many wars, his son Solomon should build that temple. When it was finally dedicated, Solomon prayed the wonderful prayer in 1 Kgs. 8:1-9:9:

(1) Let there always be a king on the throne of David, as you promised David (1 Kgs. 8:24). (2) Let your eyes always watch over this house (8:29)! (3) If Israel because of his sins is conquered by enemies but repents, then forgive him and let it be restored (8:32)! (4) If there is no rain because of Israel's sins and the people asks for forgiveness, let it rain again (8:36)! (5) Help also foreigners in our land so that all nations may acknowledge (8:41)! (6) Help us in times of war (8:44)!

### **Second Reading: 1 Petr. 2:4-9**

In the three Synoptic passages of Mt. 21:42, Mk. 12:10, Lk. 20:17 Jesus speaks about his own rejection by his own people, using the picture of a stone symbolically: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone of the structure". This quotation is taken from Ps. 18:22 and Is. 28:16, and is found again in 1 Petr. 2:6. To those who accept Him Jesus is saviour and friend. To those who reject Him He is judgment and condemnation.

The Church is a living edifice. Christ is the cornerstone, we all are a living stone. Christianity is community. The individual Christian only finds his true place when he is built into the edifice of the Church. As long as brick lies by itself it is useless. It becomes useful only when it is built into a building. So it is also with the individual Christian. Individualistic Christianity is not Christianity. Christianity is community.

Christians are a holy priesthood (v. 5). The priest is the man who has access to God and whose task it is to bring others to God. But the sacrifices of the Christian are spiritual sacrifices. A Christian makes his work an offering to God. Everything he does is done for God. As Paul puts it: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God" (Rom. 12:1).

Christians are a chosen people as the Lord stressed it in the covenant of Sinai (Ex. 19:5-6). This means a privilege. He is chosen for obedience and for service.

Christians are a royal priesthood, as we saw already.

And Christians are a holy nation that we may be different from other men, since we are dedicated to God's will and to God's service. Other people follow the standards of the world, but the Christians follow the standard and the will of God.



**Reading of the Good News: Luke 19:1-10**

A pericope proper to Luke tells the great story in the life of Zacchaeus. He lived in Jericho, a very wealthy and important town in the Jordan Valley, commanding both the approach to Jerusalem and the crossings of the river, with a great palm forest and world famous balsam groves and the even more famous "roses of Jericho". All this together made her one of the greatest taxation centers in Palestine.

Zacchaeus had reached the top of this profession and thus he also was very hated by the Jews. After all, a tax collector had taken service under the Roman government and thus was considered a renegade and a traitor.

But Zacchaeus was not satisfied with himself nor with his life. As an outcast he must have felt lonely. He had heard about this Jesus who was different from others, especially in his judgment of tax collectors and sinners. He was curious, if this Jesus would have a word for him.

He was determined to see Jesus, and nothing could hold him back. There was a great hindrance, though, his shortness in height. And a big crowd would make sure that the small Zacchaeus could not see anything. But he was not discouraged. In his resourfulness he ignored his dignity and climbed into the lower boughs of a sycamore tree.

A word of Jesus makes Zacchaeus a changed man: "Zacchaeus, hurry down. I mean to stay at your house today" (19:5). It was the most personal word Zacchaeus ever heard.

And he acted right away, accepting this new friend, showing everybody that he was a changed man. He decided to give half of his goods to the poor and the other half he would use to make restitution for the frauds of which he had been self-confessedly guilty. In his restitution he went far beyond what was legally necessary. If voluntary confession was made, and voluntary restitution offered, the value of the original goods had to be paid, plus one-fifth (Numb. 5:7). Zachaeus offers the fourfold restitution for everything.

The immediate and joyous repentance of Zacchaeus is contrasted with the hostile and murmuring disapproval of all when they saw Jesus gone to be a guest at an outcast's house.

## HOMILY

### GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

1. The Yahwistic Source in Gen. 3 describes the closeness of God to men by saying: "They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of the day" (Gen. 3:8), as if to say, God and man are really close as only friends can be. After all, God has made everything. Therefore, everything is good and even very good. The universe is not something profane but something sacred, a visible revelation of the invisible and transcendent God. The luminary bodies are, as it were, the sanctuary lights.

2. Sin destroys this closeness and causes alienation between God and men. Men try to hide from God, to run away from him: "And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8). Man's expulsion from paradise meant before all else the loss of this state of familiarity with God. In the words to Cain: "Since you have now banished me from the soil, and I must avoid your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, anyone may kill me at sight" (Gen. 4:14). And so man is a wanderer. Although from time to time God manifested himself to men, God's dwelling was in heaven and no longer on earth. Yahweh "came down" to inspect the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:5.7). When the outcry against the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah reached heaven, God decided to "go down and see whether or not their actions fully corresponded to the cry against them that comes to me" (Gen. 18:21). God appeared to the patriarchs from time to time at various sanctuaries in Canaan: Shechem, Bethel, Hebron-Mamre, Beersheba. But there is no question of an abiding divine presence which accompanies the patriarchs on their journeys. God remained in heaven, although there were certain privileged places which would serve as point of contact between heaven and earth, such as the sanctuary at Bethel (cf. Gen. 28:12-13.16-17): "Surely, the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it... This is none other than the house of God."

3. Then comes the revelation of God as Yahweh to Moses and the covenant of Mt. Sinai. By definition, Yahweh was He Who Is Present where he will be present (Ex. 3:14). The great experience of the covenant is that the Lord is carrying his

people on eagles' wings, bringing it to himself (Ex. 19:4). He is their God and they are his people (Ex. 6:7): "If you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6). God has carried Israel out of Egypt, on eagle's wings and has elected it his people in this covenant on Mt. Sinai. Israel is dearer to the Lord than any other people. They are a nation of priests, having access to God, offering him spiritual sacrifices, by making their work an offering to God, by presenting their bodies, their life as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1).

4. This call of God on Mt. Sinai calls for a response. And when Moses came and told the people all the words and all the ordinances of the Lord, they all answered with one voice: "We will do everything that the Lord has told us" (Ex. 24:3).

5. Then the covenant is ratified and God's presence made even more impressive: Moses writes down all the words of the Lord. Then he erects at the foot of the mountain an altar and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex. 24:4). Holo-causts and sacrifices are offered, Moses takes half of the blood and places it in large bowls. The other half he splashes on the altar. Taking the book of the covenant, he reads it aloud to the people who answer: "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do" (Ex. 24:7). Then Moses takes the blood and sprinkles it on the people saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his" (Ex. 24:8).

6. The covenant is completed by a *covenant meal*. "Moses then went up with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, and they beheld the God of Israel... After gazing on God, they ate and drank" (Ex. 24:9-11).

7. After this wonderful experience of the presence of God Moses had only one question and wish that God may go with them through the desert to the promised land. The covenant formula, "I will be your God and you will be my people" would make sense only if Yahweh would be present guiding his people to the land he had promised them. And this he did, living in the Ark and in the Tent of the Covenant. The ark was a chest or box-like structure surmounted by two winged figures called cherubim (Ex. 25:10ff). This chest served as repository for the tablets containing the words of the covenant. It was a reminder that Israel had no king but Yahweh, who was in-

visibly enthroned upon the cherubim. The ark served as God's "footstool" and was portable. Yahweh was the God who passes. His throne should not be permanently tied down to any place.

In the *Tent* God came to meet his people through their representatives. The pillar of cloud at the door of the tent served as sign that Yahweh had descended to speak with Moses (Ex. 33:7-9).

8. What was an imperfect symbol in the Old Testament has found its fulfillment in the New Testament: The Lord lives in our midst in all our churches, bringing the new covenant to its perfection, living under the symbols of bread and wine. He is our God and we are his people. All he says to us we want to do. He has cleansed us from our sins by the blood of the lamb and in every Mass we hear: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you" (Lk. 22:20).

9. The Lord does not want to live, in buildings of stone only, but in living hearts. Ever since our baptism we are "a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in us" (1 Cor. 3:16).

### THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (November 16, 1980)

Today's liturgy speaks about the *Day of the Lord*: Persevere through suffering so as to obtain life on the Day of the Lord (Lk. 21:5-19), which will be a blazing oven for the wicked, but a sun of justice for the good (Mal. 4:1-21). — As usual, the second reading has a theme of its own: "Earn your own bread" (2 Thes. 3:7-12) Paul tells those who over anxiously are looking forward to the Parousia.

#### First Reading: Malachi 4:1-2a

Nothing is known of the prophet Malachi. Even his name, which means in Hebrew "my messenger", may simply be a deduction from Mal. 3:1. He probably wrote after the exile (538 B.C.). The Jews are dissatisfied with God. They question the existence of His love for them. Thus God refers to the manifestation of His favors upon the Jews, for they do not render God the necessary reverence. The priests despise His name by offering polluted sacrifices. Thus in the whole gentile world a pure offering will be made to God's name (1:6-14).

If the priests do not amend their ways, they will bring a curse upon themselves and the deepest shame (2:1-4). The people sin and offend God by marriages with pagans and the divorce of their legitimate wives (2:13-16).

They accuse God even of being unjust (2:17). God can only answer that He will come to His Temple. Who will then be able to stand before Him? He will come as a refining fire, purifying the good, punishing the bad (3:1-5.13-21).

Malachi therefore endeavors to revive the people's spirit by telling them that the Day of the Lord is coming. Fire symbolizes the chastising wrath of God (Deut. 32:22; Job 20:23; Jer. 4:4; 21:12; 15:14; 17:4). But the second phase of the Lord's coming will be the appearance of "the sun of righteousness", the rays of which will bring healing.

We Christians of today may be as disillusioned as the Jews were after the exile, close to abandoning all zeal and discipline. We may expect from our faith earthly happiness, which it is not meant to give. Faith and fidelity do not guarantee happiness in this world. On the contrary, they may often lead to persecution and misunderstanding, even between members of the same family.

Other reasons for disillusionment may be lack of spiritual depth in many areas of the Church; or we are in danger of making no efforts to come to grips with the problems of our own life. We live a carefree life.

To all of them Malachi says: nothing worthwhile is acquired without suffering. If we experience no suffering we may be simply tepid. We have lost the sense of our mission in the world. We should never forget that the Day of the Lord is coming, either as fire or as sunshine. It all depends on us.

### **Second Reading: Thessalonians 3:7-12**

Some people had come into the Thessalonian community preaching that the Parousia of the Lord was at hand. Those agitators appealed to the saying of prophets; possibly they also made a wrong conclusion from 1 Thes., especially 4:15: "We who live, who survive until his coming, will in no way have an advantage over those who have fallen asleep, "which probably means: "We, *if* we survive until his coming."

In any case some who were eagerly anticipating the Parousia took it easy and did not work any more saying to

themselves: "Why should we still work if the Lord is coming for his second arrival any moment!" To them Paul says: "Anyone who does not work, should not eat." (2 Thes. 3:10).

And he himself can refer to his own good example which they should imitate: In order not to be a burden for his community and at the same time in order to be independent and free from any pressure to preach according to the wishes of his supporters he earns his own living by manual work as tent-maker.

Probably, there will be hardly any people nowadays who do not work because of overanxiety for the Parousia of the Lord; but they may do it for other reasons. To them St. Paul would say: If anyone refuses to work then do not let him eat.

#### **Reading of the Good News: Luke 21:5-19**

In 17:22-37 Luke has treated the Parousia, the glorious return of Jesus. Here (Lk. 21:5-36) he takes up the same subject, but this time, like Mark (Mk. 13:1-37) and Matthew (Matt. 24:1-51), in close association with the question of the destruction of Jerusalem. But there is a development in Luke since the fact and time of destruction of Jerusalem is clearly singled out. Obviously the destruction had already taken place before Luke was written. Luke is also more conscious of the delay of the Parousia.

The Temple of Herod the Great was begun in 19 B.C. and completed in A.D. 64, only six years before it was burned down in the Roman attack on Jerusalem. Herod spared no expenses. It should be the gift to the Jews which would remove of the hostility which they felt toward him as an Idumean and a man whose religion was more heathen than Jewish. The Temple building was composed of white limestone, ornamented with gold plating and gilded pinnacles, so that it must have been an impressive sight, especially when the sun was shining on it.

No wonder that some people around Jesus grow ecstatic about the Temple. But the Lord predicts bluntly its destruction. This means for the disciples in Matthew the end of the world. The Temple guarantees God's saving presence. And with this saving presence gone the end of the world could be only around the corner. Thus the disciples in Mt. 24:3 ask: "Tell us, when will all this occur? What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?" This confusion in the mind of the disciples who wrongly identify destruction of Temple and end of the world, was not cleared up by the Lord in his answer.

He gives some signs which will go ahead of the destruction of the Temple and His Parousia. It is not easy to distinguish clearly between the signs going ahead of the destruction of the Temple and signs preceding Christ's second coming. Most scholars believe that Luke was written after 70 A.D. and this accounts for the clearer description of the signs for the destruction of the Temple in Lk. 21:20-24. Thus Luke clearly speaks about two events: (1) end of the Temple and the victory of the gospel and (2) the second coming of Christ. Lk. 21:5-7.20-24 speak clearly about the destruction of Jerusalem; Lk. 21:25-28. 29-33.34-36 talk about the Parousia of the Lord. The warning signs in Lk. 21:8-19 seem to belong to the destruction of the Temple and then again to the Parousia. Thus they are valid also for any calamity. The gospel of today is taken from the first half.

Jesus does not say when the destruction will take place or what signs will precede it. He never satisfies curiosity. He simply helps to accept the event in a calm and sensible way. We must not be fooled by illusions. The Lord warns against *false messiahs*. In times of distress people easily look for a reassuring voice and an authoritative guide, but we must be on guard against miraculous solutions. — Then Jesus warns against *false alarms* about the end of the world. We are only too ready to take them at face value. He talks about wars, earthquakes, plagues, famines, frightening phenomena on earth, and striking signs in the heavens. They are not the signs of the end and have no connection with the final events. Mark 13:8 regards such wars and tumults as the beginning of the sufferings that will come.

Prior to these events, Christians will be subjected to persecution. During the period between Christ's first and second coming the gospel must be preached. But precisely this preaching of the gospel will lead to persecution. The disciples must not be afraid. The Lord will give them a wisdom and words that their enemies cannot withstand. But the situation will be extremely difficult: Even the members of a disciple's own family will be divided for and against Christ. Christians will be hated because of Jesus' name. But he who perseveres till the end will be saved. We can trust in God. Even the hairs of our head are numbered.



## HOMILY

PERSEVERE THROUGH SUFFERING SO AS TO OBTAIN LIFE  
ON THE DAY OF THE LORD!

1. The last three Sundays in Ordinary Time and the first Sunday of Advent focus upon the traditional "last things", the end of the world, the general resurrection, the last judgment and the new heaven and the new earth. The Lord spoke about these last things, especially the end of the world and His own Parousia, His second coming to judge heaven and earth on the occasion when some people pointed out to him the beauty of the Herodian Temple. He bluntly pointed out to them that the whole Temple would be destroyed. For an average Jew, however, the Temple meant God's saving presence, and thus destruction of this Temple and end of the world would be identical. So they asked for the time and the signs of the destruction of the Temple and the end of the world. Christ thus did not clearly distinguish between destruction of the Temple and the end of the world either, although He knew the difference. The gospel of Luke was probably written after the destruction of Jerusalem and thus in some cases we see clearer what refers to the destruction of the Temple (Lk. 21-20-24). But most of the signs still remain undetermined: They were valid before the destruction of the Temple, they are valid as signs preceding the Parousia, they are valid for any crises.

2. The Lord *never answers curiosity*. The Lord *never gives clear dates* expressed in years and hours. Thus we must beware when people come and predict certain events or even the end of the world with exact year or even month. And yet, again and again people fall for it. Christ wants us to be ready. And that we can be without knowing exact dates which probably would make us only more nervous. Ready we are, if we live in such a way that the Day of the Lord can come anytime.

3. What is sure is that *woes will go ahead* of the Day of the Lord and calmly we must be willing to face them. There is *no magic protection* against such hardships. The Jews thought that the Temple would be such an amulet for them. Jeremiah had already warned them: "Put not your trust in the deceitful words: 'The Temple of the Lord!... Only if you reform your ways and your deeds... I will remain with you in this place'" (Jer. 7:4-5). God's protecting presence is not tied down to a

building. This many have experienced also during World War II when many churches and cathedrals were bombed out. The Little Flower did not protect her shrine and her city Lisieux materially during World War II against bombs. What will save us is our true Christian life as Jeremiah continues: the resident alien, the orphan and the widow, if you no longer shed innocent blood in this place, or follow strange gods to your own harm, will I remain with you in this place" (Jer. 7:5-7).

4. *Four warnings* Christ gives against the spiritual, political, cosmic and satanic chaos of the endtime:

a. To arm us against *spiritual chaos* the Lord says: "Take care not to be misled. Many will come in my name saying: 'I am he' and 'the time is at hand.' Do not follow them" (Lk. 21:8)! We all know how even in our time there have been false messiahs like the anti-pope Clement XV. Their claim should be ridiculous, and yet often enough they have their followers.

b. Concerning the *political chaos* Jesus tells us: "Neither must you be perturbed when you hear of wars and insurrections. These things are bound to happen first, but the end does not follow immediately" (Lk. 21:9). How often do we have such political chaos! And thus almost any time during wars, like World War II, people would speak as if the end of the world is at hand. The Lord tells us: "It's only the beginning. The end does not yet follow."

c. Lk. 21:11 speaks about *cosmic chaos*: "There will be great earthquakes, plagues, and famines in various places and in the sky fearful omens and great signs." Some think these could be contemporary events of Luke: The worldwide famines of the fifties and sixties, the Phrygian earthquake of A.D. 61, the eruption of Vesuvius A.D. 79, wars in Britain and Parthia, struggle between the four emperors in A.D. 69, insurrection in Palestine. However, all are like standard general descriptions of great sorrows in the Old Testament and are best not interpreted literally.

d. Ahead of all this (timewise and probably also concerning impact) will be the *satanic chaos*: "But before any of this, they will manhandle and persecute you, summoning you to synagogues and prisons, bringing you to trial before kings and governors, all because of my name. You will be brought to give witness on account of it... You will be delivered up even by your parents, brothers, relatives and friends... And will hate you because of me" (Lk. 21:12-17). The great event be-

tween Christ's first and second coming is the preaching of the gospel. Luke omits Mk. 13:10 "But the good news must first (before the end of the world comes) be proclaimed to all the Gentiles." Perhaps Luke with the arrival of the gospel in Rome, as described in Acts, considered the gospel as reached all nations. But he like Mark stresses we must expect that preaching the gospel means persecution.

There will be persecutions from without (Jews and Gentiles). But we must not worry. Such persecutions come because we bear Christ's name, we are Christians, and as they persecuted him they will persecute us. In the words of John: We dare to be different from the world by being Christians and thus the world hates us just because of being different (Jn. 15:18-21). We must not worry either what to say when we stand before the tribunal. Christ will give us a wisdom and words nobody can withstand (Lk. 21:15). We know from the history of the persecutions how this often has come true, starting with Stephen.

Worse are the persecutions from within: members of one's own family will betray us. They will even think that they are denouncing a member of their family for Christ's sake, "in his name", or as Jn. 16:2 puts it: "A time will come when anyone who puts you to death will claim to be serving God." Even here we follow Christ who was betrayed by a friend (Lk. 22:48).

5. That *Day of the Lord* will be a day of judgment for which we must be ready. Malachi describes it as fire, which burns and destroys those who are not ready, and those who did not live the way the Lord wanted them to live. But for those who according to Jeremiah cared for their neighbors and put themselves in their shoes, those who served the Lord alone and had no hidden gods, the Day of the Lord will be a great light, a sun that enlightens everything. Their good deeds will come into the open.

#### **THIRTY-FOURTH, OR LAST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING (November 23, 1980)**

Pope Pius XI made the last Sunday of October the feast of Christ the King. In a time of upheavals and political revolutions the Holy Father wanted to point out, there is stability inspite of it all since Christ is the King of Kings. And there is somebody who cares for us: Jesus Christ. The day also

provided for a distinctive emphasis on Catholic social action. The Last Sunday in October presented to us, the militant Church the King. The Feast of All the Saints on November 1 presented the triumphant church in heaven and the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed on November 2 the suffering church.

With the new Missal the Feast of Christ the King has been integrated more into the church year, placing it on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, as a climax of the year. And since the last three Sundays of the liturgical year and the first Sunday in Advent have an eschatological note, talking about the last things, Christ's kingship becomes eschatological. His enthronement started with the ascension and his continued heavenly rule between the ascension and his return marks the progressive defeat of the powers of evil. He must reign until he has subjected all his enemies under his feet.

All three readings picture Christ as King in different ways: For the first reading (2 Samuel 5:1-3) Christ as king is the true David who was the most ideal king the Jews ever had. The second reading (Colossians 1:12-20) describes with an old hymn the kingship of Christ as image of God and firstborn of all creation as first-born from the dead the head of the Church and the fulness of God in the cosmos. — The gospel (Luke 23:35-43) portrays Jesus as king on the cross.

### **First Reading: 2 Samuel 5:1-3**

There are two strands of thought concerning monarchy in the Old Testament. Some considered it only as a necessary evil to counteract the dangers especially created by the attacks of the Philistines (and this seems to have been the occasion and reason for introducing monarchy in Israel). Soon the kings will forget that they take only God's place and act as sovereigns and exploit people as it is clearly described by Samuel who only reluctantly gave in to the demands for a king (1 Sam. 8:10-18; 10:17-19; 12:13-15). Also the Elohist Source (E), therefore the northern tribes, show a clear preference of loose confederacy to monarchy.

On the other side, the Yahwistic Source (J), coming from the South with the tribe of Judah especially and thus David who descends from Judah, is very much in favor of monarchy. David is not like the pagan kings. He is king of Israel and Israel belongs to God alone. The king manifests on earth God's

presence and power; lastly Yahweh alone is king. The human king is only his representatives. David makes that clear several times. Thus Yahweh wins the wars, not David (2 Sam. 5:17-25; 8:1-14; 19:10). David is a charismatic leader, he is elected by God, not by his people, He is anointed and thus a sacred person (2 Sam. 2:1-7). Because of the goodness of David God promises that the dynasty of David shall last forever (completely true, of course, only in the person of *the* true David, Jesus Christ (2 Sam. 7:8-17)). No surprise then that also Jer. 23:5-6, Ez. 34:23; 37:22 speak about the ideal king and shepherd, David. And many prophecies about the Messiah picture him as *the* David; All the good qualities of David and even more shall the Messiah have.

### Second Reading: Colossians 1:12-20

According to most scholars Col. 1:15-20 (the main part of today's second reading) is a pre-Pauline hymn which Paul took over (or whoever is the author of Colossians, since some doubt that Paul was the author) and enlarged by some few half verses, to describe the greatness of Christ. And this is for the liturgy another picture of Christ the King. Josef Ernst in his commentary has the following arrangement:

#### Original hymn

#### Additions

#### Cosmological part

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 15a) He is the IMAGE  | b) of the invisible God  |
| c) the <i>firstborn</i> of all creatures;                           |  |
| 16a) for in him everything was created                              |  |
| b) in heaven and on earth   |  |
|   | c) things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, principalities or powers; |
| d) all was created through him, and for him                         |  |
| 17 He is before else that is. In him everything continues in being. |  |
| 18a) It is he who is head of the body,                              | the church   |

**Soteriological part**

18b) HE IS THE BEGINING

c) the *firstborn* of the dead

d) so that primacy may be his in everything.

19a) For it pleased God to make

b) absolute fullness reside in him

20a) and, by means of him, to reconcile everything in his person, making peace

**Additions**

b) through the blood of his  
c) both on earth and in the heavens.

Ahead of this hymn goes a thanksgiving of Paul (1:12-4); The Apostle thanks God that He has (1) given the pagans a *share* in the inheritance of the Jews and (2) *transferred* them into the the kingdom of His beloved son which means transference (a) from darkness to light, (b) from slavery to freedom, (c) from condemnation to forgiveness, (d) from the power of Satan to the power of God.

Thus the Christological hymn, as we see, celebrates:

- (1) Christ's excellence as *Creator*: as Son, image, first-born, head of angels. Everything is created through him (15-17).
- (2) Christ's excellence as *Redeemer*: as head of the Church, first-born from the dead, he possesses the fullness and reconciles all things (18-20). This is Christ the King according to Colossians. As one can see, it would be enough material for a separate sermon.

**Reading of the Good News: Luke 23:35-43**

The picture of Christ as king in this pericope, proper to Luke, at first glance might appear as an anticlimax, especially coming after Colossians. And yet the picture of Christ the King is rounded out:

- (1) He has power, but he does not use it for his own advantage and glory. Thus he does not give in to the mockery of the Pharisees, the soldiers and the one thief to come down from the cross and thus prove his divinity and kingly power (the same temptation as the first, where the devil suggested to him to change stones into bread (Lk. 4:3-4; Mt. 4:3-4). Christ becomes king by suffering.
- (2) Usually condemned and crucified people would curse the executioners Christ *forgives* them, proving that way that he is superior, that he is king. And he even excuses his enemies: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34); a verse proper to Luke.

To the second thief he even *grants forgiveness* after he as only one of the people around the cross sides with Jesus and humbly asked: "Jesus, remember me when you enter upon your reign" (Lk. 23:42); "This day, you will be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43); a word everybody would be happy to hear when he dies.

- (3) Christ is king as the inscription on the cross says. But what is our attitude? The people who made the inscription mean it as an accusation and charge. The Pharisees, soldiers and the one thief mocked, hated. Only the one thief loved the Lord and received a kingly gift: divine life.

## HOMILY

### CHRIST OUR KING

1. In our time of democracies kings and queens are often not highly regarded. They seem to be a waste of money and against our feeling of equality. And yet, countries, especially England and Holland which have a centuries old monarchy like it very much. Thus there must be something that appeals.

2. Pius XI who introduced the Feast of Christ the King during the many revolutions and overthrow of governments after the First World War wanted to give us the awareness: there is stability inspite of all the changes, and there is somebody who cares for us, after all: Christ the King.



3. Among the Jews there were also enough people who preferred a loose confederacy to a monarchy. But whenever those who liked a king got nostalgic, it was because of David, the greatest and best of all the kings, so good that one could picture the Messiah only as another David, as *the David*. What made him so similar to Jesus Christ? He was a man of the people, close to the people. He could have said what Jesus said: "I know mine and mine know me" (Jn. 10:14). David had been a shepherd before he became a king, he had defended his sheep against lions as he could point out to Saul before his fight with Goliath (1 Sam. 17:34-35): Your servant used to tend his father's sheep, and whenever a lion or a bear came to carry off a sheep from the flock, I would go after it and attack it and rescue the prey from its mouth." As David was close to his sheep he was close to his people and understood them well being their shepherd. The application to Jesus in Jn. 10, where he calls himself the true shepherd, is too obvious. He is king because he cares for us, lays his life down for us, knows us inside out.

David was lovable, honest, sincere, simple, humble, even in his sins. When he had the affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah (2 Sam. 11:1-27) he did not hide it very long or try to blame somebody else, as any person of authority nowadays would do it, but humbly and openly did penance (2 Sam. 12). Christ is even more lovable, simple and humble, although he did not sin.

4. The Letter to the Colossians is unsurpassed in picturing Christ the King:

(a) His kingdom is *universal* since *all nations share* in it. What was so far the privilege of the Jews becomes inheritance for all (Col. 1:12). There are no privileges for some people only.

(b) In this kingdom is *light* since we know where we are going, we are not groping in the dark. In this kingdom is *freedom*. We are not slaves of our fears, sins and helplessness. In this kingdom we receive *forgiveness* from our condemnation and we are transferred into the realm of *power of God* and the devil cannot prevail against us.

(c) Christ the King is the *image of God* and the *first-born* of all *creatures*. Jews were not allowed to make pictures of Yahweh; in order that they would not worship the pictures and statues as God. Christ is the image, the picture, the photo

of the Father. Seeing Him and knowing Him we see and know the Father. And since man is created after God's image, seeing Christ we also know what we should be.

Everything was created in Christ. He is the *model*. How perfect must he be that it needs trillions of people to express his perfection somehow, but never perfectly. Everybody is a different edition, a different concretization of Christ.

And Christ keeps everything in being.

(d) Ever since Damascus Paul experienced the closeness between Christ and the Christians when the voice from heaven said: "Saul, Saul, WHO do you persecute me" (Acts 9:4). In a flash he realized: persecuting Christians is the same as persecuting Christ himself. And the truth he explained by developing the comparison of Christ the head and we the body. Our union with Christ is as intimate as the head is united with the body of a person. We are all one in the Church. *Christ the King is the head* (Col. 1:18).

(e) Christ is not only the firstborn of all creatures, he is also the *firstborn of the dead*. He has risen and since he is the head, our own resurrection has already begun to take place in him (1 Cor. 15:20).

(f) The *fullness of God*, his wisdom, his presence and his divinity resides in Christ who shares this with the Church, and this affects even the whole universe. There is no other intermediary necessary.

(g) Finally Christ has *reconciled* and still reconciles us to the Father by dying for us on the cross. It is not us who reconcile ourselves to God, but it is God who reconciles us to him.

5. Lk. 23:35-43 adds some other details to the picture of Christ the King: (a) He does not use his power to satisfy his own needs, e.g., changing stones into bread — Lk. 4:3-4, or descending from the cross to convince his enemies, on the spot, that they are wrong. But he becomes king by suffering innocently and silently.

(b) He is not taking revenge, but he forgives his enemies (Lk. 23:34) and gives a repentant thief eternal life on the spot (Lk. 23:43).

6. What is *our attitude* toward Christ the King? On and under the cross there were some curious spectators, the people

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of the street. They only looked on but were at least honest enough to beat their breast when they saw how a king suffered and died (Lk. 23:48).

But most, the Pharisees, the soldiers, those who wrote the inscription, and the one thief mercilessly mocked Jesus and hated him.

There was only one who defended Him and loved Him, the other thief (Lk. 23:40). And for his courageous "Jesus, remember me when you enter upon your reign" (Lk. 23:42) he received the forgiveness of sin and eternal life: "This day you will be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43). We can only hope and pray that the Lord will say the same to us when we die. But this will only be, if we confessed him before men.

### FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (November 30, 1980)

With Advent the new cycle A starts. — Advent commemorates the coming of the Lord at his Parousia, his coming in the Church and his coming at Christmas. There is some uncertainty what is the predominant theme of Advent: Christ's coming at the Parousia or His coming at Christmas. The new Missal talks as we saw, during the last three Sundays of the liturgical year and the first Sunday in Advent about the "last things". The remaining three Sundays of Advent prepare us for Christ's coming at Christmas.

During Advent all three readings are selected and grouped around the same theme. Today's liturgy tells us: The Lord returns (gospel). Our salvation is near (second reading). Nations gather (first reading). Watch and be ready (gospel).

#### First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah more than any other prophet will be the herald in Advent and is often called the prophet of the Messiah, the kingly and choleric prophet, the prophet of the Virgin Mary and of the Holy Spirit. He seems to have been an aristocrat and a native of Jerusalem, born ca. 760 B.C. His book comprises Isaiah 1-39. It was preached first on different occasions and only later put in writing, probably by his disciples. Is. 1-12 contain prophecies against Judah-Jerusalem; Is. 1-6 contains prophecies

from the time prior to the Syro-Ephraemite War (735 B.C.) from the time of King Azariah (783-42) and Jotham (742-35). After an invitation to repentance (Is. 1:1-31) Isaiah pictures the universal Messianic Kingdom (Is. 2:1-5), which we also find in Micah 4:1-5). The differences between both reports are rather small. And the question is: who depended upon whom? Probably both depended upon a common source and both worked it over.

After the exile will come a time when Zion, towering above the surrounding hills, will be the center for all nations. From there God will teach them all (2:3). There God gives judgment for the destinies of nations (2:4). This religious universalism leads to universal peace which makes war and weapons superfluous. Swords will be beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning-hooks.

Years ago at Babel people had tried to reach the heights of God but could not because of their pride; only God can lead all nations to the mountain of God. He alone can make people one and abolish wars. This however, will happen only at the end of times, not before.

### **Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14**

As in most letters of St. Paul so also Romans has two parts: A dogmatic (Rom. 1:16-11:36) and a moral part (Rom. 12:1-16:27). We are a new creature in Christ (dogmatic fact) and from this must follow our moral actions. Here Paul speaks first about Christian life as a spiritual service rendered to God in particular duties (Rom. 12:1-13:14). At the end of this part (Rom. 13:11-14) the Apostle motivates the Romans to make the best use of their lives because it is only a "today". The coming of the Lord is around the corner and with Him our salvation. Although our present age is a time of darkness, the night is already far gone and the day is at hand. All the more reason to be sober and not to spend the time in drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling, and jealousy. Rather we shall put on Christ, live Christ's life which we live since baptism.

### **Reading of the Good News: Matthew 24:37-44**

Last Sunday's gospel from Luke and this Sunday's from Matthew both are taken from the Synoptic Apocalypse, in which Christ speaks about the end of the world. Last Sunday the atten-

tion was divided between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, today the evangelist speaks exclusively about the day of the Parousia.

Two things are singled out: (1) The Parousia will come *suddenly* and unexpectedly as the flood of Noah came *suddenly* and unexpectedly. Therefore, people will be taken by surprise as when thieves come unexpectedly at night and break in and steal. (2) The Parousia means *judgment* by God not by men. And thus it is objective and strict. Thus it can happen that two women grinding at the mill will be separated and of two men working on the field, the one is saved, the other not. This number does of course not have to be taken literally as if only one half of mankind would be saved.

The conclusion is: Watch! Be alert! You do not know when the Lord will come.

## HOMILY

### HISTORICAL TIME: TODAY IS THE TIME OF OUR SALVATION

1. Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year and directs our thoughts toward the coming of our Lord. This Sunday speaks in particular about this undefinable thing, called time. We have a cosmic time: the alternation of day and night, the rhythm of the seasons, in short, time repeats itself in cycles. And we have historical time, time which develops to a certain climax and is unrepeatable inasmuch as it does not return in cycles. *Historical time* is oriented by the *design of God* which is unveiled and manifested in it. It is marked by events which have a unique character and which are not repeated and are deposited in the memories of men. And so mankind becomes capable of progress. Historical time is measured by generations (cf. the *Toledoth* of Genesis), *reigns* and *eras*. History, therefore, is an upward line. Our life and the history of mankind goes up to a certain fulfillment.

#### 2. The time of Jesus, the fullness of time

World history comes to a climax with Christ's birth. "When the appointed time (fulness of time) came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the sub-

jects of the Law" (Gal. 4:4). "He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning to act upon which the times had run their course to the end; that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth" (Eph. 1:10).

### 3. The time of the Church

Everything was made through the Word (Jn. 1:2), already in the beginning (Jn. 1:1; Gen. 1:1), and He should be the head of mankind. Time has, therefore, a unique function for everybody. Our life is placed in a definite span of time. The decisive event of time has come in Jesus. Nevertheless, it has not yet born all its fruit. The last time has only begun, and from the resurrection onward we have the time of the Church. It is the time of the Spirit (Jn. 16:5-15; Rom. 8:15ff), the time in which the gospel is proclaimed. There will be (1) the "*time of the pagans*" including two aspects: (a) On the one hand, "Jerusalem (symbol of all the ancient Israel) will be trampled upon by the feet of the pagans" (Lk. 21:24); and (b) on the other hand, these same pagans will gradually be converted to the gospel (Rom. 11:25). (2) Finally there will come the *time of Israel*: then in turn "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26), and then will come the end. All the nations will come to the mountain of the Lord (Is. 2:1-5).

### 4. The "Today"

Historical time means unique time, never to return. The Book of *Deuteronomy* is very much interested in this "today", this unique short time of our life. Some seventy times the Lord through Moses reminded the Israelites that God is making his covenant *today* and that *today* the Jews must answer. "What great nation has statutes... as just as this whole law which I am setting before you today" (Deut. 4:8). "You he has taken out... of Egypt, that you might be his very own people, as you are today" (Deut. 4:20).

Especially Christ's coming was something unique, something that cannot be repeated. And so is the timespan we are living in. This uniqueness the New Testament often expresses with *kairos*, in the time of Jesus: "The time (*kairos*) has come and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News". With these words Jesus starts his preaching



career. Practically all the events and deeds of Jesus in the New Testament are introduced by the word "*kairos*", which the English translation weakly renders with "at that time"; e.g., Mt. 11:25: "At that time Jesus exclaimed"; Mt. 12:1: "At that time Jesus took a walk one Sabbath day".

And thus "*today is the time of salvation*", as Jesus tells Zacchaeus "Today salvation has come to this house" (Lk. 19:9). Today is the *kairos*. And that offer is unique and unrepeatable. The Psalmist (Ps. 95:9) had already warned: "If only you would listen to him today. Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, when your ancestors challenged me, tested me, although they had seen what I could do."

St. Paul phrases it: "You know, "the time" (*kairos*) has come. You must wake up now. Our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon. Let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark. Let us arm ourselves and appear in the light" (Rom. 13:11-12).

## 6. The Consummation of the ages

This causes a certain *urgency*. The time of the Church forms part of the "last times". It is extended toward a fulfillment which is to come and is oriented toward an end which is the *day of the Lord*. Now that the Spirit has been given to men, all of creation longs for the final revelation of the sons of God and for the redemption of their bodies" (Rom. 8:18-24). Only then will the work of Christ be accomplished by Him, who is the Alpha and the Omega.

*Nobody knows when the end will come.* Certain is only that it will come. Therefore be prepared! "But regarding that day and hour, no one knows... not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mt. 24:36). "Watch therefore because you do not know when the Lord will come" (Mt. 24:42).

There are passages which give the impression that the Lord will not come so soon: Christ orders the Apostles to preach the gospel to all (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:27). And the end will not come before the gospel is preached: "The gospel of the kingdom must be preached throughout the whole world,



so that all nations may have valid evidence. And then will come the end" (Mt. 24:14). The parables of vigilance speak of a delay of the arrival of the bridegroom, or the king (Mt. 24:48 par; 25:8; Lk. 12:38; Mt. 25:19; Lk. 19:12-27).

The first Christians were looking forward to this second coming of the Lord with great enthusiasm. We perhaps are scared. The thought of the imminent Parousia stimulated the first Christians to use their time well. We perhaps have gotten used to the idea that His coming is way off. And yet, summing up all the ideas of "today", *kairos* we must tell ourselves: "*Whatever we do on earth, is first performance*. Even a rehearsal is first performance in God's eyes, because we can never do anything again. Even a repeated rehearsal is not the same act any longer, but a new one. No week, no day, no hour, no minute, no second comes back again. And God has given us only a definite span of time, our *kairos*, our today. Obviously, we should try to use it well.

It is only a short little while. "In a short time the world will no longer see me" (Jn. 14:19). This word of the "little while" is (1) consolation in times of hardships, suffering and disappointments: they last only a short little while. And when they seem hardest, the new day has already started as the old saying goes: "The midnight is the beginning of a new day"; (2) a word of warning and stimulus to use our time well, because before we realize it is gone and we have missed our chance.