



# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

THE POPE SPEAKS IN THE PHILIPPINES

February 20 to 21

NOTES ON THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES

Florencio Testera, O.P.

FREQUENT COMMUNION AND  
INFREQUENT CONFESSION

Edwin Gordon

THE WAYS OF DIALOGUE

Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, D.D.

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

Address all communication to:

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

Fathers' Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
Manila, Philippines

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**


---

<b>EDITORIAL</b>	306 LORD, HAVE MERCY
	308 IN THIS ISSUE
<b>DOCUMENTATION – I</b>	
The Pope Speaks in the Philippines February 20 to 21	309 DAVAO: MASS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
	314 TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY (DAVAO)
	317 TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS (BACOLOD)
	324 TO THE CATHOLIC LAITY (ILOILO)
	328 TO FARMERS AND WORKERS (LEGAZPI)
	333 VISIT TO THE REFUGEE CENTER (MORONG)
	336 GREETINGS TO THOSE SUFFERING FROM LEPROSY (RADIO VERITAS)
Sacred Congregation for Bishops	338 THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES 1979 – 1989
<b>FEATURES</b>	
Florencio Testera, O.P.	344 NOTES ON THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES
Edwin Gordon	351 FREQUENT COMMUNION AND INFREQUENT CONFESSION
Jaime Cardinal Sin, D.D.	357 THE WAYS OF DIALOGUE: LISTENING TO THE HEART; MEETING IN CHRIST
<b>HOMILETICS</b>	
Herman Mueller, S.V.D.	373 BIBLICAL NOTES AND HOMILIES FOR JUNE–JULY
<b>BOOKS</b>	
Benito Vargas, O.P.	421 SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS
<b>DOCUMENTATION – II</b>	
Appointment Letter: To <b>LEONCIO LAT</b> , Auxiliary Bishop of Malolos, (p. 423); Date for the Liturgical Celebration of <b>Blessed LORENZO RUIZ</b> (p. 424); Arch- diocese of San Fernando, Pampanga: Circular Letter (p. 425); <b>OFFICIAL PAPER OF A SHRINE</b> (p. 426).	

---



## EDITORIAL

### Lord, Have Mercy

Very soon the citizens of the Philippine Republic will be going to the polls to elect a president after about twelve years of not exercising this right. The polls are being promoted as a way of finding out whether the incumbent president is to be praised or condemned for his own style of martial law. It is claimed that the economic, social and political situation of the country, and therefore its over-all human condition, is better than it was some ten years ago. This is presumably due to the "New Society" ushered in when the president availed himself of emergency powers.

To one who has read the recent Encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Dives in misericordia*, the claim of the "New Society" seems too optimistic. The Philippines would be an exception to the worldwide trend seen by the Pope. In his encyclical he says: "In the span of the fifteen years since the end of the Second Vatican Council, has the picture of tensions and threats that mark our epoch become less disquieting? It seems not. On the contrary, the tensions and threats that in the Council document (*Gaudium et Spes*) seem only to be outlines and not to manifest in depth all the dangers hidden within them have revealed themselves more clearly in the space of these years; they have in a different way confirmed that danger, and do not permit us to cherish the illusions of the past."

We must admit that the "New Society" has some achievements. But are they in line with making society more "human"? The "New Society", sad to say, still falls under the category of a "materialistic society which — in spite of 'humanistic'



declaration — accept the primacy of things over persons." It is the kind of society that conceals within itself "not only the possibility of self-destruction through military conflict, but also *the possibility of a 'peaceful' subjugation of individuals, of environments . . . that for one reason or another might prove inconvenient for those who possess the necessary means and are ready to use them without scruple.*" The Philippine "New Society" is certainly to be counted among those in which "there is a growing awareness of a threat that might destroy what is essentially human, what is intimately bound up with the dignity of the person and his or her right to truth and freedom."

Faced by a situation like this Pope John Paul II recommends that we seek justice, but even more than that, he exhorts us to appeal to God's mercy. "Justice alone," according to the Pope, "is not enough, it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if *that deeper power, which is love*, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions."

Somewhat further in his Encyclical he says: "Society can become 'ever more human' only when we introduce into all the mutual relationships which form its moral aspect the moment of forgiveness, which is so much of the essence of the Gospel. Forgiveness demonstrates the presence in the world of the *love which is more powerful than sin*. Forgiveness is also the fundamental condition for reconciliation, not only in the relationship of God with man, but also in relationships between people. A world from which forgiveness was eliminated would be nothing but a world of cold and unfeeling justice, in the name of which each person would claim his or her own right vis-a-vis others; the various kinds of selfishness latent in man would transform life and human society into a system of oppression of the weak by the strong, or into an arena of permanent strife between one group and another."

We can very well make our own the observation of the Pope that "at no time and in no historical period — especially as a moment as critical as our own — can the Church forget *the prayer that is a cry for the mercy of God* amid the many forms of evil which weigh upon humanity and threaten it."

In a special way therefore, as our country passes a critical milestone on June 16, let us pray, LORD, HAVE MERCY.

## IN THIS ISSUE

The second installment of the Pope's speeches in the Philippines is now presented to our readers. Among these speeches, given on February 20 and 21, we have one that deals with the topic of *ecclesial communities*, one of the most interesting developments in the life of the local church, especially in Mindanao. The speech to the *Muslim community* encourages the on-going dialogue between Christians and Muslims. It also re-states the principle in the Pope's recent Encyclical, that justice by itself is not enough, and we should all seek mercy... To the people of the *sugar plantations* the Pope addresses a message of love and justice; he reflects on the dignity of man and the need for Christians to have a preference for the poor; he reassert the principle that the land is a gift of God for all humanity and that work is a dignified human vocation. To the *Catholic laity* the Pope said that he came "to speak to you about your Christian dignity — what it means to belong to Christ; about the responsibilities of your mission and about the urgency of the task that Christ has entrusted to you." To the *farmers and workers* gathered in Legazpi the Pope once more shares his reflections on the land as God's gift for all men and on the beautiful mystery of work.

Fr. Florencio Testera once more takes up his pen to do a service for the Church in the Philippines by giving a commentary on the *New Decennial Faculties* approved by Rome a year ago. Hopefully too, the article of Edwin Gordon on *Frequent Communion and Infrequent Confession* would be of service to those seeking some clarification on this matter. One of our bishops recommended its publication. Cardinal Sin, pursuing his interest in one of the main theological concerns of our times, again shares with us some of his thoughts on the *dialogue of Christianity with Asian religions*.

## THE POPE SPEAKS IN THE PHILIPPINES

### HOMILY DURING THE MASS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Davao Airport  
20 February, 1981

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

1. The vibrant sound of our voices rending the air of this growing city of Davao, in this rapidly developing island of Mindanao, as we sing the praises of God through and in our Lord Jesus, recalls to us our Lord's voice addressed to the first Apostles saying: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:18-20). Jesus, who was himself sent by the Father, was in turn sending his Apostles: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn. 20:21). Since then, there has been no interruption in the sending and going forth: "and they went forth and preached everywhere" (Mk. 16:20). Since then, too, there has been an unceasing ecclesial or communitarian response of those who believe and are baptized. The Acts of the Apostles tell us: "So those who received his word were baptized... And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:41-42). From the foregoing we can see already the communitarian nature of the Church which would be formed by all nations being gathered into one. Believers would be bound to each other by faith and fellowship, by the breaking together of bread and common prayers. *Those who believe would form one Church, one community.*

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters, I cannot describe to you how overjoyed I am to be with you today in this Eucharistic celebration. As the one chosen by God's providence to be the Vicar of Christ on earth and the Successor of Saint Peter in the Apostolic See of Rome, I am celebrating with you, in a place thousands of miles away from Rome, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and Resurrection. We are proclaiming together the mystery of faith: that "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again".



This is indeed a unique moment of deep fulfillment. For we are gathered here as Pastor and Flock, as a Church, as the Body of Christ, where there are varieties of services but the same Lord, where there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one; where to each is given the same manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-7). I see in your characteristically Filipino faces, filled with wonder, the faces of children of our common Father, brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ. But I also see in your faces the pain that is linked to the memory of all those who suffered and died during the recent floods that ravaged six provinces of this island. I offer to all of you the expression of my sympathy for the loss of your loved ones, my prayers for the dead and the injured and the homeless, and my encouragement as you face the future with the burdensome task of reconstructing, with God's grace, your homes and your lives. I see in all of us, assembled here in our Lord's name, the one family of God, the new People of God, building together — each according to his respective role but always in ecclesial solidarity — the Body of Christ in joy and in sorrow.

2. This Eucharistic assembly, composed of us coming here from the West and you of Davao and Mindanao representing the only Catholic country in the East, is a synthesis of our Lord's desire, our Lord's command, and our own response. Our Lord desired to gather all nations into one Flock under one Shepherd. His command was to make disciples of all nations, East and West, and our response is this vast multitude of people of varied tongues and color, of varied cultures and status, *united in ecclesial communion to share the word of God and the Bread of eternal life*. Here around your Archbishop and around the table of God's word and the Eucharistic Sacrifice you from your local Church, your local ecclesial community. You are united in the unity of one faith and one worship and in that bond of love which is the distinctive mark of the true disciples of Christ: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:35).

This ecclesial community on the diocesan level, with the Bishop as the sign and center of unity, is nourished constantly by loyal adherence to the word of God and to an authentic worship according to that basic relationship between faith and worship: "*lex orandi, lex credendi*". It is also strengthened by the bond of love among the members, and by the conscious participation of all members according to the gifts each one has received for the building up of the local Church.

3. The same ecclesial life on the diocesan level is reflected on the parish level. The same variety of gifts and ministries contributes to the one mission of building up the Body of Christ. The same consciousness of being a member of an ecclesial community prevails. On the parish level a truly meaningful ecclesial communion and participation is experienced day after day. *It is in small Christian communities where the members know each other more personally that true love and fraternal concern is more easily practiced.* The affliction and need of a brother or a sister whom one knows and sees everyday moves the human heart to love and compassion. Conversely, we are less inclined to have love and compassion for someone who is unknown and unseen. "For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn. 4:20).

Moreover the communitarian dimension of our Christian vocation has been strongly emphasized by the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council. Every liturgical act is in itself an act of the whole Body of Christ, of the Head and of the members. Every sacrament and every Mass that is celebrated is an act of Christ and of his Body. Every good deed performed by a member benefits the whole membership, and every sin is, not only an offense against God, but a wound inflicted on the Body of Christ. In this perspective, our first communal act at the start of this Eucharistic celebration is a confession of our sins against God and the Body of Christ: "I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters"; and at the latter part of this communal penitential act we say "and I ask blessed Mary, ever Virgin, all the angels and saints and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God". It is quite clear from all this, that there is no such thing as a Christian for one's own self. We are Christians because we belong to Christ and to his Body. Christian who has not learned to see and love Christ in his neighbor is not fully a Christian. A Christian cannot be like Cain who refused to be his brother's keeper. We are keepers of our brothers, we are bound to one another by the bond of love. This love is God's command for all those who believe in him. For a Christian, to live is to love, and love is to live. *Magmahalan tayo tulad ng pagmamahal sa ating ng Diyos!* (Let us love one another as God has loved us!)

4. This communitarian or ecclesial nature of our Christian vocation which is more easily practised on the diocesan and parish levels, must, however, be directed towards the universal

Church. *We are a local Church only to the extent that we are part of the universal Church established by Christ our Lord. We are a legitimate part only because we belong to the whole. And our Lord intended and actually established a Church that will extend from one end to the other of the world, to become the new People of God, the new Israel. Christ our Lord wanted his Church to be universal and yet to be one and the same all over the world. He wanted all nations beyond boundaries and barriers to be one ecclesial community shepherded by one supreme Pastor. He wanted his Church or ecclesial community to preach the same doctrine, practise the same worship, observe the same law of love, and be shepherded by one holder of the keys, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. This same Church is the fountain of truth and source of spiritual power that assimilates all cultures of all places and times. This assimilation does not result in the destruction of the human and local cultures but in their sublimation. Christ's truth, in turn, is made incarnate in each local culture, purifying, elevating and solidifying its values.*

The unity of doctrine and worship proclaimed and safeguarded from adulteration by the universal Church is perfectly complemented by the law of love that binds all Christians to God and to one another, all local Churches to the universal Church and to each other. Thus the universal Church, through the local Churches and under the impulse of the indwelling Spirit, gradually transforms the whole world into the kingdom of God here on earth and ceaselessly promotes a civilization of love.

5. Dearly beloved brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus Christ wants us to live our faith for the building up of the ecclesial community, so that his redemption can be applied to the individual members through the ministry of the Church. At the same time we must never cease to emphasize that *each member must continuously be converted to God and conformed to Christ by love*, in order to share in this common task of building up the Body of Christ.

It may not be hard for one to remain faithful to the doctrine of faith as proposed by the universal Church and faithful to authentic worship; we may even be able to speak in tongues, and interpret them and be gifted with prophecies. But if we fail to follow our Lord's command to love God and one another we will not be counted worthy of his eternal reward. With clear deliberation our Lord summarized all the



commandments of the Old Law into a command to love God and one another. Doing no harm or injury to others is much less and truly short of loving others. In our community of Christians, Saint Paul's understanding of love is the true understanding of our Lord's command to love one another. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13-1-3).

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters, if my visit here would only make all of you love one another just a little bit more; if my visit here would make you just a little more ecclesial or community-oriented, so that you would think more and more of others with love; if my visit here would make you desire more to serve than to be served, then my visit, by God's grace, would be fruitful and worthwhile.

Finally, allow me, dearly beloved in our Lord, to recall and propose as our rule of life in our ecclesial relationship the unsurpassable prayer of the Seraphic Saint Francis of Assisi "Make me a channel of your peace, where there is hatred let me bring your love, where there is injury your pardon, Lord, and where there is doubt true faith in you. O Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul. Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, in giving to all men that we receive, and in dying that we are born to eternal life. Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is despair in life let me bring hope; where there is darkness only light, and where there is sadness ever joy".

Maraming salamat at pagpalain nawa kayo ng Diyos!  
(Thank you and may God bless you!)

## TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Davao Airport  
20 February, 1981

Dear Brothers,

It is always a pleasure for me to meet the members of the Muslim communities during my journeys, and to give them my personal greetings and those of all their Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world.

1. I deliberately *address you as "brothers"*: that is certainly what we are, because we are members of the same human family, whose efforts, whether people realize it or not, tend towards God and the truth that comes from him. But we are especially brothers in God, who created us and whom we are trying to reach, in our own ways, through faith, prayer and worship, through the keeping of his law and through submission to his designs.

But are you not above all brothers of the Christians of this great country, through the bonds of nationality, history, geography, culture and hope for a better future, a future that you are building up together? Is it not right to think that, in the Philippines, the Muslims and the Christians are really travelling on the same ship, for better or worse, and that in the storms that sweep across the world the safety of each individual depends upon the efforts and cooperation of all? Let me expand this latter point a little.

2. I address you as the spiritual head of the Catholic Church, which has no power in political matters. I can only pass on *to you the teaching and the words of Jesus*: "Blessed are the peacemakers", he says in the Gospel, "for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt. 5:9). In another place he says: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Mt. 7:12). These words that I have repeated to my brothers and sisters, my sons and daughters in the Catholic Church, I permit myself to repeat to you at this moment.

3. You share with the Christians *the same citizenship*, which you have acquired by living here and by participating in the life of the nation, with all the obligations and duties that this involves. In addition to your Filipino nationality and to the other qualities and values common to all Filipinos, you are conscious of being the bearers of certain specific qualities, among which the culture of Islam is perhaps the most obvious. This is what adds to your shared national identity an original element that merits attention and respect.

Your total well-being and that of your Christian brothers and sisters require *a climate of mutual esteem and trust*. You know as well as I do that in the past this climate has too often deteriorated, to the detriment of all concerned.

But dear friends, we know only too well that there is no positive reason why that past should continue being written today. If at all, we should look back with pain at the past, in order to ensure the establishment of a better future. And you have the task, both enviable and crucial, of helping to build that future, the future of your Muslim children, as well as the *harmonious future of the whole Philippine nation*.

I know that you and your Christian brothers and sisters are becoming ever more aware of the responsibility that rests upon your generation. For a number of years now, you have felt the urgent need to sit down together and to face your problems, and to restore mutual esteem and trust. *A fruitful dialogue* was thus begun, and since that time not a year goes by without your meeting your Christian fellow-citizens, under the auspices of governmental bodies or private institutions, in Marawi City, Cotabato, Cagayan de Oro, Jolo, Zamboanga, Tagaytay and also in this pleasant city of Davao.

4. I salute all these efforts with great satisfaction, and I earnestly encourage their extension. Society cannot bring citizens the happiness that they expect from it unless society itself is built upon dialogue. Dialogue in turn is built upon trust, and *trust presupposes not only justice but mercy*. Without doubt, equality and freedom, which are at the foundation of every society, require law and justice. But, as I said in a recent letter addressed to the whole Catholic Church, justice by itself is not enough: "...the equality brought by justice is limited to the realms of objective and extrinsic goods, while love and mercy bring it about that people meet one another in that value which is man himself, with the dignity that is proper to him" (*Dives in Misericordia*, 14).



Dear Muslims, my brothers: I would like to add that we Christians, just like you, seek the basis and model of mercy in God himself, the God to whom your Book gives the very beautiful name of *al-Rahman*, while the Bible calls him *al-Rahum*, the Merciful One.

5. It is only within this framework of religion and its shared premises of faith that one can really speak of mutual respect, openness and collaboration between Christians and Muslims. Then comes willingness to work together, to build a more fraternal society. In spite of the geographical nature of your great country, it is more relevant today than ever to repeat the saying: "no man is an island".

My dear friends: I wish you to be convinced of the fact that your Christian brothers and sisters need you and they need your love. And the whole world, with its longing for greater peace, brotherhood and harmony, needs to see *fraternal coexistence between Christians and Muslims* in a modern, believing and peaceful Philippine nation.

## TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS

Bacolod City  
20 February, 1981

Dear brothers and sisters,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:2). With the blessing of the apostle Paul I greet you all most cordially. It is a great joy for me to come to you today in this city of Bacolod to meet the people of Negros Occidental. My only regret is that my visit with you is so short, but many more communities in the Philippines have invited me, from the North to the South of these beautiful islands. Even if I can be with you only for a few hours, I want you to know that every encounter with the Filipino people is special to me because it is you, the people, the young and old, who make it so. And therefore, I say from the bottom of my heart: thank you for coming together here this afternoon, thank you for making me feel at home in Bacolod.

1. Madamo guid nga salamat! (Thank you very much!) *I come in the name of the Lord Jesus and as his servant.* I come as the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ and your brother in the faith. I come as a friend of all the people, and especially of the young people who are so numerous here and whose smiling faces give me such deep joy. My fraternal greetings go in the first place to your pastor, Bishop Antonio Yapsutco Fortich, who kindly invited me to this island, and to the other Bishops and priests present. In the priest, diocesan and religious, in the religious sisters, I greet the successors of the first missionaries who more than four hundred years ago, established flourishing Christian communities on these shores. I greet in them the tireless workers for the faith, who keep alive among the people the message of the gospel in unselfish service and generous dedication collaborating with the Bishop, in a spirit of unity and in the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5).

2. In particular, however, my heartfelt greetings go to you, my brothers and sisters of the Catholic laity in Bacolod, to you who are *such a great sector of the one People of God,*

*reborn in Christ and united by his Holy Spirit.* Because you believe in Christ, you are able to approach him in the Sacrament of Penance and to receive his love in the Holy Eucharist. I know how much you esteem the Sacraments, and I want to encourage you to remain faithful to them. They are the source of life and hope, and they will give you strength to remain true to your calling as Christians, real Christians. And, when they look at you people should be able to say: "See how much they love each other". Love each other in Jesus Christ, for in doing so *you will be true witnesses of Jesus Christ, of his immense love for every human being.* Jesus needs you, dear faithful people of the Church in Bacolod. Jesus needs you, because his love will not reach the world without the witness of your Christian lives. Jesus cannot be fully present in your families and schools, in your workshops or in the fields where you toil, unless you, the lay people, bring him there, manifest him there by what you say and do, make him visible in your love for each other.

The message which I bring to you today is a *message of love*, the same which the Church has brought to people all over the world in ages past and which she will never cease to proclaim to the future generations. It is the same message that you, the Church in Bacolod, must bring to all the people of this island.

3. It is in the name of Christ, and because she must preach his message of Love to the whole world, that the *Church speaks out on behalf of the dignity of man*, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Because she believes in the God-given dignity of every human person, the Church sees it as her mission to embrace in her solicitude man in his totality: man whose definitive destiny is God, man who must live, in the concrete reality of his daily life, according to the dignity that is his. For these reasons, the Church desires to bring the message of salvation, which Christ has entrusted to her, to every human being, to every culture and social environment, to the whole of mankind, but in the first place to those who are most in need.

Without abandoning her specific task of evangelization, she will also strive to ensure that all the aspects of the life of man and of the *society of which he is part should be imbued with human dignity and therefore with justice.* To you people of Bacolod, and through you to all the people of the Philip-



pires, who are sons and daughters of a nation engaged in the search for a better life for all its citizens, I repeat what I said once before: that "the world willed by God is a world of justice. That this order must be continually realized in the world, and even that it must always be realized anew, as situations and social systems grow and develop, in proportion to new conditions and economic possibilities, new possibilities and necessities of distributing goods" (Discourse at Saint-Denis, France, 31 May 1980, no. 5). The dignity of man and the common good of society demand that society be based on justice.

4. There are in today's world too many situation of injustice. Injustice reigns when some nations accumulate riches and live in abundance while other nations cannot offer the majority of people the basic necessities. Injustice reigns when within the same society some groups hold most of the wealth and power while large strata of the population cannot decently provide for the livelihood of their families even through long hours of backbreaking labor in factories or in the fields. Injustice reigns when the laws of economic growth and ever greater profit determine social relations leaving in poverty and destitution those who have only the work of their hands to offer. Being aware of such situations, the Church will not hesitate to take up the cause of the poor and to become the voice of those who are not listened to when they speak up, not to demand charity, but to ask for justice.

*Yes, the preference for the poor is a Christian preference!* It is a preference that expresses the concern of Christ who came to proclaim a message of salvation to the poor, for the poor are indeed loved by God, and God it is who guarantees their rights. The Church proclaims her preference for the poor within the totality of her mission of evangelization that is directed to all people so that all may come to know Christ and find in the love of God and of neighbor their highest fulfillment. The Church wants to be of service to all people, in whatever special condition they may be; she wants to be close to all human beings, since all are poor and in need of salvation and all ought to be "poor in spirit". But she shows a special solidarity with those that are suffering and in need, with those that weep and are humiliated, with those that have been left at the margin of society and of life; she does this so that they may be helped to become aware of their dignity as human beings and as children of God. No area of her pastoral mission will be omitted in her concern for the poor: she will preach to them the Gospel, she will invite them to

the sacramental life of the Church and to prayer, she will speak to them about sacrifice and resurrection, she will include them in her social apostolate.

5. I have been told that many of you here present are connected with the agricultural sector, and more specifically with the sugar cultivation, either as landowners, planters or laborers. You all live close to the land and the land provides your livelihood. To all of you I would address some special words in order to apply to you and your particular situation the special message of the Church.

You love the land, you cherish the fertile plains. You belong to this land and this land belongs to you. I myself have always been close to nature and I understand your attachment to your rural setting. During my pastoral visits to other parts of the globe, I have insisted on meeting every time the people who live from the land: at Cuilapan and Oaxaca in Mexico, at Nowy Targ in my native Poland, at Des Moines in the United States of America, at Kisangani in Zaire, at Recife and Teresina in Brazil. To all of them I have repeated the same message: *that the land is a gift of God to all humanity*, a gift entrusted to man by the Creator, a gift of divine love. In his gratuitous love, God did not only create man and woman, but he gave them the earth so that human life could be sustained through their efforts. From the beginning, and for the benefit of all, God has willed the interaction of land and labor so that the full dignity of man may always be protected and promoted.

Yes, human dignity must be promoted by the land. Because the land is a gift of God for the benefit of all, it is not admissible to use this gift in such a manner that the benefits it produces serve only a limited number of people, while the others — the vast majority — are excluded from the benefits which the land yields. It is not admissible that in the general development process of a nation there should continue to exist the injustice whereby progress worthy of man does not reach precisely those people who live in the rural areas, who in sweat and toil make land productive, and who must rely on the work of their hands for the sustenance of their family. It is not admissible that people who work the land must continue to live in a situation that offers them no hope for a better future. No, in giving the land to humanity, God had a different purpose, for his gift was a gift of love to humanity.

6. A truly Christian challenge is therefore presented to *those that own or control the land*. I know that many of you

who are plantation-owners or who are planters are truly concerned with the welfare of your workers, but the Church, aware of her responsibilities, feel impelled to hold up before you again and again the ideal of love and justice, and to encourage you to compare constantly your actions and attitudes with the ethical principles regarding the priority of the common good regarding the social purpose of economic activity. The right of ownership is legitimate in itself but it cannot be separated from its wider social dimension. In his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI, echoing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, stated this principle very clearly when he wrote: "God intended the earth and all it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all people follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis (*Gaudium et Spes*, 69). All other rights whatsoever, including those of property and of free commerce, are to be subordinated to this principle. They should not hinder but on the contrary favor its application. It is a grave and urgent social duty to redirect them to their primary finality" (no. 22). The landowners and the planters should therefore not let themselves be guided in the first place by the economic laws of growth and gain, nor by the demands of competition or the selfish accumulation of goods, but by the demands of justice and by the moral imperative of contributing to a decent standard of living and to working conditions which make it possible for the workers and for the rural society to live a life that is truly human and to see all their fundamental rights respected.

7. Likewise, the *workers*, either duma-ans, sacadas or industrial workers, must be guided by a truly human and Christian concept of their task. Human labor remains the superior element in the economic enterprise, for through it man exerts his dominion over the material world for the building of his own human dignity (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 67). The man or the woman who works becomes a cooperator of God. Made to the image of God, man received the mission of governing the universe so that its riches can be developed and used for the benefit of all, in order to grant every human person the possibility to live according to his own dignity and thus give the glory to God. To all the sugar cane workers I say, as I say to all workers everywhere: never forget the great dignity that God has granted you, never let your work degrade you but remember always the mission that God has entrusted to you: to be by the work of your hands his collaborators in the

continuation of the work of creation. See in your work a labor of love, for your daily work expresses love for your dear ones and your commitment to the well-being of your family. Be proud to be workers of the land. At the same time know that the Church supports you in your endeavors to have your rights as workers respected. Ninety years ago already, the great social Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spelled out very clearly that the worker is entitled to wages that give him a just share in the wealth he helps to produce, and that working conditions should be geared not to the ever increasing economic profit of the enterprise but to the inviolable dignity of man as an individual, as a provider for his family and as a builder of the society to which he belongs. It has been the constant teaching of the Church that workers have a right to unite in free associations for the purpose of defending their interest and contributing as responsible partners to the common good. Such associations should be protected by appropriate laws which, rather than restrict their activities, should guarantee the free pursuit of the social welfare of all their members and of the workers in general.

8. Wherever people work together, inspired by the aim of securing the dignity of every human being and of building a society based on justice, the hope for a better future will be kept alive, and ways and means will be found to share the fruits of progress with all in the community. When the legitimate rights of every category are respected peaceful ways will be devised to achieve the common good and no one will hesitate to put the full wealth of his talents, skills and influence at the service of his brothers and sisters in the common pursuit of a just society. *Government agencies* that are guided by a true concern for the dignity of the human person will not become instruments of oppression or power tools for one class category. *Free associations of workers* that base their action on the peerless dignity of man will inspire confidence as partners in the search for just solutions. *Workers and employers* who learn to see each other as brothers will not get locked in bitter disputes that leave problems unsolved and human solidarity weakened or in ruins. When man himself, man with his unsurpassed dignity, is the measure that is applied to the special problems, then there will be no room for violence in the struggle for justice. To adopt man as the criterion of all social activity means committing oneself to the transformation of every unjust situation without destroying what one seeks to protect: a society based on brotherhood, justice and love. Violence can never be a means of solving social conflict, and class struggle which opposes one group to another cannot create justice since its



premise is destruction and contempt for man. To construct a truly human society in the Philippines, every man and woman must make a choice for justice and love, for solidarity and brotherhood against selfishness and hatred. Choose human dignity and a better future will be yours.

9. My dear friends of Bacolod, of Negros Occidental and all of you who have come from far away to be with me today, I know that you are not lacking in generosity and courage. In your communities, in the cities and in the villages, you keep alive a marvelous heritage of values and qualities that is your strength for the future. Remain true to what you are: preserve always your joy, your love of the family, your solidarity within each community, and above all your determination to share whatever you have — even if it be little or humble — with those of your brothers and sisters who are in need. In doing so, your community will be graced by the mark of humanity!

To all my brothers and sisters in Christ I say: keep alive in your hearts your confidence in God, your faithfulness to the Church and your devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The moment has now come for me to take leave of you. I would have liked to stay longer with you but others are waiting to celebrate with me in the bond of love that unites us in Jesus Christ. Thank you for your presence here and for the sharing of this hour. I feel so much richer for having met you and for having seen your pride as Filipinos and as Christians.

When you return to your villages and families, take with you the blessing of the Pope. And tell all those that could not be here today, tell your old people and your sick, that the Pope loves them and carries them always in his heart and prayers. I bless you all in the name of Jesus Christ, our merciful and loving Savior.

Kabay pa nga bendisyonan kamo sang Dios! (May God bless you, as you go with my love and care!)

## TO THE CATHOLIC LAITY

Iloilo City  
20 February, 1981

Dear brothers and sisters,

I have come to Iloilo City to tell you all of *my love in Christ Jesus*. I greet all the inhabitants of this city and all the people of this large Archdiocese of Jaro. I wish to express my fraternal esteem for the priests and sisters who labor in this sector of the Lord's vineyard, and to offer you my encouragement and support as you endeavor day after day to proclaim the Gospel of God by word and example, and to build up the community of the faithful.

1. In a very special way, however, the providence of God has determined that this part of my visit should be devoted to a meeting with *the Catholic laity and, in particular, with representatives of their various associations and movements*. My dear lay people: in you I greet the heirs of the Catholic faith that is *deeply rooted in the tradition and culture of the Filipino people*. I give thanks to God for the love and zeal that is in you, that has been implanted in you by the Spirit of Jesus. I feel very close to you today; I feel as though you are telling me that you appreciate your mission in the Church, and that you wish to be strengthened and encouraged in your Christian vocation as lay people consecrated in Baptism and united to Christ by faith. And this is why I have come: to speak to you about your *Christian dignity* — what it means to belong to Christ; about *the responsibility of your mission* and about *the urgency of the task* that Christ has entrusted to you.

2. Yes, dear lay people, *Jesus Christ himself through your Baptism and Confirmation has commissioned you to the lay apostolate*, that wonderful sharing in the saving mission of his Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 33). Your mission and your destiny are forever linked with Christ the Savior of the world. You have a specific role to fulfill in the application of God's plan of redemption. The Second Vatican Council has spoken of the need to recognize the relationship of all creation to the praise of God. It has called you, by your activity in the world, to help one another to attain an ever greater holiness

of life, "so that this world may be filled with the spirit of Christ and may more effectively attain its destiny in justice, in love and in peace" (*Lumen Gentium*, 36).

3. In order to do this, *you must remain united with Christ*. His words are the basis for your effectiveness: "I am the vine, you are the branches... apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). Indeed, he is calling you this very day to a greater love, because he is inviting you to constant conversion of heart. He is calling you to greater union with himself in his Church, for it is there that you find him. And union with Christ in his Church is the essential condition for all your apostolic effectiveness. It is Christ who entrusts you with your mission, but a mission that is coordinated within the unity of his Body by the pastors of the Church. This explains the great value there is in a loving communion of faith and discipline with your Bishops who, in the words of the Letter to the Hebrews, "must give an account of the way they look after your souls" (Heb. 13:17).

4. You have heard the Good News of salvation and embraced it with joy, bringing forth fruits of justice and holiness of life. But it is important that the grace of faith should develop in you and in all believers with God's help, and lead you to a deeper knowledge of the person and message of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 19) *The need for a systematic catechesis is one of the greatest needs of the Church in this day*. It is a great challenge for you as Filipino Catholics. As laity, you are called, individually and collectively, to meet this challenge.

5. Among all the opportunities open to you for the exercise of the individual apostolate, the family occupies a place of primary importance. The family can provide an effective response to the secularization of the world; *the family has a special charism for transmitting the faith and for assisting in developing an initial evangelization*. Within the intimacy of the family, every individual can find an opportunity to give personal witness to the love of Christ. Parents have the right and duty to catechize their children; they have the immense privilege of being the first ones to teach their children to pray. In the words of my predecessor John Paul I, I would like to "encourage parents in their role as educators of their children — the first catechists and the best ones. What a great task and challenge they have: to teach children the love of God, to make it something real for them. And by God's grace, how

easily some families can fulfill the role of being a *primum seminarium*: the germ of a vocation to the priesthood is nourished through family prayer, the example of faith and the support of love" (September 21, 1978).

6. Besides the varied opportunities for exercising the individual apostolate, I strongly recommend intensification of the *group apostolate* through Catholic organizations and Church-inspired lay movements. I mention with profound gratitude the invaluable service rendered to the Church by Catholic organizations in the past decades. Their dedication to the lay apostolate according to the charisms of their respective goals has merited the admiration of the hierarchy and I wish to add my own appreciation. Undoubtedly, certain changes and adaptations and movements better suited to meet the present needs of the apostolate, but the existence of these associations and groups continues to be of great help to the mission of the Church.

In consultation with your Bishops and the pastors of your parishes, be open to new methods of apostolic activity in order to build up continuously the Body of Christ. Small Christian communities, where personal exchanges and the practice of fraternal love and solidarity can be more easily achieved, open vast opportunities for creativeness in the apostolate. Remember all the time, that the effectiveness of your activity in the apostolate depends on your unity with the hierarchy and among yourselves. Your apostolate will be fruitful to the degree that you are faithful and are firmly attached to the local Church in which you are inserted, and to the universal Church (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 58)

7. A consistent collective Christian commitment by the Philippine lay people is felt not only in the ecclesial community. It is also an immense force *bringing the power of the Gospel to bear on culture*, transforming and regenerating it. Working in accordance with their ecclesial nature, your associations and movements are especially effective means for proclaiming the Church's commitment to the dignity of the human person and to the advancement of the freedom and rights of all Filipinos. The People of God, who have been given God's peace, must always be collectively intent on promoting that human justice which is a requirement of social peace.

8. My brothers and sisters: you will not be surprised if at times the most worthy initiatives are subject to human frailty and to opposition from others. *Vigilance is always a condition for Christian freedom* — the vigilance expressed above



all in prayer. Jesus told his disciples: "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (Mt. 26:41). *Ideological temptations* may present themselves and divisions may arise, but the grace of Christ is sufficient for you — Christ's grace calling you to unity and fraternal love, Christ's grace transforming you into a people of hope.

Jesus Christ has truly called you to share his salvific mission and to build up the communion of his Church. At the same time he prepares us for Christian effort and victory: "In the world you will have affliction, but have confidence, I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). And in overcoming the world in everything that is sinful and corrupt, you will at the same time, in union with Christ, be able to offer to the Father the glory of creation, and to direct it to the praise of the Most Holy Trinity. As lay people in the world you can make a unique contribution, in an ecclesial role, to the Church's dialogue of salvation. You can offer to the world not only the message of Christ but also its concrete application in your lives, thus furthering the very spirit of dialogue in friendship and service and love. My dear brothers and sisters: This is *your dignity and your strength: to remain united with Christ, sharing his salvific mission*, promoting his cause, building up his kingdom of truth and life, holiness and grace, justice, love and peace. You do this day after day, week after week, in the ordinary yet extremely important setting of your daily Christian lives.

9. And remember always that *Mary the Mother of God* is with you. She is the mother of mercy and fair love, who has been watching over the Filipino people for centuries and will continue to *preside over your destiny* in the years to come. She will lead you to her Son and assist you in communicating him to others — in communicating Jesus to the world.

## TO FARMERS AND WORKERS

Legazpi City  
21 February, 1981

Dear brothers and sisters,

1. The readings of today's liturgy, listened to against the background of your beautiful Mayon, acquire a special meaning and a living clarity. The almost perfect cone of Mayon accentuates the verdict of perfection pronounced by God regarding his creation.

But it is not only the beauty of creation that Mayon remind us of. Its shape resembles hands in an attitude both of thanksgiving for the gift of the land for all people, and acceptance to put into it the human effort of work.

I have been eagerly waiting to meet you, in order to give you this twin message: *The land as God's gift for all men, and the beautiful mystery of work.*

2. Why to you, my dear farm-workers? Because you are important and have a special place in God's plan for the world: you provide food for your fellowmen. It is a task that deserves the appreciation and grateful esteem of all; it is a task which deserves the recognition of the dignity of those engaged in it. You have every right therefore to expect from the Pope, who is your father and brother and servant in Christ, a word of encouragement and hope, of guidance and support.

But I wanted so very much to meet you not only for this reason, but also to proclaim the important values to which your lives bear witness. The rural world truly possesses enviable *human and religious riches*: a deep-rooted love of the family and of peace, a religious sense, an appreciation of friendship, trust and openness to God, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, particularly in your case under the title of Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

Do you not extol these values when you sing:

Kung ang hanap mo ay ligaya sa buhay  
(If your quest is happiness in life)  
Sa libis ng nayon doon manirahan  
(In the farm you reside)

Taga-bukid man ay may gintong kalooban,  
 (Although farm people, they have a golden heart)  
 Kayaman at dangal ng kabukiran.  
 (Which is the treasure and pride of the farm.)?

It is a well-deserved tribute of recognition that the Pope wishes to express to you, for society is indeed indebted to you. Thank you, my dear farm-workers, for your precious contribution to the social well-being of mankind; society owes you a great deal.

3. Your distinct contribution to society rests on your deep and living awareness that *the land is a gift of God*, a gift that he makes to all human beings, whom he wishes to see gathered in a single family and treating one another as brothers and sisters (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24). Is not this gift emphasized in the first chapter of Genesis? "And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed . . . and every tree with seed in its fruit: you shall have them for food'" (Gen. 1:29). The land belongs to man because God entrusted it to man, and by his work man subdues it and makes it yield fruit (cf. Gen. 1:28).

What follows from this? That it is not the will of God — it is not according to his plan — for this gift to be used in such a way that its benefits are to the advantage of only a few, while others, the vast majority, are excluded. And when this vast majority are, in fact, excluded from sharing the benefits of the land, and consequently condemned to a state of want, poverty and borderline existence, then it is a very serious matter.

For in this case, the land is not serving the dignity of human persons — human persons called to the fulness of life in Christ Jesus. But this is what you are and must always remain, in your own eyes and in the eyes of others, in theory and in practice. Consequently, you must be able to realize your human potentialities for "being more". You have the right to live and to be treated in accordance with your human dignity; at the same time you have the corresponding duty to treat others in the same way. You should then be able to draw from your work on the farms the necessary and sufficient means to meet your family and social responsibilities in a worthy human and Christian way.

4. In the Book of Genesis we read that "the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to fill it and

keep it" (Gen. 2:15). And in our reading today we heard God's command: Fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over creation (cf. Gen. 1:28). What do these texts tell us? The clear language of the Bible is telling us that it is our Creator's will that man should communicate with nature as as an *intelligent and noble master and guardian*, and not as reckless exploiters. This is what is meant when we are told "to have dominion", "to till" the earth: the principle that dictates the obligatory line of action for all those who are responsible for, and interested in, the problem of the earth: persons invested with public authority, technicians, entrepreneurs and workers.

Recalling here what I said on another occasion, but adapting it to you and your country, let me urge you to till the land of your beloved Philippines and to preserve it. Make the most of the goods of nature; ensure that they will yield more in favor of man, the man of today and of tomorrow. As regards the use of God's gift of the land, it is necessary to think a great deal of the future generations, to pay the price of austerity in order not to weaken or reduce — or worse still, to make unbearable — the living conditions of future generations, justice and humanity require this too (cf. Homily at Recife, no. 7, July 7, 1980).

5. Our response to God's gift is made with human effort and work. These characterize man's struggle in time and space to subdue nature; they are the subject of my special message to you, dear workers, tricycle and jeepney drivers.

I feel deep joy when I meet workers like you, for you remind me of those years in my youth when I too experienced the grandeur and severity, the happy hours and the moments of anxiety, the achievements and the frustrations that a worker's condition entails. Thank you then most especially for giving me this opportunity to meet you.

Let us reflect together on the *dignity of work, the nobility of work*. Do I have to tell you about it? You know the dignity and the nobility of your work, you who work to live, to improve your life, to provide for your children's sustenance, education and well-being. Your work is noble because it is a service for your families and for the wider community, which is society. Work is a service in which man himself grows to the extent to which he gives himself for others.

6. For this reason, a fundamental concern of one and all — rulers, labor leaders and businessmen — must be this: *to give work to everyone*. But there is a deeper reason why every



man has the right to work; it is in order to be in a position to fulfill completely his human vocation, that is to become in Christ a co-creator with God. Man becomes more fully man by means of work freely undertaken and performed. Work is not punishment, but an honor. It has become difficult and burdensome only because of sin: "With sweat on your brow shall you eat bread" (Gen. 3:19), but it always retains its uplifting dignity.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Providing employment must not be taken lightly, or considered a secondary aspect of the economic order and development. It should be a central element in the aims of economic theory and practice.

7. But it is not only employment that justice requires. For to be so poorly paid that you can hardly support yourselves and your families, that you become slaves rather than free and responsible workers — this too is not just. This is not the will of God.

What then are the requirements of justice in this regard? That working conditions should be as worthy as possible, and that social security should be perfected so as to enable everyone, on the basis of growing solidarity, to face up to risks, difficult situations and social burdens; that wages should be regulated in their various and complementary forms; that workers should have a real and just share in the wealth that they help to produce in enterprises, in professions and in the national economy.

You can be sure that your Pope is with you on this issue and on similar issues, because what is at stake is man and his dignity.

There are many more reflections that I would like to make with you, my dear brothers and sisters. But it is time to continue the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But before I do so, let me once more make this appeal: never forget the great dignity which, as human beings and as Christians, you should imprint on your work, even the most ordinary work, even the most insignificant tasks. Never let yourself be degraded by work, but rather try to live thoroughly your real dignity, according to the word of God and the teaching of the Church. Yes, from the viewpoint of faith, work corresponds to the will of God, the creator. It is part of God's plan for man and for the fulfillment of the human person; by work man is indeed given a share in God's own work of creation. And from the viewpoint of faith, *work is immeasurably ennobled by Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of man.* By his work as a carpenter in Nazareth

and by his many other labors he sanctified all human work, thus conferring on workers a special solidarity with himself and giving them a share in his own redemptive work of uplifting humanity, transforming society, and leading the world to the praise of his Father in heaven. All of this shows too the need for work to be performed well, and the obligation on the part of workers to fulfill their duties conscientiously and in accordance with the requirements of justice and love.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ: the Pope invites you to pray with him and with the universal Church, so that all the farmers and workers of the world will live their dignity, fulfill their role worthily and make their great contribution to the building of the Kingdom of Christ, for the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. And may Our Lady of Peñafrancia continue to love you, console you, and protect you and your families and your country. Amen.

## VISIT TO THE REFUGEE CENTER

Morong, Bataan  
21 February, 1981

Dear brothers and sisters,

1. I am happy to be with you today, to tell you of the concern of the whole Church for you and for all who have been forced, due to unfortunate circumstances beyond their own control, to flee their native land. I would like this occasion to serve as a *symbol of the Church's solidarity* with all refugees as a symbol of the visit I would like to make, if it were possible, to every camp or settlement of refugees in the world. At this moment in history when we are witnessing with alarm an ever increasing number of people being forced to abandon their homeland, I am grateful to God for this opportunity to meet you and to assure you, each one of you, of my heartfelt concern and oneness with you in prayer.

2. I take this occasion to express my admiration for all who have participated in the various programs for aiding refugees: the governments —including that of the Philippines — that have received refugees on a temporary basis, the individuals and organizations that have provided badly-needed financial assistance, and in particular those countries that have offered a permanent residence for these displaced persons and have assisted them in the slow, painstaking process of joining the mainstream of life in a new culture and society. It is also fitting to mention the deserving work of the High Commission for Refugees which faces a most difficult task, yet one which is greatly needed. All these endeavors are indeed praiseworthy, for they bear witness to the inviolable value and dignity of every human being. At the same time, they are a *sign of hope* in that they signal *an awakening consciousness on the part of humanity* to the cry of the poor and defenseless.

I must not fail to mention the important contribution which has been made by local Churches around the world, a contribution which has been inspired by the *evangelical spirit of charity*. In particular I am thinking of all the volunteer personnel who work in the camps and receiving centers, men and women who have extended hospitality in circumstances which often are very trying and difficult. To these volunteers and to the organiza-

tions which they represent, as well as to all those who work day after day and week after week assisting the refugees in the process of adapting to their new situations, I extend a special word of encouragement and praise.

3. The fact that the Church carries out extensive relief efforts on behalf of refugees, especially in recent years, should not be a source of surprise to anyone. Indeed this is *an integral part of the Church's mission* in the world. The Church is ever mindful that Jesus Christ himself was a refugee, that as a child he had to flee with his parents from his native land in order to escape persecution. In every age therefore the Church feels herself called to help refugees. And she will continue to do so, to the full extent that her limited means allow.

In this part of Asia, the number of natural disasters and human catastrophes has been many. There have been earthquakes, typhoons, floods and civil strife, to name only a few. To the victims of these various calamities the Church extends a helping hand, and she seeks to work in close collaboration with those governments and international organizations which are engaged in the same relief activities. But of all the human tragedies of our day, perhaps the greatest is that of refugees. To them especially the Church reaches out, desiring to place herself at their service.

4. Jesus Christ once told a parable which I should like to recall at this time. This parable is known even among those of you who do not share the Christian faith. It is a parable which appeals to the hearts of all people of good will, not only to the followers of Christ; it is the *parable of the Good Samaritan*.

The Gospel of Luke records the parable, telling how a man had been robbed, beaten and left beside the road half dead. According to the Gospel account, "a Samaritan who was journeying along came on him and was moved to pity at the sight. He approached him and dressed his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. He then hoisted him on his own best and brought him to an inn, where he cared for him. The next day he took out two silver pieces and gave them to the inn-keeper with the request: 'Look after him, and if there is any further expense I will repay you on my way back'" (Lk. 10:33-35). The Good Samaritan does not mind that he might be criticized for helping someone who has "traditionally" been considered his enemy. And he does not ask him any questions: where he comes from, why he is there, where he is going. He asks no



questions at all. Very simply the Good Samaritan sees the injured person in need, and he spontaneously helps him up, takes him to an inn, and sees that he receives all he needs to get well again. This is charity! A *charity which makes no exception* because of the other person's ethnic origin, religious allegiance or political preference, no exceptions whatsoever, a charity which sees the person as a brother or sister in need and seeks only one thing: to be of immediate assistance, to be a neighbor. May this same charity motivate all of us who live in a world approaching the end of the second millennium! May it inspire all of us to have compassion for the millions of refugees who cry out for our help!

5. My brothers and sisters present here, and all you refugees who may hear my voice, may you *never lose confidence* in the rest of mankind or think that you are forgotten. For you have not been rejected by everyone. You are not looked upon as a burden which is too heavy to bear. In every country on the face of the earth there are men and women of good will who care about you, who are concerned about your future, who remember you each day in their prayers.

6. Finally, I ask everyone to join me in a *heartfelt appeal to the nations*. I appeal, in the presence of the Lord of history and before the Supreme Judge of human hearts, on behalf of all the displaced persons throughout the world. I appeal for increased aid for them, so that present efforts may be sustained, strengthened and reinforced. I appeal for continued prayers for all the refugees throughout the world, and for the warmth of human concern and fraternal love towards every brother and sister who needs our solidarity and support.

May God bless you all!

## GREETING TO THOSE SUFFERING FROM LEPROSY

Radio Veritas, Metro Manila  
21 February, 1981

Mga Kaibigan, (Dear friends,)

Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat. (Many thanks to all of you) I would have wanted to be the one to visit you in your homes, but this has not been possible. Thank you for coming to meet me here instead. Thank you for representing the others who so wanted to come but are unable to do so. Being with you today brings great joy to my heart. I greet you with affection and trust you know how much I have looked forward to our meeting.

In my previous pastoral visits to Africa and Brazil, I met with other men and women who suffer from leprosy. Those meetings have left a deep impression on me, as I have come to appreciate the loving patience and the courageous resolve with which they live despite trials and adversity.

1. I am here in the name of Christ Jesus to remind you of his extraordinary love for all his brothers and sisters, but in particular for each one of you. The Gospels bear witness to this truth. Think for a moment of how often Jesus showed his concern by transforming situations of need into moments of grace. In Saint Luke's Gospel, for example, Jesus is approached by ten lepers asking to be cured. Our Lord instructs them to show themselves to the priests and on the way they are healed. One of their number returns to give thanks. In his gratitude, he demonstrates a faith that is strong, joyful and full of praise for the wonder of God's gifts. Obviously, Jesus has touched the very core of this man's being with love.

2. Again in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, we are presented with a leper who begs Jesus to cure him *but only if* it is his will. How grateful the man is when his request is heard! Off he goes to spread the joyful news of the miracle to everyone he meets. Such great happiness stems from the man's faith. His words, "*If you will, you can make me clean*", reflect a willingness to accept whatever Jesus wishes for him, And his faith in Jesus was not disappointed! My brothers and sisters, may your faith in Jesus be no less firm or constant than the faith of these people in the Gospels.

3. I know that your affliction brings with it great suffering — not only through its physical manifestations, but because of the misunderstanding that so many in society continue to associate with Hansen's disease. Often you encounter age-old prejudices and these become an even greater source of suffering. On my part I shall continue to proclaim before the world the need for a still greater awareness that with appropriate help this disease can indeed be overcome. For this reason I ask people everywhere to give increased support to the valiant efforts being made to conquer leprosy and to give effective treatment to those who are still suffering from it.

4. I pray that you may never grow discouraged or become embittered. Wherever and whenever you meet the Cross embrace it as Jesus did, so that the Father's will may be accomplished. Let your suffering be offered for the sake of the whole Church, so that you may say with Saint Paul: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings... and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church..." (Col. 1:24).

Three days ago I beatified in your country sixteen martyrs of Nagasaki. Among their number is Blessed Lazaro of Kyoto, who was himself a leper. How we rejoice in the assistance that Blessed Lazaro provided for the missionaries as a translator and guide. Ultimately, his commitment to spreading the Gospel cost him his life; he died by shedding his blood for the faith. His love for Christ involved much suffering, even torturing pain! He experienced misunderstanding, rejection and the hatred of orders in his service to the Church! But with the strength of God's grace, Blessed Lazaro bore witness to the faith and won the precious gift of a martyr's crown.

My dear friends, I invite you to imitate the courage of Blessed Lazaro who is so close to you. Share the convictions of your faith with your brothers and sisters who suffer with you. Return the love of the doctors, nurses and volunteers who so generously care for you. Work to build a community of living faith, a community which will support, strengthen and enrich the universal Church. Here is your service to Christ! Here is the challenge for your lives! Here is how you can show your faith, your hope and your love!

May God bless you, dear brothers and sisters! May he bless all those who suffer from leprosy in this country! May he bless your families, your friends and all who assist you! At higit sa lahat, inihahabilin ko and aking sarili as inyong panalangin, sa inyong pagmamahal. (Above all, I am commending myself to your prayer and love).

## **THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES**

**(31 Dec., 1979 — 31 Dec., 1989)**

### **DECRETUM**

Facultates per Apostolicas Litteras "Trans Oceanum", anno 1897 a Summo Pontifice Leone XIII fel. rec., omnibus Ordinariis locorum, Sacerdotibus et Christifidelibus Americae Latinae ad triginta annorum spatium concessae, ab eiusdem in Petri cathedra successoribus sive ad Insulas Philippinas extensae sive per subsequencia Apostolica documenta semel iterumque recognitae et prorogatae sunt.

Cum autem die 31 decembris 1979 facultates expirassent, memorati Ordinarii — Americae Latinae scilicet et Insularum Philippinarum iisdem permanentibus adjunctis, postulaverunt ut eadem adhuc prorogarentur.

Porro Summus Pontifex Joannes Paulus, Divina Providentis Pp. II, consultis Eminentissimis Patribus Romanae Curiae Dicasteriorum, pro rebus ad unumquodque spectantibus, de consilio infrascripti Cardinalis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti, porrectis praecibus benigne annuendum censuit.

Quandoquidem nonnullae facultates in superiore Indice contentae ex Litteris Apostolicis "Pastorale Munus" atque ex nonnullis documentis post Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II editis, universis dioecesanis Episcopis tributae sunt, ut tamen ceteri etiam locorum Ordinarii characterē episcopali non polentes iisdem fruantur, hic opportune referuntur.

Quapropter hoc Decreto idem Summus Pontifex omnibus et singulis locorum Ordinariis, Sacerdotibus et Christifidelibus dioecesium et ditionum Americae Latinae et Insularum Philippinarum facultates quae infra educuntur confirmat atque elargitur usque ad diem 31 Decembris 1989.

1. Ordinarii locorum, secluso Vicario Generali sine Episcopi speciali mandato, deputare possunt, ad Sacramentum Confirmationis administrandum, sacerdotes, quatenus fieri potest in aliqua dignitate ecclesiastica constitutos, vel munere Vicarii foranei fungentes, nunquam vero simplices sacerdotes commorantes illis in locis in quibus praedictum Sacramentum administrandum erit; servata S.C. de disciplina Sacramentorum In-



## **ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

### **THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES**

**(31 Dec., 1979 — 31 Dec., 1989)**

#### **D E C R E E**

The faculties granted to the local Ordinaries, priests and the faithful of Latin America for thirty years in the Apost. Lett. "Trans Oceanum" given in 1897 by the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII, of happy memory, and extended to the Philippine Islands by His successors in the Chair of Peter, have repeatedly been confirmed and renewed through subsequent apostolic documents.

However, since the faculties had expired on 31 dec. 1979, the above mentioned Ordinaries, namely those of Latin America and the Philippines, petitioned that, in as much as the same circumstances still obtain, the same privileges be renewed.

Furthermore, the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, after consultation with the Eminent Fathers of the Sacred Roman Curia, regarding matters pertaining to each one, and with the advice of the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, has decided to graciously accede to their request.

While some privileges contained in the previous Catalog have been conferred on all diocesan Bishops through the Apost. Lett. "Pastorale Munus" and other documents issued after Vat. II Ecumenical Council, such are recapitulated here, inasmuch as other local Ordinaries, even without episcopal character, may now enjoy them.

Wherefore, by this Decree, the Supreme Pontiff confirms and bestows, until 31 dec. 1989, the favors listed below on all and each of the local Ordinaries, priests and the faithful of the dioceses of Latin America and the Philippine Islands.

1. Local Ordinaries, excluding the Vicar General without the Bishop's special mandate, can depute to administer the sacrament of Confirmation priests who, as much as possible,

structione pro simplici sacerdote, ex Sedis Apostolicae delegatione, Sacramentum Confirmationis administrante (AAS., XXVII 11 seq.).

2. Iidem Ordinarii locorum ad assistendum nuptiis iuxta formam a iure statutam delegare possunt sacerdotes qui Missionum causa ad evangelizandos fideles vel ad aliud exercitium pietatis exercendum in longinquas regiones, a parochiali sede dissitas, pergunt, iisdem Missionibus perdurantibus, atque iis servatis, quae, prouti res ferat et loci ac temporis condiciones onservare permittant, matrimonii celebrationii ad normam canonis 1019 et seq. Codicis Iuris Canonici, praemitti debent; facta tamen huius Apostolici Indulti expressa mentione in unoquoque casu et semper firmis sacrorum canonum praescriptionibus tum de iuribus parochi servandis tum inscriptione in librisparoe-cialibus facienda.

3. Ordinarii locorum pariter dispensare valent tantum modo super matrimonialibus impedimentis, de quibus in Litteris Apostolicis "De Episcoporum Muneribus", Motu Proprio datis die 30 Iulii 1966, cum Litteris Apostolicis "Pastorale Munus" die 30 Novembris 1963 collatis; haud exceptis haud exceptis impedimentis mixtae religionis et disparitacultus dummodo iusta causa habeatur, iuxta Litteras Apostolicas "Matrimonia Mixta" Motu Proprio die 30 Aprilis 1970 datas.

Insuper venia eisdem conceditur decernendi atque declarandi legitimam prolem nupturientium, dummodo ipsa in adulterio ne sit concepta; facta in unoquoque casu, etiam in concedendis dispensationibus, hius Apostolici Indulti expressa mentione.

4. Ordinarii locorum permittere possunt ut sacerdotes celebrent extra locum sacrum, tantum tamen in fidelium bonum et dummodo celebrationis locum sit decens atque honestus (cfr. "Pastorale Munus", n. 7 et "Instructio Generalis Missalis Romani", n. 260).

5. Ordinarii locorum concedere possunt sacerdotibus facultatem celebrandi in navi sacrosantum Missae Sacrificium, durante dumtaxat tempore itineris, dummodo locus in quo Missa litanda est, nihil indecens aut indecorum praeseferat, mare aut flumen sit adeo tranquillum, ut quodcumque ex Calice effussionis Sacrarum Specierum periculum absit; atque sacerdos, superpelliceo indutus, si adsit, celebranti presbytero adsistat.

are invested with some ecclesiastical dignity or are holding the office of Vicar Forane but never simple priests residing in the places where the Sacrament is to be administered.

The *Instr.* of the S.C. for the Discipline of the Sacraments on the administration of Confirmation by a simple priest,, in virtue of the delegation by the Holy See, should be observed.

2. The same local Ordinaries can delegate to assist at marriage, in accordance with the form prescribed by law, priests who conduct missions to evangelize the faithful or to do some other pious work in remote regions far away from the parish seat, for as long as the said missions continue, and provided that, as far as the case and the conditions of time and of place permit, all the requirements that should precede the celebration of marriage in accordance with cc. 1019 and following of the CIC be observed.

Express mention, however, is to be made of this Apostolic Indult in each case, and the prescriptions of law, regarding the rights of the pastor and the recording of the marriage in the parish register, are also to be observed.

3. Local Ordinaries can likewise dispense from only those matrimonial impediments referred to in the *Apost. Lett.* "De Episcoporum Muneribus" issued *motu proprio* on 30 July, 1966, in conjunction with the *Apost. Lett.* "Pastorale Munus" of 30 Nov., 1963: the impediments of mixed religion and of disparity of cult not excepted, provided there exists a just cause as stated in the *Apost. Lett.* "Matrimonia Mixta" issued *motu proprio* on 30 Apr., 1970.

Moreover, they are given permission to decree and declare as legitimate the offspring of persons about to marry provided it was not conceived in adultery; in granting dispensation, express mention must be made in each case of this apostolic indult.

4. Local Ordinaries may permit a priest to celebrate outside a sacred place, but only for the benefit of the faithful and provided further that the place of celebration is proper and decent.

5. Local Ordinaries may grant to priests the faculty of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on shipboard, but only during the time of the voyage and provided that the place where the Mass is to be said is not improper and unbecoming, that the

6. Omni bus autem Americae Latinae Christifidelibus permittitur ut a festo in Praesentatione Domini usque ad diem 16 mensis iulii, in Commemoratione B.M.V. de Monte Carmelo, praecepto annuae paschalis communionis satisfacere possint.

Contrariis quibusvis non obstantibus, etiam speciali mentione dignis.

Datum Romae, ex Aedibus Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, die 8 Iunii, anno 1980.

✠ SEBASTIANUS Card. BAGGIO  
*Praefectus*



sea or river is so quiet that there is no danger of spilling the Sacred Blood from the chalice, and that another priest, if one is available, vested in a surplice, assist the celebrant.

6. It is permitted to all the faithful of Latin America, however, to fulfill the precept of the annual paschal Communion from the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord to the 16th of July, the Commemoration of O.L. of Mount Carmel.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding, even those worthy of special mention.

Given at Rome, from the Office of the S.C. for the Bishops, on the 8th day of June in the year 1980.

✠ SEBASTINUS Card. BAGGIO  
*Prefect.*

## **FEATURES**

# **NOTES ON THE NEW DECENNIAL FACULTIES**

by

**Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P.**

### *1. The Priest as an Extraordinary Minister of Confirmation.*

In the Latin Church the ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop and he alone. A priest may act at times as extraordinary minister if he has been granted that power either by law or by an apostolic indult of the Holy See, (c. 782).

This ruling on the priest as an extraordinary minister, however, has undergone various and radical changes ever since the issuance of the *decree* "Spiritus Sancti Munera" in 1946 and other post Vat. II documents and official directives. ("Pastorale Munus", n. 13; "Ordo Confirmationis" nn. 7, 8; "Ordo Initiationis Baptismi Adultorum", n. 46).

The privilege now granted in the Decennial Faculties is by far the most liberal of all those already in existence. In fact, the Ordinary of the place may depute any priest to confirm, even if he is not a pastor, parochial vicar, chaplain of a certain institution . . . , as long as he is not residing in the place where the sacrament is supposed to be administered. This is obviously done to enhance the solemnity of the ceremony and to give more meaning and relevance to the sacrament.

If, and whenever possible the priest thus chosen to administer confirmation should be invested in some ecclesiastical dignity or be a holder of the office of vicar forane.

### *2. Delegation to solemnize Marriages.*

The permission to solemnize marriage must be given to a definite priest and for a definite marriage. No general delegations are allowed except in the cases of assistant parish priests for the parish to which they are attached (c. 1096, 1), and of deacons in places where a priest is lacking, ("Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem", n. 22; Commissio Interp. Decr. Vat. II, AAS, 1969, p. 348; Canon Law Digest, VII, 133).

In virtue of the new faculty, local Ordinaries can grant a general delegation to solemnize marriages to any priest—even if he is not an assistant pastor—who is sent to do some mis-

sionary or charitable work in remote places, far from the parish seat. The delegation is valid for as long as the work or the mission entrusted to the priest lasts, and can be used even if there are in the region other priests authorized to assist at marriages.

### 3. *Dispensation from Matrimonial Impediments.*

Up to the time of Vat. II, the powers of local Ordinaries to dispense from matrimonial impediments of ecclesiastical law were restricted to cases of urgency (c. 1045), danger of death (c. 1043), aside the general powers granted them in cc. 15 and 81.

The *motu proprio* "*Pastorale Munus*", nn. 19, 20, however, granted residential bishops faculties to dispense from all minor impediments (c. 1042) for a just and reasonable cause, even from the impediments of mixed religion and of disparity of cult, (cc. 1061-1064).

Moreover, the conciliar decree "*Christus Dominus*", n. 8, b) extends to all diocesan bishops the power to dispense from the general laws of the Church—including marriage impediments—whenever the spiritual benefit of the faithful so demands, with the exception of certain matters reserved to the Holy See.

It is the *Mot. Propr.* "*De Episcoporum Muneribus*" (IX, nn. 11-16) where these reserved cases are enumerated, to wit:

- The impediment of nonage, if the want of age exceeds one year.
- The impediment arising from the disconate, the priesthood or a solemn religious profession.
- The impediment of crime, (c. 1075, 2, 3).
- The impediment of consanguinity in the direct line, and in the collateral line up to the second degree touching the first.
- The impediment of affinity in the direct line.
- All other matrimonial impediments if there be questions of mixed marriages when the conditions required by the *Instr.* "*Matrimonii Sacramentum*" of 18 march, 1966, can not be observed.

Consequently, diocesan bishops and all other members of the hierarchy who are equivalent to them in law—Vicars and Prefects Apostolic (c. 294, 1), Apostolic Administrators per-

manently named (c. 315, 1), and Prelates and Abbots *nullius* (c. 323, 1), may, for a reasonable cause, dispense from all impediments of ecclesiastical law not reserved to the Roman Pontiff, ("De Episcoporum Muneribus", n. III.

The Decennial Faculties (n. 3) extends the aforesaid privileges granted to diocesan bishops to all local Ordinaries (c. 198) who can therefore dispense from all impediments of ecclesiastical law not reserved to the Holy See. The impediments of mixed religion and of disparity of cult constitute no longer an exception, and local Ordinaries may dispense from them, existing a just cause to do so. (*Matrimonia Mixta*", nn. 1, 2, 4).

#### 4. *Celebration of Mass outside a Sacred Place.*

The early christians used to gather in private homes and places for the eucharistic celebration, (Acts, 2, 46; 20, 7-8). The custom of saying the Mass in a sacred place was introduced sometime in the third century when the christian community had reasserted itself in a pagan world and had the material means to erect churches or places dedicated to divine worship.

The general rule for the Latin Church on this matter still follows this same old pattern, to wit:

"The Mass must be celebrated on a consecrated altar and in a church or oratory which is either blessed or consecrated", (c. 822, 1).

Indeed, the respect and reverence due to the the Holy Eucharist demand that the Mass be normally celebrated in sacred places, (cc. 1161, 1193), not in private oratories or homes (c. 1196), not even in the open air.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. In fact the law itself relaxes such obligations in favor of Church dignitaries, cardinals (c. 239, 1,7); bishops (c. 349, 1,1) ..., and all those who by law or indult enjoy the privilege of the so called "portable altar" (c. 822,2) or have been otherwise authorized to celebrate Mass outside places of worship (c. 822, 4).

The powers now granted to local Ordinaries by the Decennial Faculties (n. 4) are broader in scope than all other similar faculties hitherto known. ("Pastorale Munus", n. 7; "Cum

Admotae", n. 4). All that is actually needed in the Philippines to grant permission to celebrate out of a sacred place is compliance with the following:

- that the benefit of the faithful so demands; and
- that the Mass be said in a place proper and becoming.

The liberal tenor in which this faculty is drafted restricts greatly the options left to the local Ordinary who may wish to take a more conservative stand on the matter. For one can hardly imagine a situation in which the good of the faithful will not be at stake one way or another.

With the good of the people as a rule of thumb, permission to celebrate Mass out of a place of worship could be amply justified on the occasion of first friday celebrations, group retreats, school homecomings, prayer gatherings, seminars, meetings of the lay apostolate and catholic movements such as cursillos, christian life communities, marriage encounters, neo-cathecumenical and charismatic groups... (*Instr.*, "On Masses for Special Groups", AAS, 1969, p. 806-811; Canon Law Digest, VII, p. 637).

As to the site where the Mass is to be said there is no limitation other than that the place be "decent and proper". Thus as long as the place fits into the double standard of decency and propriety, permission can be granted to celebrate Mass practically everywhere, as in private homes, funeral parlors bedrooms, penal institutions, hospital rooms or suites, classrooms, auditoria, conference halls..., even in the open air. Possibly the only places not covered by the present faculty are those dealing with celebration on shipboard, trains, airplanes and spaceships.

At this juncture it is worth to note the policy adopted by the CBCP on the use of private homes for the celebration of the Mass. The pertinent ruling on the matter is as follows:

"Masses in private homes may be allowed only in extraordinary and special cases with due permission from the local Ordinary. Bishops are enjoined to set the example to avoid possible discrimination". (*Boletín Ecclesiástico*, 1980, p. 23).

Furthermore, the 1979 Manila Synod has likewise taken a definite stand on the celebration of Masses in funeral parlors and penal institutions. Whenever the institution has a chaplain of its own, his consent is necessary and sufficient. Otherwise, the permission of the Ordinary and, in some cases, the endorsement of the parish priest are necessary. (*Acts and Statutes*, p. 72).



The criterion to determine whether a given place is decent and fitting enough for the celebration of Mass must be based not on the physical aspect of the building, its artistic or historical value, or even the name of a person or family, but rather the fitness is to be gauged by the respect and reverence due to the Holy Eucharist.

Finally let it be noted that no altar stone is further needed to celebrate out of a place of worship (IGRM, nn. 260, 265). The faithful who hear Mass in such occasions and places do comply with the Sunday precept or obligation.

#### 5. *Celebration of Mass on Shipboard.*

The faculty to say Mass at sea or on rivers has always been a rare and unique privilege. Given the many safeguards needed to celebrate on shipboards, the faculty has been in fact restricted to a few special cases, namely, those of cardinals (c. 239, 1, 8) and bishops (c. 349, 1, 1). All others including those enjoying the privilege of "the portable altar" need a special indult or authorization to say Mass at sea or on rivers.

Today, however, the restrictiveness of this law has somehow been eased up. As a matter of fact a priest may now celebrate on board as long as he uses the ship's altar whose oratory is now accepted and recognized as a place legally fitted to say Mass. Undoubtedly such faculty does not extend to cases where the Mass is celebrated on board but out of the ship's oratory. In this instance, however, a priest may avail himself of a second faculty which may be granted by diocesan, residential bishops for a just cause, and provided that the usual safeguards customary in similar cases are employed. ("Pastorale Munus", n. 8).

Moreover, the powers of the country's local Ordinaries are greatly broadened by the new Decennial Faculties (n. 5). All they—even those who are not residential or diocesan bishops—can now grant license to celebrate on board, even if the ship has no oratory of its own, for the duration of the voyage and provided that the customary precautions for such cases are seriously taken into consideration, namely: a) that the place is decent and fitting; b) that the sea or river be quite enough to avoid danger of spilling the Sacred Species from the chalice c) that another priest, if one is available on board, vested in a surplice, assist the celebrant.

6. *The Eastern Duty.*

In the very words of Christ the attainment of eternal life is made dependent on the partaking of His Body and Blood (John, 6, 53). This divine precept was more closely determined by the Church, first at the II Lateran Council (1215) and later at Trent (1545) wherein the obligation of the yearly reception of the Eucharist at Easter was imposed on all the faithful as the minimum requirement for compliance with the Lord's command, (*Denzinger*, 437, 891). The obligation begins as soon as the baptized reaches the age of discretion, that is, the use of reason (*Ib.*, 2137; CIC, c. 859).

The normal or legal time to comply with the Eastern Precept extends from Palm Sunday to the Dominica in Albis or the second sunday of Easter, that is for two weeks. However, local Ordinaries may prolong this period of time in favor of all the faithful of the diocese if so required by special circumstances, (c. 859, 2).

In the Philippines the time set for the Easter Communion has varied through the centuries and has been determined by custom or special indults. For centuries the filipino native could comply with the Eastern Precept all through the time from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost Sunday. On a later date, however, this centenary custom was somewhat altered in favor of both the natives and the resident europeans, as the Paschal Time was set from Septuagesima Sunday to the feast of the Apostle Sts. Peter and Paul.

The Fathers of the 1910 Council of Manila sought to sanction the existing custom, and in fact were able to obtain from the Holy See on 11 feb., 1910, this favorable concession:

"That all the filipino catholics and all those living in those islands may comply with the Duty of Paschal Communion from Septuagesima Sunday to the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul". (*Acta et Decreta I Conc. Manila*, vol. I, p. LXXXIV, n. XVI).

This privilege granted without any time limit has never been rescinded and, therefore, it can still be used. This is the case of a "favorable privilege" granted for the good of the faithful which does not cease or expires by the non-use or even contrary use by the grantee, since he may have valid reasons for not availing of the privileges granted him (c. 76). Thus his privilege is still considered a permanent favor (c. 70).

The Decennial Faculties of 1929 (n. 10), 1939 (n. 8) and 1949 (n. 10) did not alter the paschal schedule set at the Manila Council. It was in 1959 when the Decennial Faculties (n. 11) modified somewhat the previous practice by setting a longer period, namely, from Septuagesima Sunday to July 16th, the feast of O.L. of Mount Carmel.

However, the New Norms on the Liturgical Year and Calendar and the subsequent suppression of the Septuagesima Sunday required a necessary adjustment of the paschal time which is now reflected in the 1969 (n. 7) and 1979 (n. 6) Decennial Faculties. In accordance with this new schedule the faithful can now comply with the Easter Precept during the time which extends from feb. 2th to july 16th, the feast of O.L. of Mount Carmel.

Seemingly the filipino hierarchy did not find the favors granted to the country on this matter extensive enough to facilitate the fulfillment of the paschal precept. Thus the CBCP, prompted by some pastoral considerations and the special circumstances prevailing in the country, sought from the Holy See broader faculties, a favor that was granted through a rescript in 1956. The Paschal Duty time set by the indult extends from Septuagesima to, and inclusive of, All Saints Day.

Through a periodical renewal every five years, the 1956 indult remained in force till 15 oct., 1971 when the CBCP applied for still a more generous concession which would allow the faithful to comply with the Easter Duty all through the year. This concession is still in force at present and is valid till 13 july, 1982. The latest renewal, valid for five years, was transmitted to the CBCP through the Manila Nunciature with this appeal:

"This Congregation would be pleased to see the bishops of the Philippines encouraged to begin to limit the period of the year during which the Easter Duty is to be fulfilled in order to place in higher relief the centrality of the Paschal Mystery in the spiritual life of the faithful".

*Next to the Mass, there is no work more important or vital to the life of the Church than that of the Confessional.*

## FREQUENT COMMUNION AND INFREQUENT CONFESSION

By

EDWIN GORDON

Pope John Paul II in his recent address to the American Bishops spoke of "that widespread phenomenon of our time, namely, that many of our people who are among the great numbers who receive Communion make little use of Confession". In the face of this, he said, "we must emphasize Christ's basic call to conversion. We must also stress that the personal encounter with the forgiving Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a divine means which keeps alive in our hearts... a consciousness of sin in its perennial and tragic reality, and which actually brings forth by the action of Jesus and the power of his Spirit fruits of conversion." He went on to quote from *Redemptor Hominis*: "Without this constant endeavour for conversion, partaking of the Eucharist would lack its full redeeming effectiveness" (cf. *Osservatore Romano* Oct. 29th, 1979).

This means that many of our people who no longer frequent the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation) are not receiving "the full redeeming effectiveness of the Eucharist." These are strong words when we consider that the Eucharist is the Bread of life, without which we cannot live fully the life of Christ. If the faithful are being starved of the full redeeming effectiveness of the Eucharist, is it any wonder that so many lapse? Could it be that we have concentrated too much on the renewal of externals, necessary as this may be, and forgotten that true renewal must be founded primarily on an interior conversion, in meeting the forgiving Christ in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

When speaking to the Canadian Bishops in November 1978, Pope John Paul II stressed the importance of frequent Confession: "In the name of the Lord Jesus, let us give assurance in union with the whole Church to all our priests of the great supernatural effectiveness of a persevering ministry exercised through auricular Confession, in fidelity to the command of the

teaching of his Church. And once again let us assure all our people of the great benefits derived from frequent confession. I am indeed convinced of the words of our predecessor Pius XII: Not without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was this practice introduced into the Church." Pope Pius XII had condemned severely those who made little of frequent confession: "Let those therefore among the younger clergy who make light of or lessen esteem for frequent confession realize that what they are doing is alien to the Spirit of Christ and disastrous for the mystical body of our Saviour" (*Mystici Corporis* 1943), Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution *Paenitemini* wrote: "It is very desirable for bishops and other pastors of souls to promote zealously more frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance... especially during the Lenten Season." Pope John XXIII was equally emphatic and put very clearly the unambiguous teaching of the Magisterium: "It is here in the Sacrament of Penance that God's mercy will at last win the victory over human wickedness. It is here that men will be cleansed of their sins and reconciled to God. We condemn the theory that the frequent confession of venial sin is not a practice to be greatly valued. On the contrary, for a constant and rapid advancement in virtue, we highly recommend the pious practice of frequent confession, introduced by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit" (*Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia*). In his autobiography *Journal of a Soul* Pope John XXIII, already an old man of eighty, tells us that for him frequent confession was once a week: "During my whole life I have kept faithful to my practice of weekly Confession. Several times during my life I have renewed my general confession. So now I content myself with a more general examination, without precise details, but in the words of the offertory prayer of my daily Mass, thinking of my countless sins, offences and negligences, all of which have already been confessed in their turn but are still mourned and detested... The vivid memory of the failings of my life, eighty years long, and of my countless sins, offences and negligences was the general matter for the holy confession which I renewed this morning to my spiritual director."

### *Consciences are dull*

I have deliberately quoted exclusively from the highest magisterium of the Church to show that the question of the importance of frequent confession of sin is not just one opinion among many, but the clear teaching of the Church "under the



guidance of the Holy Spirit" as Pope John XXIII put it. One could have quoted from the writings of innumerable saints as well as from Vatican II and the Council of Trent.

I would like now to examine the reasons for the decline in recent years of the practice of frequent confession and finally to suggest means by which it could be restored. *In general* it can be said that if, in the words of Pope John XXIII, the Sacrament of Penance will "at last win the victory over human wickedness" and "men will be cleansed of their sins and reconciled to God," then we can be quite sure that the spirit of evil in high places will do all in his power to hinder the faithful from the practice of frequent confession, sometimes in doing so disguising himself as an angel of light so as to deceive if possible even the elect. There has been a decline in the sense of sin, instrumentally resulting from the mass media, and a dulling of conscience which is undoubtedly the work of Satan, witness the mass murders of the unborn which hardly raise a cry of indignation, and yet are just as evil as the gas-chambers of Nazi Germany.

#### *Frequent confession benefits*

*In particular* there are many reasons that come to mind for the decline in frequent confessions:

1) It has been said that in the past the faithful were deprived of the Holy Eucharist even though in a state of sanctifying grace, by the erroneous belief that one could not go to Holy Communion without going to confession first. In some, perhaps even in many cases, this was true; but the answer surely lay in an adequate catechesis of the faithful and not in belittling the practice of frequent confession. There were some theologians and "experts" who did so belittle it, and these confused many faithful and even some good priests as often as they spoke with a mandate from a Bishop. These were severely condemned by both Pius XII and John XXIII, as has already been pointed out, but the damage was done.

2) The new rite of Penance was emphatic about the benefit accruing from the frequent confession of venial sin, and yet this was often passed over and a wrong interpretation given to the exceptional rite of general absolution. In spite of repeated clarifications from the Holy See and particularly from Pope Paul VI, general absolution was introduced with the justification that many who had been away from the sacraments

for many years had been brought back and the serious conditions required were not fulfilled. A process began similar to that of covering up the rust in a car: the externals appeared to have changed when in reality the rust remained. The inner requirements of contrition and interior conversion were by no means present. Pope John Paul II reiterated the norms given by Pope Paul VI in the address to the Canadian Bishops (Oss. Rom. Nov. 30th, 1978). "These norms," he said, "are in fact linked to the solemn teaching of the Council of Trent concerning the divine precept of individual confession." Once again he indicated the altogether exceptional character of general absolution. At the same time he asked the Bishops to help their priests "to have an ever greater appreciation of the splendid ministry of theirs as confessors. . . . Other works, for lack of time, may have to be postponed or even abandoned, but not the confessional." Pope John Paul emphasized once again the importance of "frequent and individual confession of sins" and also reasserted that confession must be individual and *cannot* be passed on to the community.

### *Confession is personal*

In *Redemptor Hominis* he wrote: "In the last few years, much has been done to highlight the Community aspect of Penance. We cannot however forget that conversion is a profound inward act in which the individual cannot be replaced by others and cannot make the community a substitute for him. In faithfully observing the centuries' old practice of individual confession with a personal act of sorrow and the intention to amend and make satisfaction, the Church is defending the human soul's individual right: man's right to a more profound encounter with the crucified forgiving Christ; with Christ saying through the ministry of the Sacrament of Reconciliation: 'Your sins are forgiven!'"

Often the new rite of penance was thought by some of the faithful to be so complicated that they were frightened to go. The impression had somehow been given that each confession involved a penitential service, when all that the penitent wished was quietly and with as little fuss as possible to confess his sins and receive forgiveness. This is not, of course, to say that there is not room for penitential services which can do much to evoke contrition and help the penitent to make a better confession.

*Half-truths persist*

Too much emphasis was put on face to face confession, when in reality the option should belong entirely to the penitent. Pope Paul VI condemned "certain errors that had arisen regarding the new rite of penance such as the abolition of the Confessional. The Confessional as a protective screen between the minister and the penitent, to guarantee the absolute secrecy of the conversation, must, it is clear, remain" (April 3rd. 1974).

To come to the practical level in our parishes, here are some of the sayings I have come across, from some of our commentators and experts, which have confused and continue to confuse the faithful. They are for the most part half-truths and therefore much more dangerous:

"The mind of the new rite of Penance is that we should go to confession in depth and not so frequently."

"There is no need to confess venial sins."

"We are only bound to go to Confession once a year and then only if there is a mortal sin."

"It is very difficult to commit a mortal sin as it involves a fundamental option or deliberate and fundamental turning from God. One single grave sin is not a mortal sin as it does not amount to a fundamental option." (Mortal sin here is practically identified with the sin against the Holy Spirit!)

"Most of our mortal sins were invented by moral theologians." (They forget perhaps that it was not the moral theologians but Our Lord himself who said that he who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. It was Holy Writ itself which said that they who do these things would not enter the kingdom of heaven. Let us give credit where credit is due.)

*Begin with good catechesis*

Such statements as these and many more have helped to diminish the sense of sin in its "perennial and tragic reality." Given the unambiguous teaching of the highest Magisterium of the Church on the importance of frequent confession, what can be done to bring the faithful back? The answer is quite clear

in the words of Pope John Paul II: "let us assure our people of the great benefit derived from frequent confession." This can be done first of all by a good catechesis in our schools on how to go to confession, and its importance. Let us make certain that school chaplains and teachers are in accord with the magisterium of the Church. Secondly, let Bishops issue Pastoral Letters on the sacrament of Confession, following the lead of Pope John Paul. Thirdly, let us often preach about frequent confession in our sermons and homilies.

If we are to carry out a true renewal of our parishes and not merely paper up the cracks; if we are to build for eternity and not just for time, then we must get the people to the Sacrament of God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us be quite convinced about this: the Priest, saying Mass or hearing confessions, is acting "*in persona Christi*." He does not say, "This is *His* Body," but "This is *MY* Body." So too in the Confessional, he does not merely say, "May the Lord forgive you," but "I absolve you from you sins" because he is identified with Christ. Next to the Mass, there is no work more important or vital to the life of the Church than that of the Confessional: In this way will arise "a consciousness of sin in its perennial and tragic reality" and the reconciliation "...which actually brings forth by the action of Jesus and the power of his Spirit fruits of conversion" (Pope John Paul II: Oss. Rom. Oct. 29th, 1979).

## THE WAYS OF DIALOGUE:

### Listening to the Heart; Meeting in Christ

by

Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, D.D.

#### INTRODUCTION

It is an honor and a joy, and I will confess — an honor and joy beyond my expectations, to receive from this historic and distinguished seat of learning\* the Honorary Degree in Humane Letters.

The explorers and travellers of past centuries called this island *Formosa*, the lovely land, the beautiful island, and for me it will ever be that: a place of beautiful memories, of which this evening shall be always one.

On inquiring after the meaning of the name of this university, Fu Jen, I was told that it meant (more or less) the fostering of an integral humanism: a university dedicated to leading men and women to the ideal of true humanism. Hence it is doubly an honor that I receive, in accepting the doctorate *honoris causa* in Humane Letters from the hands of a truly distinguished Chinese humanist, your most Reverend Rector Magnificus, Archbishop Stanislaus Lokuang. You all know that I am descended from Chinese forebears; indeed my own father was by blood fully Chinese. This evening I am certain that the long line of my Chinese ancestors look on me, their Filipino grandson, with a pride they cannot contain. My heart is full with gratitude toward this great university, and all of you here present. And this evening I will always cherish, I will always remember.

#### DIALOGUE WITH THE ASIAN RELIGIONS

For this occasion you will perhaps allow me to address myself to one of the major themes of Christian mission in Asia today: a theme highlighted in the Final Statement of the First Plenary Assembly<sup>1</sup> of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Con-

---

\* Fujen University, Taipeh



ferences held in this same city in April, 1974; a theme discussed in some depth in the International Mission Congress held in Manila just one year ago — *The Dialogue with the Religions of Asia*. Surely here in your midst, in this distinguished center of learning and wisdom, I need not enlarge on the importance of this subject. In fact, I know that it has been one of the privileged areas of study to which you have dedicated your time and effort.<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely because I address myself to scholars and experts that will not attempt an address heavy with *Wissenschaft*; on this theme savants among you can teach me many times over. You will allow me instead, I trust, to speak as a pastor of the Church, concerned with her mission in Asia, concerned with the millions of our brothers and sisters whom God calls to His Fatherly Love and the fullness of His Life, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Allow me to begin by recalling the six paragraphs (nos. 13-18)<sup>3</sup> in the FABC's Taipei declaration which deals with the "dialogue with the religions."

The statement began by speaking of the need of "incarnating the Christian life and message" in our peoples' lives, in the realities of the local church. It saw this "incarnation" coming to realization by means, above all, of three dialogues: the dialogue with the cultures with the religions, and with the Asian peoples themselves — especially the poor.

On the dialogue with the religious traditions, the text (if I summarize correctly) made these points:

1. The Asian religions are "significant and positive elements in the economy of salvation" in which we recognize and respect profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values. They are the treasury of the religious experience of our peoples. We believe that God has drawn our peoples through them to Himself.

2. We find in them the *semina Verbi*, the seeds of the Word, which are laid in the deepest selves of our peoples, and which "reveal to us many riches of our own faith". Hence we as Christians can learn and received... from these religious traditions.

3. Our dialogue will allow us, in our turn, to offer the treasures of our own faith: the Christ-life we receive from Jesus as Son of the Father, the gifts of Gospel and sacraments, and the community of the Church, as well as certain Christian

meanings and values: the dignity of the human person, the dimensions of salvation as societal, of human freedom and liberation creative within the world and history.

In a sense, all these points were already made in the Second Vatican Council's declaration on Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra aetate*.<sup>4</sup> And yet it was important that the Asian Bishops returned to them before and during the Synod of 1974<sup>5</sup> because they deserved reassertion within our Asian context. It is in this same spirit that even as "one less wise", I would like to reflect with you on a few of these affirmations.

### PRIMACY OF DIALOGUE

There is, first of all, the primacy of dialogue. The International Congress on Mission,<sup>6</sup> last year, came back to this, again and again. The Message of the Delegates had this to say: "It suffices for the present to indicate the continued building up of the local church as the focus of the task of evangelization, *with dialogue as its essential mode...*"<sup>7</sup>

The third workshop produced a small treatise on the meaning and importance of dialogue for our local churches in Asia.

God is present and working through the Spirit in the whole of creation, and the Christian, together with men of all faiths, strives to discover this transforming love of God and makes it a more living experience. Through dialogue, the Christian grows in awareness of his partnership with God in the coming about of the Kingdom. The history of salvation tells us that God is continuously dialoguing with men. Christ is the center of this process. As disciples of Christ, within His community, the Church we are called to imitate Him. Christ has come to do the will of the Father. As the Father has sent Christ, so the Christian is sent by Christ to bring the Good News, in the same way [the way of dialogue], to all men.<sup>8</sup>

Here, we will already note, is the key to dialogue: *in any dialogue about the great issues of human existence*, as that between the Church and the world, and that between Christians and men of other religious traditions, *the Spirit speaks, in and through both participants*.

We will not enter here into the debated and difficult question of whether dialogue can be said to be integrally evangeliza-

tion, whether dialogue suffices as completely fulfilling the task of mission.<sup>9</sup> The solution, if one exists, is to spell out how one does understand the reality of dialogue, — I might simply recall that Pope Paul VI's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*,<sup>10</sup> is perhaps one of the best of contemporary reflections on the meaning and ways of dialogue.

Pope Paul VI spoke of "dialogue as a method of fulfilling our apostolic mission", "an example of the art of spiritual communication" (par. 83). And its characteristics were, he said, clarity, meekness, trust, and prudence.

"In dialogue one discovers how different are the ways which lead to the light of Faith, and how it is possible to make them converge on the same goal. Even if these ways are divergent, they can become complementary by forcing our reasoning process out of the worn paths and by obliging it to deepen its research, to find fresh expressions."

It is thus, Pope Paul goes on to say, that we shall discover elements of truth in other's positions; that we shall learn how to express our own teaching. "The dialogue will make us wise; it will make us teachers." With his great pastoral concern he tells us that dialogue "adapts itself to needs of a concrete situation, chooses the appropriate means, does not bind itself to ineffectual theories and does not cling to hard and fast forms when these have lost their power to speak to men and more them" (par. 86, 88).

Finally, he gives us those memorable rules of a dialogue patterned after the ways of Christ: the dialogue of salvation is a dialogue of life; it is a listening to the heart; it is friendship and brotherhood in a common search.

Permit me to cite his unforgettable lines:

The world cannot be saved from the outside. As the Word of God became man, so must a man to a certain degree identify himself with the forms of life of those to whom he wishes to bring the message of Christ. Without invoking privileges which would but widen separation, without employing unintelligible terminology, he must share the common way of life — provided that it is human and honorable — especially of the most humble, if he wishes to be listened to and understood.

And before speaking it is necessary to listen, not only to a man's voice, but to his heart. A man must first be understood; and, where he merits it, agreed with. In the very act of trying to make ourselves pastors, fathers and teachers of men, we must make ourselves their brothers. The spirit of dialogue is friendship, and even more, it is service. All this we must remember and strive to put into practice according to the example and commandment that Christ left to us.<sup>11</sup>

*Ecclesiam suam* itself does not directly and immediately apply these norms to inter-religious dialogue; they are rather "ground rules" for all dialogue. But as such they apply *a fortiori* to the dialogue on faith, between men of diverse religions.

A recent work on Christian mission and word religions, dealing with "the tasks for which the Church is being prepared by its Lord at the present time," tells us that the first task "is an engagement with the non-Christian faiths at a far deeper level than has been at present attained."<sup>12</sup> I can only agree with the author that in the decades to come, this dialogue will assume increasing importance. And the "ground rules" of Pope Paul VI will prove, I believe, to be of increasing relevance. For this dialogue will call for ever more authentic sensitiveness on our part, "that disciplined and instinctive sympathy by which the inquirer is led to intuitive understanding, on a far level than that of mere intellectual apprehension."<sup>13</sup> This is what Pope Paul means by his phrase, "*to listen not only to a man's voice, but also to his heart.*" We must try to grasp, to understand, to "feel", *from within*, any religion we come face to face with — not primarily as a series of propositions, but as a response of our partner in dialogue — his response to the Holy Spirit.

For I believe there is a great deal of truth in the position that would want to look upon other religious primarily "as a body of propositions and regulations, standing over against people who either believe or do not believe, asking for their allegiance and offering a way of fulfillment." Rather, this position prefers to think of a religion primarily "as a people's tradition of response to the reality the Holy Spirit has set before their eyes."<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that any given religion does in fact contain the truth revealed by the Spirit, but only this: this is the history, in this people, of *their* particular response to what they have been made aware of, by the Spirit who is leading all men to the truth, according to his own ways, and in his own time.<sup>15</sup>

Thus to enter into dialogue with men of other religions is more than an efforts to learn *about the religion* of "the other": their creed and cult, their ethical regulations and public and private practices, but to try to enter into their total world; their understanding of reality, their world-view: their total life and culture, rather than merely their theology. For a religion "is not the fabrication of priests and theologians (merely) but the entire tradition of a people's response," shaped through their particular history, intertwined with their total culture, a cumulative unity in itself. It is this total world I must try to enter into.

It is through the patient, trusting — even loving — listening to the heart of my partner in dialogue that this is learned: somehow, even in a limited way, to "see his world through *his* eyes, to love *his* world with *his* heart." In a way, this is the true beginning of dialogue, because (as Pope Paul has said) true dialogue is possible only in mutual understanding and "compassion", — that is, in friendship, in brotherhood.

At this point I may perhaps be allowed to cite a passage from a well-known work on the Holy Spirit and mission:

... if I persevere in listening openness I shall begin to see more of that other man's real world. I shall see past what to me [may be even] distasteful rituals, alien symbols and concepts that carry no conviction to the insights they are trying to express. I shall come to appreciate his understanding of what a man is, how he is related to his family, to the dead, to the whole of existence, and to the ultimate reality. And, as a final bestowal, I shall be given access to the dark places of that stranger's world, — things that really make him ashamed or anxious or despairing. And then, at last I shall see the Saviour and Lord of that world, my Lord Jesus, and yet not [exactly, in every way] as I have known him. I shall understand how perfectly the Lord Jesus matches all the needs and all the aspirations and all the insights of that other world — he who is the unique Lord and Saviour of all possible worlds. And I shall worship with a new found wonder and falteringly start proclaiming him in the new terms which I am just beginning to comprehend.<sup>15</sup>



THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN THIS DIALOGUE

This brings us to the second point I wish to dwell on this evening: the place of Christ, the presence of the Lord Jesus in this dialogue.

Of late it has been said that a "Copernican revolution" is needed in our understanding of the "universe of faiths". This position, strongly advocated by some whose zeal for inter-religious dialogue is greater perhaps than their logic and wisdom, would have it that we can only solve the problem of inter-religious understanding by means of "a shift from the dogma that *Christianity* is at the centre, to the realization that it is *God* who is at the centre, and that all the religions, of mankind, including our own, serve and revolve around him."<sup>17</sup>

Behind this position are, of course, hidden assumptions which we will not go into now. This position assumes that what *this* or *that* given theologian or philosopher understands by God, by Transcendent Being, by Ultimate Reality, is the final *norm for all religions*. What begins as a posture of humility is thus unmashed as a stance of intellectual presumption. — Pope Paul VI was immensely wiser: he told us, in *Ecclesiam suam*, that "The desire to come together as brothers must not lead to a watering down or subtracting from the truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our Faith."<sup>18</sup> Perhaps that last phrase could be rewritten, in faithfulness to Pope Paul's own thought: "Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to Jesus Christ."

In inter-religious dialogue we are dealing with *ultimate commitments*. In such dialogue the only basis on which I, as partner in dialogue, can honestly stand, is my own ultimate commitment of faith in Jesus Christ. No other position would be authentic for me, no other position would be honest. "As such an ultimate commitment, it must defend its claim to truth over other claims to truth. I have no standpoint except the point where I stand. The claim that I have is simply the claim that mine is the standpoint from which it is possible to discern the Truth that relativizes all truth. That claim is the expression of the ultimate commitment which is my real religion."<sup>19</sup> "If this argument is valid," Lesslie Newbigin argues, "it follows that the Christian will meet his friend and neighbor of another faith as one committed to Jesus Christ as his ultimate authority, who openly acknowledges this commitment, and seeks to understand and to enter into dialogue with his partner of another commitment on that basis."<sup>20</sup>

For any believer, his commitment, his confession of faith, in other words — his own self-giving in faith — can not be something contrary to his quest for truth. "His confession is the starting-point of his truth-seeking." This is true of all believers, of all who hold the absolute commitments of faith: Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus — Marxists, even, for Marxism is in one true sense a faith, a commitment to an absolute viewpoint. For each of these believers the world-view of his religious commitment is the basis for understanding the totality of the experience and learning which he makes his own; it is from that standpoint that the understands and judges all other experience and knowledge. It has been well and wisely said that: "The integrity and fruitfulness of the interfaith dialogue depends . . . upon the extent to which different participants take seriously the full reality of their faiths as sources for the understanding of the totality of experience."<sup>21</sup>

It is in this light that we turn to the closing paragraph of the 1974 Taipei declaration of the FABC, and the Final Prayer with which that statement ends. It is a statement, at once joyous and humble, of that position, that commitment, that faith:

Christ of the peoples of Asia, humbly we beg you to make use of us to reveal yourself more and more to our peoples. You have been present already in their histories and traditions. In hidden ways you have led them, because for them too, you are *the Way*. In ways unknown to us you have enlightened them in their worship, their beliefs, their philosophies, since for them too, you are *the Truth*. In diverse manners you have already made yourself present in their lives,, for you are *their life*. From the beginning you have called our peoples, and from your Cross you have drawn them to yourself. (par. 46).

It is from *this standpoint of commitment in faith* to the Lord Jesus that we approach our brothers of other religions. My belief in Jesus as God's own unique Son commits me to the belief that all of creation, every man, woman and child, are illumined by the Light that is the Word: all things, all peoples, all persons — are already related to Jesus. He is the Word, St. John says, through whom all things came to be. He is the light that gives light to every human being. He is present wherever creation, life and human understanding and love are; everywhere is the unfolding of his work. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which

God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:28-30). Jesus Christ is he in whom all things cohere and work together (Col. 1:17): "from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11:33-36). In him all things and all men fulfill their destiny. God's plan for the fullness of time is to unite all things in him (Eph. 1:10). It is unto him that all things and all men go.<sup>22</sup>

It is precisely our confession of Jesus Christ as Lord which opens our eyes and our minds to the reality of the work of God in the thought and worship and lives of men and women of other faiths. It creates in us the expectancy and even readiness for finding in other religions signs and elements of that presence and work. It is in his light that we rejoice to find God's action in the lives of other believers; in their prayer and their deeds of self-giving, in their eloquent witness of self-transcending commitment to their brothers and sisters.

### THE "ASIAN FACE" OF CHRIST

Recently, a Filipina Carmelite sister was sent by her Order on a journey of study to several Asian countries to complete research she was doing on Carmelite spirituality as lived out in Asian communities; to make soundings on the dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions of spirituality and prayer within the Carmelite Order itself. One of the deepest convictions born from her many months of study, sharing in prayer, and contemplation, was this: that in Asia today the grace of God seems to be bringing us to the threshold of a fresh "rediscovery of Christ." I know that this conviction is shared by many, — people in contact with contemplative communities and with prayer-movements in Asia, by theologians and spiritual directors.

Many years ago, the late Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote with his usual eloquence on the "discovery of the Asian face of Christ." In preparing for this paper I re-read his text, and you will perhaps allow me to cite a couple of paragraphs from it.

...in this twentieth century when the peoples of these lands (Asia,, India, Africa) are coming to the fulness of the Faith, they are having their hour, as

Israel had its hour of visitation. For centuries God veiled these countries from the fulness of the Revelation of His Son... Now the unveiling of the East is about to take place, as these countries are to show forth the power of the Incarnation, when some of the Western world mistakenly believed its force was spent. Fittingly the Power and the Wisdom of Christ, which was a scandal to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, will manifest itself with as much vigor in these coming days as in the beginning. We are on the verge of a great wave of apostolicity such as was seen in the first few centuries of the Church, with this difference that now the Eastern world will have its turn.

Christ is not Western. He was born in the East. When finally the East does recognize Him, they will manifest a side of Him which the Western world has not yet understood. There is a principle in philosophy that "whatever is received, is received according to the manner of the one receiving it." For example, water poured into a blue glass looks blue; poured into a red glass it looks red, but in both instances it is water. So, too, the Word made flesh received in the mold of Western civilization reveals some of the beauty of the Incarnation, but poured into the mold of Eastern civilization, it will manifest attributes which the Western world has not yet perceived.<sup>23</sup>

Bishop Sheen wrote this text almost exactly thirty years ago. Since then, surely, the Spirit has been at work in our midst, bringing this hour to birth. Perhaps our Carmelite sister is right; the moment of this rediscovery of Christ is upon us now. Jesus is, in the words of the Apostle, "the same yesterday, today and forever." But the New Testament, scholars have told us, with impressive evidence, that the Church herself from the New Testament period has seen Christ, in different times and ages, with different eyes.<sup>24</sup> The figure of Jesus in Mark shows us different facets from the Christ of John; the person of Jesus, seen through the eyes and heart of Francis of Assisi, is not wholly identical with the image that Ignatius of Loyola saw, or Dominic de Guzman, or Don Bosco. The Christologies being written today in Europe and Latin America give us a whole gallery of diverse "faces of Jesus". Surely as the Christian dialogue with Asian religious traditions goes on, with greater breadth and seriousness, and at greater depth, we shall see more and more into the inexhaustible reality of Jesus. "He

whom our eyes have seen, whom our hands have touched, the Word of Life." (1 Jn. 1:1) We shall see him with other eyes; we shall know him with other minds; we shall love him with other hearts; we shall touch him with other hands. And yet we know it shall always be the One Christ of our faith, "the same yesterday, today and forever." This, we hope and believe, will be one of the richest fruits of the dialogue between Asians of different religious traditions and different living faiths.<sup>26</sup>

### CHRIST THE CENTER

May we be allowed to guess as to the directions in which, through the dialogue of men of different religions in Asia, the "rediscovery of Jesus" might move? I will not try to prophesy (this charism is not given with the prelate's pallium!), but perhaps I may be allowed to make three points.

1. We shall *recognize more and more*, I believe, *the uniqueness of Jesus*. I know that much has been written, since the beginnings of 'comparative religion', on how little originality we find in Jesus. Line after line of similarity and parallel has been traced, words and deeds in the Gospels have been placed side by side with their twins in other documents and religious traditions, and the "sameness of Christ" has been loudly declared. It is my belief that much of this labor has been in function of the desire to "whittle down Jesus" to manageable terms. But even where the parallels prove valid, the figure of Jesus does not become diminished. In fact, within the very similarities, his originality and uniqueness emerge.

Today so much (both good and bad!) is being written to "humanize Jesus"; by scripture scholars, by theologians, by literary men and artists. (Even blasphemous works are filmed, to try to ridicule his person!) And yet before those who search in all sincerity perhaps the figure of Jesus stands as it has never appeared before: with his authority and inexorableness; with his unchanged demand of total commitment even unto death. Men like Archbishop Romero, women like Mother Teresa translate that originality and exigency in terms of today's world — and in them and through them the singularity of Jesus shines forth even in a sceptical and unbelieving age.

2. As we open the ways of dialogue *we shall know*, I believe, *more and more, the power of Christ to call people to conversion, to mutual understanding and to the demands of both compassion and justice*. We shall have experience of the power



of Christ to bring men together in a search for brotherhood and peace. We see today the unleashing of unparalleled violence and terrorism, the vast contagion of the anger and evil intent in the heart of sinful man. And yet, we see also — for our hope — almost everywhere, a new consciousness of human dignity, a new search for human solidarity, a common struggle for the creation of brotherhood traversing the earth and the communities of mankind. And if we could see beneath these forces *for* man, these forces *in behalf* of man, I believe we can see the figure of Christ, the power of his Spirit, moving in the depths to make men one. At least this is my conviction, as it is my Christian faith and hope.

The night before he died, as a last great gesture and example, Jesus prayed that all men might be one in his Father and in him, I believe in the power of that longing and that prayer as it rises always from the heart of the Risen Saviour. It remains only for that hope to activate our efforts earnestly seconding the movement of his grace.

3. A distinguished Christian scholar in your midst, Dr. John C. H. Wu, has written wisely that towards "the only possible synthesis between East and West, our necessary starting point must be the Person of Christ." *Christ is the One Reconciler*, he writes in his beautiful book, *Chinese Humanism and Christian Spirituality*, reconciling men to God and at the same time reconciling men with one another under the Fatherhood of God. "For He Himself is our peace. He it is who has made both one, and has broken down the intervening wall of the enclosure, the enmity, in His Flesh" (Eph. 214).

To summarize his already-dense thought would be to betray it, but perhaps he will let me cite a few lines only, to illustrate it for us tonight.

It is providential [he says] that at the present juncture both the East and the West are challenging us to lead a more interior life. The East, in that we must show it that the Kingdom of God within us is the reality of which all its past philosophies have been but foreshadowings. The West, in that only by developing our interior life in proportion to the material civilization can we transmit the deadening weight of matter into a vessel of the Spirit.

If the East does not find the West in Christ, it will never meet the West and love it. If the West does not

find the East in Christ, it will never meet the East and love it. If the East is westernized, it becomes worse than the West. If the East and the West are married outside of Christ, the union will not last long, being the result of a momentary infatuation, which will only produce monsters. Only when they are united in the bosom of Christ will they love each other with the love of Christ, and the union give birth to the new man.<sup>26</sup>

I will leave the last word to this wise and learned man. I will add only this: increasingly, in the face of today's challenges, *we see Jesus, not only as the culmination and fulfillment of a covenant made in the past to Israel, and through Israel, to the world. We see him as the enfleshment and "incarnation of the questing and striving of the whole race of man, stumbling and uncertain, and yet with some dim awareness of the one true God who will not forever hide himself in the shadows. We have to enlarge our understanding of the truth that in the cosmic Christ, . . . everything that is good and true and honorable in any aspiration of man will find its place. How this can be we do not know. But we have the assurance given by the apostle that God has put all things in subjection under the feet of Christ, and that it is his purpose to sum up, to gather together, all things in the one whom by his infinite power he has raised from the dead (Eph. 1:10; 1:22, 23)."*<sup>27</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, my Sisters and Brothers: As we hold this celebration this evening we remember that we are in the season of Advent—the Church's season of expectation and longing. And it is thus fitting that we end by praying together the prayer of Advent that the Asian Bishops made their own in their statement of 1974.

Lord of history, in the times and seasons known to you, you shall make yourself known in fullness to our peoples. An ancient prayer implored, "Let your love embrace all the nations. It is the prayer we make again today. In us and through us, but also before us and beyond us, come to our lands and our peoples. Make them your own. Let your love embrace them, that they may have life, ever fuller life in you (cf. John 10:10)."<sup>28</sup>

May the oneness of all our brothers and sisters in Asia be the constant burden of our desire and our hope. And may the Lord of Advent open in our lives the paths of dialogue, for these can only begin in our own hearts—in the gifts of meekness, trust, and the untiring search for truth. And these gifts are also from him.<sup>29</sup>

Lastly, we pray to Our Lady, whose feast we have just celebrated, the great feast of the Immaculate Conception. She is the Church of the Advent; for she held the Saviour in her womb; her womb was itself the advent of our salvation, and her mother's longing the "groaning of creation" for the redemption given to us in her Son. As we end, we turn to her, in the Church's Advent hymn so fitting for our evening prayer,

*Alma Redemptoris Mater:*

Dear Mother of the Savior, yet remaining  
 Star of the Sea and heaven's open door,  
 Come when we stumble, lifting and sustaining,  
 For in our hearts we long to rise once more,  
 You who, defying nature, still continue  
 Virgin before and after Gabriel's call,  
 You who, defying nature, wrought the sinew  
 Of Him who made you, pity us who fall.<sup>30</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*, Final Statement and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C., 22-27 April 1974, Office of the Secretary General, FABC, Hong Kong-Manila, 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Collectanea Theologica Universitatis Fu Jen*, articles by Mark Fang, A. B. Chang, et al. Very recently I have read A. B. Chang Chung Shen's "The Category of Unity (of God) in a Chinese Theology," in *East Asian Pastoral Review*, XVII/3, 1980, pp. 262-275. I regret that I have not been able to read the writings, in Chinese, of the Rector Magnificus of Fu Jen, His Excellency, Archbishop Lokuang.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. footnote 1, above, pp. 21-22. This passage has been cited by some commentators as perhaps the most original and "most Asian" in the text.

<sup>4</sup> A. M. Henry, OP, ed., *Les Relations de l'Eglise avec les Religions non-Chretiennes*, Declaration "Nostra aetate" Cerf, *Unam Sanctam*, No. 61, Paris, 1966. Cf. the valuable essay, "Lecture de la Declaration par un missionnaire d'Asie," by J. Dournes, pp. 81-117, and the articles by J. Masson on Hinduism and Buddhism, and B. Caspar on Islam.

<sup>5</sup> *Vid. His Gospel to Our Peoples*, three volumes published by the FABC containing the preparatory documents (Before Taipei), the proceedings of the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC (Taipei), and the Asian Bishops' participation in the Roman Synod of 1974. Published by the Office intervention by Archbishop Joseph Kuo, "Adaption to Local Culture," and "Evangelizing China," pp. 30-31, 168-183 of Volume II: Taipei, ed. Elizabeth Farley, Manila, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> *Toward a New Age in Mission (TANAM)* the multi-volume *acta* of the International Congress on Mission, 2-7 December 1979, Manila, Secretariat of the IMC, 1980. Book One, containing the Message of the Delegates and the Workshop Consensus Papers, *pro manuscripto* edition, Quezon City, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the booklet referred to in the preceding footnote, above, TANAM, Book One, "Message of the Delegates", no. 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Prudent de Letter, "Renewal and crisis in the Mission," in *After Vatican II: Renewal and Crisis*, Ranchi (India) 1972, pp. 56-68; G. Gispert-Sauch, "Crisis in the Missions," *Clergy Monthly* (Ranchi) 1968, pp. 533-543 and 1969, pp. 10-17; Walbert Buhlmann, *all have the same God*, Middlegreen Slough, Daughters of St. Paul, 1979, e.g. in pp. 190-211, "Balance and prospects for the future." The well-known Indian theologian, D.S. Amalorpavadass, has addressed himself to this theme in several of his writings on evangelization.

<sup>10</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesian suam*, Encyclical Letter on the Paths of the Church, Paulist Press edition (with commentary by Gregory Baum), Glen Rock, New Jersey, 1964, — This remains, on all counts, a remarkable text, which merits our study and reflection.

<sup>11</sup> *Ecclesian suam*, par. 90 (Paulist edition, pp. 55-56).

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Neil, *Salvation Tomorrow.*, Nashville, Abingdon, 1976 (henceforth referred to as Neil, *ST*), p. 136.

<sup>13</sup> Neil, *ST*, p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, the Holy Spirit and Christian Mission, London, SCM, 1976 (henceforth referred to as Taylor, *GBG*), p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *GBG*, citing Piet Fransen, who thus describes the working of the Holy Spirit:

The intimate, divine attraction towards the truth, which is at the same time a spiritual and inward light... gives a sense and a taste for truth... This deep and existential religious experience of being attracted by the Spirit towards the living truth leads to a personal creed... This reflect upon one's experience remains, of course, under the influence of the Spirit, but... in its final formulation may contain false opinions and errors induced by the social and psychological influences of heredity, education and culture, religious environment and national or social traditions and ways of thought.

Cited from *Christian Revelation and World Religions*, edited by Joseph Neuner SJ, London, Burns and Oates, 1967 pp. 92-93.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, *CBG*, p. 189.

<sup>17</sup> Thus John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faith*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1973, p. 131.

<sup>18</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*, no. 91, Paulist editions, p. 56.

<sup>19</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, Sketches for a Missionary Theology, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978 (henceforth referred to as Newbigin, *TOS*), p. 185.

<sup>20</sup> Newbigin, *TOS*, p. 190.

<sup>21</sup> Newbigin *TOS*, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup> Vid. Robert Butterworth. *The Theology of Creation*, Theology Today, No. 5, Cork/Dublin, Mercier, 1969, pp. 54-63, 86-90.

<sup>23</sup> Fulton J. Sheen, Introduction to H. van Straelen, *Through Eastern Eyes*, Loveland, Ohio, Grailville, 1951, pp. x-xi. See also the important article by Karl Rahner, "Towards a fundamental theological interpretation of Vatican II," in *Theological Studies* 4, December 1979, pp. 716-727. A challenging and valuable essay.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. recent introductions to the New Testament by contemporary exegetes, e.g., Rudolf Schnackenburg.

<sup>25</sup> Vid. *Prayer, The Life of the Church of Asia*, Statement and Recommendations of the Second Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Calcutta, India, 19-25 November 1978. Published by the FABC Secretary General's Office, Manila/Hong Kong, 1979.

<sup>26</sup> Paul K. T. Sih, ed., *Chinese Humanism and Christian Spirituality*, Essays of John C. H. Wu, Jamaica, N.Y., St. John's University Press, 1965, p. 170. We pay tribute to the wise and engaging writings of this noted Chinese savant and man of the Church.

<sup>27</sup> Neill, *ST*, p. 150.

<sup>28</sup> FABC Statement, cf. footnote 1, above, text of the statement, par. 49, p. 30. — I would like to make reference here also to the various statements which have come from the Bishops' Institutes for Inter-religious Affairs (BIRA, I-III), meetings held under the auspices of the FABC, under the leadership of Archbishop Stanislaus Lokuang. — Cf. also "The First Bishops Institute for Missionary Apostolate," FABC Papers, Nov. 19, 1979.

<sup>29</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam suam*. Cf. footnote 10, above. Lack of space has prevented us from citing several pertinent passages from Pope John Paul II's *Redemptor Hominis* — the program of his Pontificate, as *Ecclesiam suam* was the program of Pope Paul VI's. No one here needs to be told of the richness of the teaching in *RH*.

<sup>30</sup> This is the splendid translation by James J. Donohue, in *Exile in the Stars*, A Book of Hours for the First Sunday of Advent, New York, Macmillan, 1946, p. 55, "Last Antiphon: To Mary."



# HOMILETICS

## BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES JUNE - JULY 1981

BY

FR. HERMAN MUELLER, S.V.D.

### PENTECOST SUNDAY

(June 7, 1981)

Pentecost, the conclusion of the holy fifty days, marks the exaltation of Jesus and the giving of the spirit by this glorified Christ. They were all filled with the Spirit (first reading). We are baptized in the one Spirit into a single body (second reading). Christ sends the apostles and us: "Receive the Spirit" (gospel)! The three readings of Sunday A, B, and C are the same.

#### First Reading: Acts 2:1-11

As there was no unanimity concerning the tradition of the ascension and exaltation of Christ so there is no unanimity regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Jn 20:23 the Spirit is given on Easter Sunday evening; Acts 2 places this event on Pentecost, fifty days after Easter. As Luke was the only hagiographer who dramatizes the ascension of Christ so that it almost looks like an exact historical event with details so again he is the only New Testament writer who dramatizes the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. And as we realized that Luke stresses more the theology of the ascension of Christ than historical details, telling us that Christ's exaltation is an event, a fact, so we must be also satisfied knowing that the apostles and disciples received the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit without trying to untangle the exact historical

details of the different pericopes of the Acts and the gospel of John which rely on different traditions. Theologians try to stress the happening of our salvation (Christ's death, resurrection, ascension and outpouring of the Holy Spirit) as one complex event. As an example one may think of Jn 7:37-39 where Christ promises that the Spirit will be given through the piercing of his side. The fulfillment is reported in Jn. 19:31-37: Blood and water come out of Christ's pierced side, traditionally referred to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Since Luke opted for forty days of apparition of Christ, he associated the coming of the Holy Spirit with the fiftieth day after Easter, Pentecost, although even he himself has different comings of the Spirit (and as we saw on the sixth Sunday of Easter he distinguishes a Christian Pentecost for the Jews in Acts 2:1-4, a Samaritan Pentecost in Acts 8:17 and a Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10:44). Thus the grain harvest, originally celebrated on this day, and the giving of the Law at Sinai, later celebrated on that same day, are replaced by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

On Pentecost, one of the three great feasts (the others: Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles) on which a Jew went to the Temple (Deut 16:16) the brethren (probably the hundred and twenty of Acts 1:15) gather in one place (probably the upper room of the last supper). The Holy Spirit comes with noticeable signs: wind (*pneuma* = Spirit means literally breath, wind), symbolizing him as breath of life, and fire, parted in tongues, hinting at the speaking in new tongues, effected by the Spirit.

The result is: the disciples speak "in foreign tongues" (NAB), "foreign languages" (JB), "in other tongues" (RSV; NEB) (Acts 2:4). The exact meaning is discussed. Some think, the disciples spoke actually different foreign languages. This could be suggested by the remark "each one heard these men speaking his own language" (NAB, NEB, JB, RSV) in Acts 2:6 and the observation of the twelve different nationality groups: "each of us hears them speaking in his own tongue" (NAB, RSV, NEB), "in our own language" (JB) in Acts 2:11. But it is more likely that the disciples (apostles) did not speak actual foreign languages (how could they have been understood if they spoke different foreign languages at the same time), but their native Aramaic in an ecstatic way (*heteros* in Acts 2:4 means not "foreign" language, but "different" language, different from the ordinary, usual speaking, i.e., ecstatic speaking) which made on those who were not open to God's prompt-

ing the impression of being drunk (Acts 2:12-13). If these groups of proselytes who had come from different parts of the world and lived now in Jerusalem as the culmination of their wishes in life actually spoke different foreign languages of the country of origin, the Holy Spirit effected a miracle of hearing, not of speaking: The disciples spoke in Aramaic, the hearers understood it each in his native language. This may be more the application and the theology of Luke than the historical reality: Pentecost undoes the confusion of languages at Babel. The historical reality suggests that all knew Aramaic and Greek, the two main languages at that time and thus there was no need for speaking in a foreign language. The gift of tongues is outstanding in this report. It is one clear sign of the presence of the Spirit. And all understand the speaking in tongues, the ecstatic speaking.

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7.12-13**

The Corinthian community was charismatic in some ways. As a matter of fact, Christians were craving for charisms. Thus Paul had to give some guidelines in 1 Cor 12-14. He did not share all the enthusiasm of the Corinthians, but was rather reserved. After all, the effect of speaking in tongues (the charism people were looking for most, rather than prophecy which Paul would recommend) was questionable: It could lead to divisiveness in cases where people speaking in tongues considered those not speaking in tongues as second class Christians and where nobody could interpret the speaking in tongues for those who could not understand the speaking in tongues.

Today's second reading has the following recommendations:

- (1) To have the Spirit means to confess that Jesus is the Lord, i.e. the earthly, crucified Jesus, not just a purely spiritual, ethereal Christ. Christianity is a religion of Christ crucified (and of course risen).
- (2) The gifts of the Spirit take different forms. There is not just the one speaking in tongues. But each gift has to be used for the common good, not for private satisfaction.
- (3) The gifts of the Spirit must not lead to individualism, but to the building up of the corporate body of the community of the Church. We have become one body through one baptism and a common "drinking of the one Spirit".

**Reading of the Good News: John 20:19-23**

This gospel (plus some eight more verses) we saw on the second Sunday of Easter. John places the giving of the Holy Spirit on Easter evening. The Council of Trent saw in Jn 20:22f the classical text of the institution of the sacrament of penance: "The Lord then especially instituted the sacrament of penance when, after being risen from the dead, he breathed upon his disciples and said: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John 20:22f)" (Denzinger 1670; Josef Neuner — Heinrich Roos — Karl Rahner. *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* 1670). But since the appearance stories usually have the risen Lord command to baptize and thus sins are forgiven by baptism (cf. Lk 24:47; "In his name penance for the remission of sins is to be preached") the sacrament of penance would perhaps be referred to here insofar as the sacrament of absolution is a renewal of the baptism status.

**HOMILY****THE NEW COVENANT ESTABLISHED ON PENTECOST**

1. The New Testament is the full flowering of the Old Testament. This is true also with the Feast of Pentecost. Pass-over, the Feast of Tabernacles and Pentecost were the three feasts on which every Jewish male was bound to go to the Temple in Jerusalem (Deut 16:16).

2. In the beginning, Pentecost was a feast of Harvest, a day of thanksgiving and joy. "You shall keep the feast of the grain harvest with the first of the crop that you have sown in the field" (Ex. 23:16). "On the day after the seventh week, the fiftieth day, you shall present the new cereal offering to the Lord" (Lev 23:16). "On the day of the first fruits, on your feast of Weeks, when you present to the Lord the new cereal offering, you shall hold a sacred assembly" (Num 28:26). As one sees, the first fruits that the land had produced were to be offered on the fiftieth day after Easter, which thus was called the Feast of Weeks (i.e. seven times seven weeks is forty-nine or fifty days).

3. Later, the feast commemorated the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. The Old Covenant had been concluded fifty days after the exodus from Egypt: "In the third month after their

departure from the land of Egypt, on its first day, the Israelites came to the desert of Sinai. Moses went up the mountain to God. Then the Lord called to him and said, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob; tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you upon eagle wings and brought you here to myself. Therefore, 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 19:1-6). So Moses goes up, receives the commandments, presents them to the people who answer: "Everything the Lord has said, we will do" (Ex 19:8).

God then reveals himself in a great theophany. "On the morning of the third day there were peals of thunder and lightning, a heavy cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled... Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire" (Ex 19:16-18).

4. This covenant established on Mt. Sinai was broken again and again. Thus God promised a new covenant through his prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel. "The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant... But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the Lord" (Jer 31:31-34).

In other words, the old law, written on stone tablets, was given from without. It remained something foreign to the people, something which told them what to do and what not to do. The new law will be something from within, something written on the hearts of people and will thus become second nature with them. Ezekiel tells the same: "I will restore to you the land of Israel. They shall return to it... I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the stony heart from their bodies, and replace it with a natural heart, so that they will live according to my statutes, and observe and carry out my ordinances; thus they will be my people and I will be their God" (Ez 11:17-20). And again we hear it in Ez 36:25-28: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all



your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees . . . You shall be my people, and I will be your God."

5. Thus St. Paul can compare the old and the new covenant, the old and the new ministry, stating that the new ministry is far superior. Paul does not need a letter of recommendation; the Corinthians are his letter of recommendation because they are written not with ink or on stone tablets (as the old law was), but by the Spirit of the living God and on tablets of flesh in the heart (2 Cor 3:1-3). And although the old covenant was already so shining that the Jews could not look into Moses' face when he came down from the mountain, he had to veile his face that people should not see that this glory slowly would fade away. The glory of the new covenant never fades away (2 Cor 3:7-11).

6. This new covenant was established on another mountain, Mount Zion in Jerusalem. It also happened on the fiftieth day. As Mt. Sinai was wrapped in smoke, thunder and lightning, Mt. Zion experienced a strong, driving wind, and tongues appeared as of fire (Acts 2:2-3).

The Holy Spirit is like a wind, mysterious and wonderful. Nobody knows how wind comes about, how it originates. But nobody can doubt its existence when it is there, and nobody can ignore its effects and force. It can break, uproot, it propels clouds, seeds and dust particles, it devastates or fertilizes the soil. The Holy Spirit is even more mysterious. Often enough we do not realize that he is there, but he is at work in our hearts and sooner or later we will notice his effects. He is the holy breather, the breath of life, without whom we cannot live. How important breathing is we realize when we for the first time have real breathing problems, like a heavy bronchitis. There will be no spiritual breathing without the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit came under the symbol of tongues of fire. He made people speak in new tongues, in an ecstatic way. And all understood the apostles, no matter how varied their national background and place of origin was. After all, where the Spirit is, there is unity, and varied as his gifts might be, they all help to build up the body of Christ and are not used for private satisfaction or glory.

Once people tried to build a monument of their pride, telling God that they could do it all alone without his help. But God could only step down at Babel and confuse the tongue of the people, i.e. their planning, so that they no longer understood one another, that they did not agree any more with one another. Here on Mt. Zion people understood one another because they were under the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 had promised that all nations should stream toward the mountain of the Lord. "Come let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths. For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Is 2:3). This was fulfilled on Pentecost. The new covenant and the new Israel was established, the Church of Christ, and the apostles started preaching and spreading the new covenant.

8. The Jews tried hard to observe the old covenant, but they could not. If one reads the ten commandments one is struck by the first word of each commandment *lo'* (not): "*Not* shall you have other gods besides me (Ex 20:2)! *Not* shall you carve idols (Ex 20:4)! *Not* shall you take the name of the Lord in vain (Ex 20:7)! *Not* shall you kill (Ex 20:13)! *Not* shall you commit adultery (Ex 20:14)! *Not* shall you steal (Ex 20:15)! *Not* shall you bear false witness against your neighbor (Ex 20:6)! *Not* shall you covet your neighbor's wife (Ex 20:17)! The only positive formulations are the commandments to obey father and mother and to keep the Sabbath holy (Ex 20:12,8). There is no doubt, the commandments are very precise and clear. But the power to observe the law was not given with the law.

St. Paul tells us: "The law does nothing but point out what is sinful" (Rom 3:20). "The law serves only to bring down wrath" (Rom 4:15). "The law came in order to increase offenses" (Rom 5:20). The law was not sin, yet "it was only through the law (the apostle goes on) that I came to know sin" (Rom 7:7). Thus the old covenant was a covenant of the letter that kills. The new covenant is a covenant of the Spirit who gives life. God "has made us qualified ministers of a new covenant, a covenant not of a written law but of spirit. The written law kills, the Spirit give life" (2 Cor 3:6).

Thus we are not children of the slave woman Hagar, which symbolizes Mt. Sinai, but we are children of the free woman Sarah which symbolizes Jerusalem (Gal 4:21-31). And we could add to this allegory of Paul: We are born on Mt. Zion.

God has taken from us the heart of stone and has given us a new heart, the Holy Spirit. He is the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul. He is the power to observe God's commandments, God's law. A law there is in the New Testament, after all, but it is the law of Christ (Gal 6:2), the law of the Spirit (Rom 8:2).

9. Only with fear and trembling did the Israelites watch the spectacle of Mt. Sinai. Moses, as a matter of fact, had to go to the mountain to meet the Lord, lest they would die. That fear is gone in the new covenant. The Holy Spirit is the well known host of the heart. Thus we can go to the mountain of the Lord with confidence.

### **Solemnity of the Most Blessed Trinity (June 14, 1981)**

This is a feast in honor of a doctrine rather than of an event of salvation, and thus medieval. We find it celebrated in 1030 on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Pope John XXII approved it in 1334 as feast of the universal Church.

The doctrine of the Trinity is implicit rather than explicit in Scripture, it is economic rather than metaphysical. We have the triadic structure of basic Christian experience: the Spirit brings the believers in faith to Christ as the one who has been sent by the Father to save us. Such triadic formulas we have in 2 Cor 13:13 (for blessing) and Mt 28:19 (for baptism). Slowly the Church defined the dogma of the Blessed Trinity in terms of Greek philosophy: three persons and one nature, rather than the vocabulary of the Bible. But if we put life into these philosophical terms we better go back to the historical experience of the Bible. And then we discover what God is in himself by discovering what he is for us in the Old and New Testaments. It is true, the Jews stressed monotheism. But Yahweh is not just what we today call the "first person", but already Father, Son and Spirit in the sense that Yahweh is the God who exists in himself, goes but of himself by communicating himself and creates in man the response.

God is merciful and gracious (first reading). He is and effects togetherness (second reading). He has shown his love and effects grace (salvation) by sending his Son (gospel).

**First Reading: Exodus 34:4-6.8-9**

God had made a covenant with the Israelites on Mt. Sinai. But when Moses stayed away for forty days the Jews asked Aaron to make them a Golden Calf (Ex 32:1-6). Dancing around the Calf the Israelites broke the covenant with Yahweh. God "got angry". Moses destroyed the tablets with the ten commandments and the Golden Calf (Ex 32:7-24). After people had done penance the covenant was renewed (Ex 34:1-35). Our first reading reports the beginning of this renewal of the covenant.

Early in the morning Moses goes up Mt. Sinai as the Lord told him to do. The first stone tablets Yahweh had (made) and given to Moses. The substitute tablets Moses has to bring along, since he destroyed the original. The Lord comes down in a cloud. He is transcendent, yet he always goes out to men. And although the Jews have highly offended him (he is a jealous God who cannot tolerate any god besides him: Ex 20:5; 34:14 Yahweh is "a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity" (Ex 34:6). That same statement occurs again in Num 14:18 and in slightly varied form already in Ex 20:5f; 33:19 and in the prophets and psalms (Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Ps 86(85):15; 103(102):8). People will often be unfaithful; God however will always be faithful.

Moses applies this statement to the concrete situation and asks the Lord to come along with the Israelites for the rest of their trip from Mt. Sinai to the promised land. This was the great experience of the covenant; to be aware that Israel is his people and Yahweh their god (Ex 19:6). Thus they did not want to be alone any more. (This petition finally resulted in God's presence in the tent, the ark and in the cloud.)

The Jews are stiff necked. That Moses has experienced against himself. But more than once he placed himself on their side to ask the Lord for forgiveness (Ex 32:32). Thus he pleads once more: "Pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own" (Ex 34:9)!

The main feature of God presented here is his mercy.

**Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

The second letter of Paul to the Corinthians is in many ways the most personal letter of the apostle. He was accused of being unreliable since he postponed his trip to Corinth. They even

tried to say he was not a real apostle or at least not as good as others. Thus Paul had to write a letter of defense, talking about the greatness of the apostolic office and the hardships and sufferings he endured for Christ (2 Cor 1:12-7:1). After motivating the Corinthians for the collection to be taken up for the Christians in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9) he then went on to attack his opponents (2 Cor 10-13). This last part is in some ways the harshest part of any Pauline Letter, not done as retaliation but in order to put people in the right place.

Usually, the apostle brings a long list of greetings. In the letter to the Romans it is a whole chapter. But here in the second letter to the Corinthians the ending is rather short. There are no greetings either. It is as if he wants to let them feel that he is not quite pleased with their dissensions.

However, he ends on a positive note, which is the Trinitarian blessing, now used at the beginning of the Mass (13:13). Paul starts the end of the letter with *chairete* = be glad, rejoice, which in the context of the letter (at the end) one also could translate, as the NAB does, with "I have to say good-bye". It's a note of reconciliation. "Encourage one another. Live in harmony and peace, and the God of love and peace be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss". What the apostle told the Corinthians was not meant to discourage or to offend them but rather to ask them to live in peace and harmony and to overcome all factions.

Such togetherness, however, can come only from the Triune God himself, the model and source of all togetherness: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (13:13). Each attribute (grace, love, fellowship) is attributed to one person in the sense that it is most typical of this divine person and/or in the sense that this person is the giver of this particular good. Of course, Paul is flexible. Thus he attributes grace here to Christ, in 6:1 to the Father; love here to the Father, in 5:13 to Christ. The Father shows his love by sending the Son. We experience this love as grace (salvation). The Holy Spirit will bring us together in peace and harmony since he is love in person in God. This blessing may have been the kiss of peace, in the beginning as introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer, not where it is now in the Mass.



**Reading of the Good News: John 3:16-18**

In the discourse with Nicodemus at night (Jn 3:1-21) Jesus speaks about the replacement of the natural birth into the chosen people by a regeneration, i.e., a birth from above, a new birth in baptism. Today's gospel brings just three verses of this conversation: Love of God is the ultimate cause of our salvation. God loved the world (usually John speaks of God's love for the disciples and in 1 John of God's love for the Christians) so much that he gave his only son. This refers to the Incarnation of Christ and to the crucifixion. "To give up to death" is the technical term for crucifixion, also used in Rom 8:32; Gal 1:4; 2:20). The background is probably that of the Suffering Servant in Is 53:12: "He was given up for their sins".

Thus everybody may have eternal life, which we can equate with "grace" in 2 Corinthians. Fact is that Christ (like the Father) does not condemn anybody. Rather, he was sent (another expression similar to "given up") that the world might be saved, that it might gain eternal life.

The only condition is: we must believe in Christ, now when we hear his voice. Whoever accepts Christ in faith has already eternal life now; whoever rejects him has already condemned himself now. The last judgment at the end of times will only reveal what decision each man has made in his life.

The Holy Spirit is not explicitly mentioned. But it is clear, the Holy Spirit gives this openness to the word of the Son.

The following homily is an attempt to unfold the economic way of the Scripture texts, and although whatever God does (outside of the Blessed Trinity) is common to all three persons, we usually attribute certain predicates — with a certain flexibility — to one of the three persons, having a relation to their divine origin.

**HOMILY**

**THE MERCY (LOVE) OF GOD THE FATHER, THE GRACE OF  
GOD THE SON AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
BE WITH YOU ALWAYS!**

1. Today's Feast of the Blessed Trinity is one of the few feasts dedicated to a doctrine rather than to an event of salvation, originating in the Middle Ages. Usually, however, it is

easier to meditate on an historical event than on a doctrine, especially such a metaphysical one: There is only one God, since he has only one divine nature; but there are three persons in this Triune God.

2. The Jews had as fundamental creed the "*Shema*": "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut 6:5). The Israelites were supposed to write these words on the doorposts of the house and gates and to bind them as a sign at their wrist and wear them as a pendant on their forehead (Deut 6:8). It was one of the greatest tasks of the prophets to fight for monotheism and the pure worship, lest the Jews would worship many gods as their neighbors did. Obviously then, the Old Testament will not speak explicitly about the Son or the Holy Spirit. But implicitly the Divine Word is hinted at, especially in the teaching of the Wisdom Books about God's wisdom which was at God's side when he created heaven and earth, which came down to earth and looked for a dwelling place among his people, invited them to a banquet and to listen to his word. And the Holy Spirit is insinuated by the description of God's powerful breath of life by which he creates, gives man the breath of life (Gen 2:7) and inspires the prophets so that they are full of his Spirit.

But even more, Yahweh of the Old Testament is not what we now call "the first person" of the Blessed Trinity, but the God who exists in himself, goes out of himself in self-communication and elects in men the response to this self-revelation.

3. The early Christian community experienced the Father seeing Christ. And the Holy Spirit they experienced as the one who continued the revelation and salvation work of the Son. Father, Son and Holy Spirit made themselves felt in the Christian heart (Jn 14:23), dwelling in them. Thus the belief in the Blessed Trinity was more economic than metaphysical, was more the belief of what the Trinity was for them than what the three divine persons are in themselves. And the early trinitarian formulas of benediction or confessions of faith were only later unfolded in a systematic theological way with the help of Greek philosophy.

4. If we follow the blessing at the end of the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians we find that love is attributed especially to the Father, grace to the Son and fellowship to the Holy Spirit. This love or mercy of the Father we find described es-

pecially in the first reading, the Son's grace especially in the gospel and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in the second reading.

5. a. God, especially God the Father, is merciful. As the Father knows himself perfectly and this self-knowledge is so complete that it is a divine person, the Word, so the Father essentially always goes out of himself in self-communication, he is dynamic, not static. Not that he lacks anything. As God he is infinitely perfect. But he elected the Jews as his people, and he wanted to be their God. But the Israelites broke the covenant of Sinai, although they knew that God is a jealous God and cannot tolerate any god besides him (Ex 20:5f). And yet, Moses knew: "Yahweh is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity (Ex 34:6). God is not as we are, angry, rancorous and resentful, even revengeful. His fidelity lasts forever, even if we are unfaithful.

b. That same picture of the *merciful* Father we also find in the gospel of John: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17).

c. God the Father recognizes us for what we are. He always sees the good in us and does not despair, even if we should despair. He still respects us to have his own divine life and recognizes this divine life in us, no matter how disfigured we may have rendered it. In the parable of the merciful Father (Lk 15:11-32) he does not even let the younger son say his apology: "I'm not worthy to be your son" (Lk 15:19). He is and remains his son, no matter what he does or will do.

d. The Father is a communicating God, who looks for contact. As long as we are still communicating with God, things will be basically alright.

e. This mercy of the Father Paul would call *love* in 2 Cor 13:1 which the apostle wishes all his hearers and thus also he tries to show in spite of all the offenses and dissensions and factions of the Corinthians.

6. a. The Son is the *re-sponse* to the Father in the eternal dialogue between Father and Son. And this re-sponse becomes for the Word Incarnate obedience to the Father, and to the Father's will. He is always listening to the Father to do his will. It is his food to do the will of him who sent him (Jn 4:34).

b. But it was the Father's will to give his only son that all should have *eternal life* (Jn 3:16). St. Paul would call this divine life *grace* (2 Cor 13:13) or redemption.

c. As he listens to the Father, is tuned in any time, does his will, so the Son speaks to us the Father's message. It is up to us if we accept the message and thus have eternal life now already or if we harden our hearts, reject God's message and thus condemn ourselves. The Son condemns nobody. He only wants us to have grace, eternal life, which he merited for us by his complete obedience.

7. a. The dialogue between Father and Son goes back to the Father in the Holy Spirit. There is perfect love in God, or perfect togetherness, complete *koinonia*, perfect fellowship.

b. All human togetherness can be modelled only after the *koinonia* of the Blessed Trinity and of the Holy Spirit in particular, who effects all togetherness. St. Paul after a long and often sharp letter, where He called a spade could only conclude with a blessing: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13). As long as the Corinthians would be open to the prompting of the Spirit, there would be hope for peace and harmony which they externally could express with a kiss of peace (2 Cor 13:11).

c. The collection which the apostles wanted to take up in Corinth for the Christians in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9) would be one means and external sign of this fellowship. And thus the apostle uses the term *koinonia* also and especially in connection with this collection which is more than something material. Communion, community, fellowship, togetherness thrives on sacrifices, and grows by generosity.

### Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (June 21, 1981)

The twelfth century saw the rise of a desire for a more intense devotion to the Eucharist, mainly the adoration, although the aspect of sacrifice and meal was not forgotten. Juliana of Retiennes (1192-1258), a nun of the Augustinian Convent of Mount Cornillon near Liege (Belgium) and later prioress, revealed a series of visions granted to her, the first during 1208, in which the Lord expressed the desire for a solemn feast in

honor of the Blessed Sacrament. This feast was introduced in Liege in 1246 and celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. James Pantaleon, archdeacon of Liege, a confidant of Juliana, who later became Pope Urban IV (1261-64), extended the feast to the universal Church. While living as Pope at Orvieto he was impressed by the news of a Eucharistic miracle: In nearby Bolsena a priest, tormented by doubts in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist saw blood dropping from a consecrated host onto the corporal. — In the Philippines the feast is celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday instead of on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

"Many though we are, we are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (second reading). The Lord fed the Jews with manna in the desert as food on the way (first reading). Christ's flesh is real food and his blood real drink, given for the life of the world (gospel).

#### **First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:2-3,14-16**

The Book of Deuteronomy (=the second law) does not contain a second law distinct from the Sinaitic legislation, but repeats and amplifies that legislation. According to structure, there are three discourses of Moses and some appendices. The first discourse (Deut 1:1-4:43) speaks about the history of the Exodus till the Jews reach Mt. Sinai. The second discourse (Deut 4:44-28:69) speaks in the first part (4:44-11:32) about God and his covenant of Mt. Sinai. Thus the ten commandments are reported a second time (Deut 5:1-22): the first time in Ex 20:1-21). And then Moses is reminding the Jews of the forty years' journey in the desert (8:1-20).

It was a time of test for the Israelites (Deut 8:1-6) characterized by fatherly guidance of God. The Lord worked out a wise divine discipline, training people sometimes through scarcity and sometimes through blessings. The most outstanding blessing was the manna, a food unknown to the fathers. It kept the Jews going on the way. It was not just the material food, but lastly the trust in God's word. "We live from every word that comes forth from the mouth of God" (Deut 8:3) is thrown by Jesus at the devil who tempts him to change stones into bread (Mt. 4:4).

Then the sermon of Moses looks to the future (Deut 8:7-20). When God has brought them out of Egypt and out of slavery into the promised land (which looks like a paradise in



Deut 8:7-10, omitted in today's reading, which can be understood only by the contrast with the real wilderness before the entry into the promised land), they shall never forget that God's strength brought them out. He guided them safely through the desert full of saraph (either flying or fiery with poison) serpents and scorpions and provided them with manna (mentioned a second time) and water from the rock (described in Ex 17: 5-6 and applied to Christ in 1 Cor 10:4).

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17**

After having taken a stand concerning the factions and abuses in the Corinthians community (1 Cor 1:10-6:20) St. Paul answers the questions brought to him concerning different problems (1 Cor 7:1-15:18); thus concerning marriage and virginity (7:1-40) and then concerning the eating of meat which had been offered to idols (8:1-11:1). Jews and Jewish Christians considered eating of meat which had been offered to idols and then sold at a retail price to customers as idolatry. Paul argued: Idols do not exist. Thus meat offered to idols does not change the meat and can be bought and eaten. This is a matter of economy rather than religion.

Yet the story is different when one participates in a sacrificial banquet. Demons stand behind such a sacrificial banquet; through it they seduce men from God.

Since we are one with Christ, since the one baptism, and since the eating of the one loaf effects the closest union we can think of between him and us and between one another, it would be a contradiction to eat at a pagan sacrificial banquet.

### **Reading of the Good News: John 6:51-58**

The discourse on the bread of Life (Jn 6:22-71) in its present form speaks about Jesus as bread of life in two ways: (1) in his word (6:35-51) and (2) in Holy Eucharist (6:51-59). And (3) he can be the bread of life in Holy Eucharist because he has been given (in his death) for the life of the world (Jn 6:51c). Or expressed differently, he is the bread of life (1) because of his revelation event, his incarnation and teaching that followed, (3) his salvation event by his dying for us on the cross and (2) by being the Eucharistic food, which is the representation and application of the salvation event.

Today's gospel speaks about Christ as bread of life in Holy Eucharist. He is this bread because he gave his flesh (on the cross) for the life of the world. Christ is the living bread, or bread of life (Jn 6 uses this alternation), causing, giving, sustaining the divine life in us and making it grow. He came down from heaven in his Incarnation. Anyone who eats this bread lives forever. He is this living bread because he gave his flesh (body) (on the cross) for the life of the world. There is no Eucharist without Christ's death.

If there would be still some doubt what this bread of life means (Christ in his word or Christ at the Eucharistic table), the following verses make clear that Jesus speaks about Holy Eucharist: flesh, blood, to eat, to drink, to feed on Christ's flesh, to feed on Christ are all strong expression for the reality of a meal. No wonder that the Jews are scandalized: "How can he give us his flesh to eat" (6:52)? They take him too literally and do not consider that Jesus is speaking about his transfigured body ("this Spirit gives life; the flesh is useless" 6:63).

First Jesus expresses the fact negatively: Somebody who does not eat his flesh and drink his blood has no life. Then he states it positively: "He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (6:54). Who receives the Lord in Holy Eucharist *has* eternal life, already now. Such a person remains in Christ and Christ in him. (6:56). Such a man will live forever (6:58); in other words he will also rise from the dead, since we all die. This life, Jesus give us, is the life he received from the Father, God's own divine life.

As one can see, there are different possible topics for a homily: One can stress the *unity*, effected by Holy Eucharist. Or one can meditate on the Holy Eucharist as bread for the way (viaticum), or on Jesus as the bread that gives life now and is guarantee for resurrection and eternal life.

## HOMILY

### WE, MANY AS WE ARE, ARE ONE LOAF.

1. One of the greatest events in the life of a Christian is his baptism. We live a human life. But as soon as the water runs over our forehead and the priest says the words: "N, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Spirit," we live also a divine life, God's own life. This is, of course, an analogy, but a reality. As human life has to grow, this divine life also has to grow. As we eat in order to grow so we have to eat the food Christ gave us in order to become tall and strong Christians. It is not chance that Jesus used the symbols of food, of bread and wine, under which he comes to us. Rather he wanted to impress on us the reality of this divine life that has to grow by taking food.

2. To be more specific, Holy Eucharist is a sacrificial banquet by which Jesus effects our unity with him, the Father and the Spirit, and the unity with one another. It is a *sacrificial* banquet on the part of Christ.

a. There can be no banquet with delicious food (and by this we usually also understand meat, like steak, fried chicken or lechon) without a calf, a pig, or a chicken giving its life. The Eucharistic banquet became possible only by Christ's death. "I myself am the living bread, the bread of life, come down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever. The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51). Christ gives his flesh, his life for the life of the world on the cross. He had to die that we might live.

b. And yet, Christ introduced the Last Supper with the words: "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:15). John introduces the washing of the feet of the apostles by Jesus with: "He had loved his own in this world, and would show his love for them to the end" (Jn 13:1). This does not only mean till the end of his life but even more till the end of all possibilities, giving us his own flesh and blood.

c. But how hard this sacrifice was for the Lord we see in the garden of Gethsemani. Jesus had volunteered to be the scapegoat for all the sins of mankind and now he saw himself oppressed by them and the sufferings of the crucifixion so that he could only pray: "Father if it is your will, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:42). The anguish was so great that he was even sweating blood (Lk 22:44), something so human that some Codices cancelled the verse as too human. And on the cross once again the immensity of the sacrifice overcame Jesus that he prayed: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Mt 27:46).

d. Unity through sacrifice. This is what it cost the Lord. He gave his life for the life of the world. He died in order to be in our midst till the end of time as the bread of life, as sacrificial banquet.

3. a. Holy Eucharist must be a *sacrificial* banquet for us also. The symbols of bread and wine speak the language of sacrifice. One can hardly not hear them. It's for us a sacrifice too to make us one. "Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body" (1 Cor. 10:16) St. Paul tells his Corinthians. Years ago, there was just one loaf used for the Mass, which before distribution of Holy Communion was broken and given to the different participants, in contrast to today where we have small pieces of bread, small individual hosts before consecration so that a breaking of bread is not necessary. It takes many kernels of wheat to make one loaf. The kernels have to undergo a two-fold process of transformation before they become bread: Humanly speaking that grinding hurts. And the kernels would prefer staying intact and remain kernels. But there will be no flour unless the kernels are ground. And still it is no bread yet. A second process of transformation has to take place: The flour has to be fermented and then baked in a hot oven.

If we want to become that one loaf of Christ all our selfishness has to go; we have to be ground and to be baked. St. Ignatius of Antioch could even write to the Romans on his way to be eaten up by the wild beasts in the Colosseum in Rome: "I am wheat of God, and I have to be ground by the teeth of the wild animals that I may become pure bread of Christ" (*Letter to the Romans* IV, 1).

b. It takes many grapes to get wine. They have to be pressed for juice to come out. If the grapes were persons it would hurt and they would want to remain intact. But there is no juice without pressed grapes. And still, it is no wine yet. The juice has to undergo the transformation process of fermentation till wine comes out.

If we want to become the wine of Christ we have to be changed too in a long process of self-denial and divinization.

c. The priest says a precious little prayer which we hardly ever hear during the Mass to illustrate this point. After he has offered the wine he bows down over the altar and says: "Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite heart". The adjective contrite comes from the Latin *conterere*, *contritum* and means literally "smashed, pressed". Our heart shall be smashed and pressed as the grapes are. This prayer was prayed the first time by the three young men, thrown into the fiery oven in Babylon. Far away from home, from Jerusalem and the Tem-

ple, they realized they had nothing anymore to offer God, no holocaust, no sacrifice. Thus they prayed: "O Lord, we have in our days no prince, prophet, or leader, no holocaust, sacrifice, oblation, or incense, no place to offer first fruits, to find favor with you. But with contrite heart and humble spirit let us be received; as though it were holocausts of rams and bullocks, or thousands of fat lambs, so let our sacrifice be in your presence today" (Daniel 3:38-39).

d. And there is another symbolic action of unity at the Offertory: The priest pours a drop of water into the wine and prays: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." As the drop of water is taken up into the wine and is wine, so we ask to be changed into Christ's divinity. Years ago this mixing of the wine with water was a mere practical act. People would never drink pure wine, otherwise it would be too strong. Wine mixed with water would not be so strong and one could drink bigger quantities. Now the symbolic meaning is more important than anything else.

4. We become one with Christ in and through the Holy Eucharist. But we also become one with one another. To eat at one table is always the greatest sign of union. What we express in a sacred drama we have to practice in our daily life afterwards. It would be a lie to go to Mass and Holy Communion with people of different social classes and after Mass act as if we would not know them.

### **Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (June 28, 1981)**

The most outstanding theme of today's liturgy is: Receive the Lord in his ministers! "He who receives you receives me" the Lord tells his apostles (gospel). A woman of Shunem received Elisha as man of God (first reading). The second reading has a theme of its own: In baptism we have died with Christ and have risen with him. And thus we must live this new life.

### **First Reading: 2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16**

The Second Book of Kings describes in 4:1-6:7 several miracles of the prophet Elisha. When his master Elijah went to heaven, Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit



(2 Kgs 2:9) as the first-born son inherited a double portion of his father's property (Deut 21:17). Thus Elisha asked to inherit from Elijah his spirit of prophecy in the degree befitting his principle. Elijah assented to the request. Is it chance then that even more miracles are reported of Elisha than of Elijah, although of course miracles are not essential part of prophecy. One such miracle is reported today as reward for the hospitality of the Shunammite.

The home of Elisha was Abel-meholah (some twenty-three miles south of Nazareth). Whenever the prophet was preaching in the region of Mt. Carmel and went home, he came through Shunem, some eight miles southeast of Nazareth. Thus he was very thankful that the woman with the consent of her husband arranged a little room for the prophet on the roof and furnished it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp so that he could stay there any time he came to Shunem. More thoughtful nobody could have been.

The woman was hospitable because she considered Elisha a holy man, a man with a call from God, a prophet. And thus (as we hear it in the gospel) she receives the reward a holy man, a prophet, would receive.

Elisha in turn went out of his way to find out what he could give the woman in return. A good word for her with the commander of the army she did not find necessary (2 Kgs 4:13, not mentioned in today's reading). She could rely for help on her relatives. Thus Elisha thought of her desire (as all Jewish couples would have it) to finally have a son. The prophet promises here in God's name that she will have a son within a year. Generosity is never outdone.

### **Second Reading: Romans 6:3-4.8-11**

The main intention of the Letter to the Romans is: We are justified by faith in Christ (Rom 1:17-4:25). This justification we experience as threefold freedom (1) from sin (5:12-21), (2) from self-love in baptism (6:1-23) and (3) from the law (7:1-25).

Today's second reading speaks about this freedom from self-love through baptism. In early years baptism was administered by immersion. The going down of the candidate into the baptismal font signified his death to sin with Christ on the

cross and his coming up from the font his rising with Christ in his resurrection. The candidate had died to sin, once and for all, and he had risen to the new life of Christ.

Christ has risen and will never die again. Died to sin in baptism and risen to the new, the divine life, we should never die (spiritually) either. This is a life-long task and struggle.

### **Reading of the Good News: Matthew 10:37-42**

With the missionary discourse in chapter 10, Matthew comes to the climax of the first half of his gospel. In Mt 1-9 he has established the authority of Jesus. In Mt 10 he shows Jesus providing for the continuation of that authority in the true Israel by commissioning his apostles to preach and work with his authority. Here are the details of the chapter: (1) Election of the apostles (10:1-5a), (2) The mission of the apostles (10:5b-15), (3) The hardships of apostleship (10:16-25), (4) Encouragement: "Do not be afraid!" (10:26-33), (5) Discipleship and the cross (10:34-39), (6) God's presence in the disciples (10:40-42).

Today's gospel, as one can see, contains two parts: (1) The cross as the cost of discipleship (10:37-39): (a) Discipleship may involve breaking of family ties, (b) Whoever wants to follow Christ must take up his cross. These two verses are also found in Lk 14:26-27 in a different context and we saw in the gospel of the twenty-third Sunday of cycle C. (2) God is present in his messengers. Whoever receives them, receives the Lord (10:40-42): (a) "He who welcomes you welcomes me, and he who welcomes me welcomes him who sent me" (10:40). This word is also found in Lk 10:16, thus again in a different context. (b) "He who welcomes a prophet because he bears the name of a prophet receives a prophet's reward; he who receives a holy man because he is known as holy receives a holy man's reward" (10:41) is proper to Matthew. This verse obviously caused the selection of the first reading. "Holy Man" does not mean personal holiness. But the man is holy because he is called by God as a prophet is. The Shunammite saw in Elisha such a holy man and got the reward of a holy man. (c) "Whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of these lowly (little) ones because he is a disciple will not want for his reward" (10:42).

Since we meditated already on the cost of discipleship on the twenty-third Sunday of cycle C the obvious topic (as one

can see from the choice of the first reading) is the presence of Christ in his messengers. Or one may preach on the importance of baptism.

## HOMILY

### "WHOEVER RECEIVES YOU RECEIVES ME."

1. The immense popularity of Pope John Paul II, the way he reaches people, speaks their language, expresses their intentions and problems in catchy formulations that one will remember for a long time and in a way few are able to do brings up the question: "Who is a good messenger of God and what shall he do?" "How shall the relation be between preacher and his hearers?" The complaint about poor or even lousy preachers is old and the joy over good ones is the greater. Does anybody ever tell a pastor if he likes his sermons or not, and why he does or does not like them? These are questions we occasionally ask ourselves and then push aside as impractical. The following homily wants to propose some theological reflections.

2. A preacher is a messenger, a herald, who comes with the message of him who sent him. His greatness consists in this that he takes the place of his master who sends him. Accepting the messenger as one accepts his master.

a. Thus the Lord cannot insist enough in saying: "He who accepts you accepts me (Mt 10:40)". And this means in terms of reward: The hearer will receive the reward the person he welcomes would receive. If the hearer welcomes the messenger as prophet, he will get the reward of a prophet. We do not have to examine the exact difference between prophet, holy man, disciple or little one. Basically they all take the place of Christ. And since one lastly accepts a prophet, an apostle, a disciple as sent by Christ, one receives Christ himself in his messengers, and consequently one will also receive Christ's reward.

b. A messenger is therefore as good as he is a messenger, taking the place of Christ, preaching his message. As much as a priest shall try to adapt himself to the time and the needs of his hearers, lastly, he must preach the gospel, not his own wisdom, not his own experience. His own experience can only illustrate the gospel message and must not take the center place. St. Paul writes the Thessalonians: "We thank God constantly that

in receiving his message from us you took it, not as the word of men, but as it truly is, the word of God at work within you who believe" (1 Thess 2:13). What Paul, what every priest, every preacher sent by Christ, preaches is lastly God's own word.

c. Every preacher should try to cloth the word of God in appealing language, in the language people understand best. After all, Christ became man, a concrete man, a Jew. And yet, just because Christ became a concrete man, born in a small place in Galilee he had his limitations which scandalized many. Only by his resurrection did he become the Son of God in power (Rom 1:4) so that all limitations of his humanity were taken away. Christ used one concrete way of speaking to his hearers, mostly the way of speaking in parables which for most people illustrate complicated things and explain the mystery better than a learned definition.

Every preacher has the desire to reach people, to make God's message understood. St. Paul prepared his speech in Athens well. He strolled through the city and studied the monuments, discovering even an altar dedicated "to the unknown god". He read their poets to quote them. And then he started out. First came a *captatio benevolentiae*, a small flattering, the kind most of us appreciate: "Men of Athens, I note that in every respect you are scrupulously religious. As I walked around looking at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed: 'To a God Unknown' (Acts 17:22-23)." And the apostle went on: "Now, what you are thus worshipping in ignorance I intend to make known to you." By now people were all ears. Paul continued: "For the God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries, made by human hands; nor does he receive man's service as if he were in need of it... 'In him we live and move and have our being,' as some of your own poets have put it, 'for we too are his offspring' (Acts 17:24-28). The first quotation is perhaps from Epimenides of Crete of Knossos (500-449 B.C.), but we are not sure. The second quotation stems from Aratus (310-240 B.C.) or Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus". Everything looked good for Paul. Here was somebody speaking their language and poets, somebody who knew their needs. But as soon as the apostle brought the typical Christian message of Christ's death and resurrection, the hearers refused to follow. That was scandal for Greek ears. After all, according to Plato our human body is only the prison of a soul. The ideal man is

a pure idea without the body. The Athenians ironically said: "We must hear you on this topic some other time" (Acts 17:32), wanting to say: never.

d. It will be discussed among scholars how polished the Greek style of Paul was. When he writes to the Corinthians: "When I came to you I did not come proclaiming God's testimony with any particular eloquence or 'wisdom'. No, I determined that while I was with you I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. When I came among you it was in weakness and fear, and with much trepidation. My message and my preaching had none of the persuasive force of 'wise' argumentation, but the convincing power of the Spirit. As a consequence, your faith rests not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God" (1 Cor 2:1-5) then this certainly means that the apostle, after his failure at Athens, where he attempted to speak as a philosopher before philosophers (Acts 17) preached the gospel at Corinth in all its shocking realism without any attempt to play the orator. But it probably would go too far to conclude that he lacked any beauty of style and education and that he did not try to present the word of God in an attractive form as far as he was concerned. Rather, he knew that lastly God's power and wisdom would attract a person to accept the message of the cross, which Christianity and the gospel basically is, not human eloquence.

e. Consequently every preacher must try to make Christ grow in the hearts of his hearers, whereas the preacher himself must decrease. It was one of the finest words of the Baptist to his disciples, when they complained that Christ would win more and more hearers, although the Baptist had prepared the way to Christ: "He (Christ) must increase while I must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

3. a. A hearer therefore has to try to see in a priest mainly Christ. That will be easy if he comes up to his expectation and ideas. It will be harder, if he does not. That people have their favorite preachers we see already in the Corinthian community. Some sided with Apollos, who was apparently a brilliant orator and also had depth. Others preferred Cephas, others Paul, again others claimed to have a special relation and hotline to Christ himself (1 Cor 1:10-17). Paul did not want to have anything to do with such rivalry. Christ is not divided. And there is no other foundation to be led but on Christ (1 Cor 3:11). Preachers and hearers must keep in mind that often enough the one will reap what somebody else sowed. For Paul this did



not make any difference. "I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. This means that neither he who plants nor he who waters is of any special account, only God, who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters work to the same end. Each will receive his wages in proportion to his toil. We are God's co-workers, while you are his cultivation, his building" Paul writes to his Corinthians (1 Cor 3:6-9).

b. Hearers shall also be *hospitable* to the apostles, to the men of God's word. Today's first reading is an example in point. Hardly anybody will appreciate hospitality more than a wandering missionary. So did Elisha, when the Shunnamite prepared even a special small room for him, where he could stay each time he passed through Shunem (1 Kgs 4:8-11).

c. Hearers shall also *support* their messenger. Paul tried hard not to be a burden on his communities. He would make a living by being a tentmaker. This way he would be independent and not easily forced to preach according to the whims of his hearers. But even more, he felt that he was not worthy to be an apostle, since he had persecuted Christ in his Christians before and therefore wanted to do something more than the other apostles did (1 Cor 15:9; 9:15-16). But he knew full well that he did something superabundant. He would have the right to be supported by his community as any apostle, as Peter or Barnabas (1 Cor 9:5-6). After all, a farmer feeds his ox, horse or carabao well if it shall work for the farmer. "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain" (Deut 25:4) the apostle reminds his readers (1 Cor 9:8). God is certainly more concerned for an apostle, for a priest than for a carabao. And so should the community be to whom a priest preaches the gospel. Only if a community becomes self-supporting also in this regard is it really mature.

#### **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 5, 1981)**

The liturgy of today tells us: "The Lord is humble." Zechariah foretold Christ as a meek king, riding on an ass (first reading). In the gospel Jesus invites all to come to him who are weary, for "I am gentle and humble of heart." — As usual, the second reading has a theme of its own: A Christian must not rely on his mere humanness, "live according to the flesh", but on his being divine since baptism, and thus live in the Spirit.

**First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10**

Because of difference in style, content and audience most scholars assign Zech 1-8 to Zechariah and Zech 9-14 to an unknown author, called Second Zechariah, who probably wrote ca. 332 B.C. The general theme is that God will bring happiness and prosperity to Judah, especially with the arrival of the Messianic King, but discomfit or absorption to her enemies (9-10). Yet Judah will reject her shepherd and have a bad ruler (11). But finally, though Jerusalem will be destroyed, she will yet be cleansed and restored, and the remnant of the nations will join her in adoring Yahweh (12-14).

In Zech 9:9-10:1 Second Zechariah describes the Messianic King and his kingdom. Today's first reading, used also on Palm Sunday, starts out with fanfare: "Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass" (Zech 9:9). The Messiah is a man of peace, not of war. In opposition to the custom of kings and warriors of that time he does not use chariots and war horses (9:10), but he rides on an ass, to be more specific on a colt. This is the external sign of his meekness. (The Septuagint uses *praüs*, the same adjective used in Mt. 11:29: "I am *meek* (*praüs*) and humble".)

The Messiah will banish the war instruments (bow) and he will proclaim peace. His kingdom will reach the limits of the earth. The Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea were practically the limits of the known territories at that time.

**Second Reading: Romans 8:9.11-13**

The main theme of the Letter to the Romans, as we saw, is: We are justified by faith in Christ (1:17-4:25). We experience this justification in a threefold freedom: from sin (5:12-21), self-love (in baptism) (6:1-23), and law (7:1-25). This life of a Christian is a life in the Holy Spirit (8:1-39).

"You are not in the flesh; you are in the spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you" St. Paul tells us (8:9). We must not take the concept "flesh" in our non-Jewish or Greek understanding, where we readily identify "sins of the flesh" with sins against chastity. "Sins of the flesh in Gal 5:19-21 include idolatry, outburst of rage, selfish rivalries, factions, envy, drunkenness" not just "lewd conduct, impurity". There is no dichotomy in man for the apostle. Man is a whole. "Flesh"

(in Greek: *sarx*) stands for the whole man and is as such something good. So for instance if the mother of the Maccabeans marvels at the miracle and mystery of conception and finally of birth of a small child: "I do not know how you came into existence in my womb; it was not I who gave you the breath of life, nor was it I who set in order the elements of which each of you is composed" (2 Macc 7:22). It is true, not the term "sarx" is used, but the equivalent ("elements"). The human body to be more exact, the human person, is something wonderful. Or when Adam in paradise shouts for joy when God leads Eve to him that he finally has "his better half": This one, at last, is bone of my bones, and flesh (*sarx*) of my flesh" (Gen 2:23), *sarx* flesh, cannot be something bad.

Flesh then is man considered from his limitations of being a creature. Thus he is weak, prone to sin, destined to die. In this direction Paul often uses the term. Sins of the flesh then means that we rely too much on our being a creature, flesh, and forget that at the same time we are more, that we are spirit, since the Holy Spirit lives in us since baptism. And since we live in the spirit, we should also walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25).

### Reading of the Good News: Matthew 11:25-30

These six verses, the first half of which we also find in Lk 10:21-22, also called the Johannine Logion, are some of the finest in the Synoptics. Mt 11:28-30 are proper to Matthew.

Matthew is the first evangelist (even more so is John) to identify Jesus clearly with wisdom, an identification understandable in view of Matthew's stress on the teachings of Jesus. We can distinguish the stanzas which have their parallel in Wisdom Books, especially in Sir 51:1-12. 13-22. 25-30. Here in Matthew the stanzas are Mt. 11:25-26. 27. 28-30.

1. *Thanksgiving* Mt 11:25-26; Sir 51:1-12 v. 25: On one occasion Jesus spoke thus: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, to you I offer praise; for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children. v. 26: Father it is true. You have graciously willed it so.

2. *Self-revelation* Mt 11:27; Sir 51:13-22; 24:3-17; Wisd 7:24-20; v. 25: Everything has been given over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son — and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

3. *Invitation* Mt 11:28-30; Sir 51:25-30; 24:18-21. v. 28: Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. v. 29: Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, v. 30: for my yoke is easy and my burden light."

As one can see, Jesus, the eternal wisdom thanks the Father for having revealed to the little ones, his disciples, the mystery of Father and Son. In the Wisdom Books Wisdom praises herself. Here Christ praises the Father.

In Wisdom Literature it is not clear who or what this wisdom is. And wisdom does not reveal God, but herself. Here in Matthew the Son reveals the Father and the Father makes known the Son, the essence of both. "Everything has been given over to me by my Father" (Mt 11:28 reminds at Mt 28:18 and thus Dan 7:14, where it refers to all authority to rule over the universe. Here in Mt 11:27 it probably refers to the eternal life which the Son has received from the Father by being generated from him.

Christ invites all who are overburdened by the many laws which are impossible to fulfill to take up his yoke, his law which one can fulfill.

Details in the Homily.

## HOMILY

### "LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE OF HEART!"

1. When we speak about humility and weakness and combine these ideas with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, things can become sentimental. Others want to have nothing to do with kneeling and genuflecting. Rather, we should stand our ground.

2. The picture Jesus projects of himself in these verses of Matthew also called the Johannine Logion (Mt 11:25-30) is nothing of all this. He is truly manly. "The Synoptic bolt from the Johannine sky" we find in the first half also in St. Luke. The last half is peculiar to Matthew. Matthew is the first gospel identifying Jesus with wisdom, an idea which John unfolds

much more. And we also find clear parallels to Mt 11:25-30 in the Wisdom Books, especially in Sir 51:1-30. In its present form, the pericope is made up of three parts.

3. The first (Mt 11:25-26) contains Christ's *thanksgiving* to the Father. "On one occasion" Jesus spoke up. Literally it was the *kairos*, the decisive moment in the fixed and predetermined plan of God's salvation, where history comes to its fulfillment. In Christ the time is fulfilled. And this self-revelation and invitation, introduced by the praise of the Father is very important. It is God's pleasure to hide the mystery before the learned and the clever, the bigshots of this world. The men of his pleasure (*eudokia*), as it was promised in the angels' Christmas hymn (Lk 2:14), are the little ones, the merest children. This secret given to the little ones consists of the full knowledge of God spoken of in the next verse. The humble and the poor to whom this knowledge is granted are not those who fulfill the law in an exemplary fashion, but those to whom verse 30 promises an easy yoke and a light burden. What God reveals in Jesus is not merely new insight into Scripture, but his way of dealing with men, his righteousness (Is 56:1; Rom 1:16-17). In Jesus God breaks through into this world. He is the God from whom we can expect everything and live without anxiety.

4. a. The second part of this jubilation contains the *self* revelation of Jesus (Mt 11:27), which at the same time is a revelation of the Father. "Everything has been given over to me by my Father" has a parallel in Jn 3:35 and 17:1ff: "The Father has given everything over to him (the Son). Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. — Father, give glory to your Son, that your Son may give glory to you, inasmuch as you have given him authority over all mankind that he may bestow eternal life on those you gave him." "Everything" here, therefore, refers to the divine life the Father gives to the Son by generating him.

b. Thus we understand that nobody knows the Son but the Father and nobody knows the Father but the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal the Father. This exclusiveness between Father and Son John stresses several times (thus the name Johannine Logion): "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (Jn 6:44). "No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father" (Jn 6:65). "No one comes to the Father but through me" (Jn 14:6). "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, over at the Father's side, who has revealed him" (Jn 1:18).



c. Only the Father knows the Son. The Jews often claimed to know Jesus, but they only knew that he was from Nazareth, that he was the carpenter's son, they knew his mother Mary and his relatives. But they did not know that he was God.

d. Only the Son knows the Father, because he is God from God, true light from true light, one in being with the Father.

e. And only the Son can reveal the Father and also himself. The son is the fountain of revelation. In him the invisible God has become visible. As he knows the Father and he knows us so we should know him. "Knowledge" is not just something theoretical but means embracing the whole person. As Father and Son know one another in eternal love so we can know Christ, the good shepherd because he has called us by our name (Jn 10:14). The Son reveals himself and the Father by doing the work of the Father, by saving mankind. But this mystery God reveals to the little ones, not the learned and the clever.

5. a. Finally Christ *invites* all to come to him (Mt 11:28-30). All who are weary and find life burdensome shall come. This, as most commentators explain, refers to the burden of the 613 positive and negative commandments the Pharisees in the course of time had imposed on the Jews, not being satisfied with the ten commandments. How can someone observe almost two new commandments on an average every day! This is certainly too burdensome. To all these people Jesus promises a yoke that can be carried. He reduced the many commandments to a double commandment of loving God and our neighbor. This is the greatest and for all practical purposes the only commandment as Christ answered a lawyer: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments the whole law is based, and the prophets as well" (Mt 22:37-40).

b. Christ's yoke thus is easy and his burden light (v.30). The Greek term for "easy" is *chrestos* = well-fitting. In Palestine ox-yokes were made of wood. The ox was brought and the measurements were taken. After the yoke was roughened out the ox was brought back to have the yoke tried on. It had to fit well. Thus it was tailor-made to fit the neck of the ox, lest it would gall the neck. Did Jesus ever made such yokes for oxen in his father's shop? In any case, he knew that the best yokes are those which fit well. Thus he tells us: "My yoke, the life I give you to live, is not a burden to gall you,

but it is tailor-made. I have taken measure of your size and strength and know what you are able to carry." Whatever we do with love is light. Love does not feel the burden.

c. The reason why Christ makes such yokes is: He is gentle (meek) and humble of heart (v. 29). He is gentle (*praüs* in Greek). That means, he is affable, mild, pleasant and thus not angry, brutal, rough, hard, contentious; he is not a man of bitter zeal as the Pharisees, trying to observe the law and make other people to observe it. Christ is called *praüs* = gentle, meek only here and in Mt 21:5 which takes up the prophesy of Zech 9:9: "Your king comes to you, meek (without display) astride on an ass." In the first beatitude, proper to Matthew (Mt 5:5) Jesus blesses the meek, for they shall possess the land. The oppressed who subject themselves to the will of God (not the revolutionary) will later possess the land. Christ himself did not advocate the life of a violent warlike zealot. St. Paul practiced this meekness, especially in Corinth in correcting the wrongdoers. He did not want to do it with a rod (1 Cor 4:21) but with a gentle spirit. Nobody, however must mistake this gentleness for weakness. Paul can be bold not only in his letters, but also when he is present in their midst (2 Cor 10:1). The same gentleness Paul (or whoever wrote the Pastoral Letters) used in correcting the lawless people to snatch them away from Satan (2 Tim 2:25) should be used in relation to all (Tit 3:2). This mildness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23; 6:1), one of the gifts of our calling (Eph 4:2; Col 3:12).

d. Jesus is also humble (*tapeinos*; v. 30). That means, he is lowly, insignificant, not because he is forced to be poor, but because he wants it so. Although being Son of God, he humbled himself, becoming man and dying for us on the cross. But just because of it the Father exalted him and gave him the name above every name, the name Lord (Phil 2:6-11). That God always exalts those who abase themselves and are at the service of others, and humbles those who exalt themselves, our Blessed Lady saw verified in her calling to be the mother of God (Lk 1:52). Jesus illustrates the same truth at a banquet (Lk 14:11) and later on with the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18:9-14).

Christ is thus meek and humble, i.e. He yielded to the Father and was at service for us men, placing himself in line with us, not despising us.

**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
(July 12, 1981)**

Today we learn: God's word is efficacious (first reading and gospel). The independent theme of the second reading is: Creation (the universe) longs to participate in the full redemption of the children of God.

**First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11**

Second Isaiah (Is. 40-55) wrote somewhere around the end of the exile 538 B.C. and encouraged the exiles in captivity by describing the deliverance from Babylon (Is. 40:1-49:13) and the new salvation for Zion-Jerusalem (Is. 49:14-55:13). God's promise is not empty. Rather God's word is efficacious, effecting what it says. Is. 55:10-11 is one of the finest texts of the Old Testament, underlying God's powerful word. We all have observed after the dry season how everything changes almost over night as soon as the rain comes back. What was brown or even black and dried up becomes fresh and green and fertile in a few hours. That's what the rain does. God's word can be compared to such a rain: It can change a person over night.

**Second Reading: Romans 8:18-23**

The first sin of mankind — and for that matter, every sin — brought and brings about not just damage to the individual person, but also an alienation between man and God, between man and his fellowmen, between man and nature. This last point is probably what Gen. 3:17 wants to say with the words: "Cursed be the ground because of you!" Not nature as such has changed because of man's sin, but man's relation to nature.

The apostle explains the same in his way. Everything created was good because God created it (v. 19). But because of man's sin it was subject to futility (v.20). It is in bondage and decay (v.21). It groans (v.22) In other words, the creation was subjected to futility not because of any wrong it had done itself, but by the disobedience of Adam, who thereby dragged it down into subjection. But there is still hope of its ultimate liberation, which comes from the apocalyptic expectation of a new heaven and a new earth. The whole creation

waits with eager longing. Its fall and corruption was bound up with man's fall. So its hope of redemption is bound up with man's redemption. And as we men are already redeemed, but not fully yet, so creation is already redeemed, but not completely yet.

By our sin we have lost the right relation to nature. We either deify it (pantheism, romanticism) or treat it with contempt (pollution). By our redemption we find the harmony again with nature. This is the cosmic order of redemption.

### Reading of the Good News: Matthew 13:1-23

The parable of the sower is one of the seven parables in Mt. 13 which make up the discourse on the kingdom, illustrating the kingdom and its true members, the new Israel and the Jews who neither hear nor understand.

There is the parable of the sower proper (Mt. 13:1-9) as originally told by Jesus. This is the first *Sitz im Leben*, the setting in the time of Christ. To his opponents, who told him that he would never amount to anything with his simple, unlearned disciples, Jesus answered: "That would be the same as telling a farmer in springtime that he will not receive a harvest, since there are so many obstacles in the field. And yet, the fact is that the farmer will reap a good harvest. So also I will have success with building the Church." Proof that this was the setting of the parable in the time of Christ is the fact that the Gospel of Thomas has just these verses.

The second *Sitz im Leben* is the setting of the early Christian Church (Mt. 13:18-23). The parable (where we always have just one main feature; the details of the parable are not explained and applied) became an allegory, in which all the different features are explained and applied: the different kinds of soil, the birds, the sun. The stress lies not on the seed, but on the soil. Although the seed, the word of God is efficacious, it also depends on the soil, on our receptivity and cooperation if the seed will produce fruit.

The third *Sitz im Leben* is the setting in the time of the writing of the gospel of Matthew (Mt. 13:10-17). The time had come that the Jews definitely rejected Christ. They neither hear nor understand. The disciples, the members of the Church are the true Israel.

In the first and last third of the pericope Matthew follows Mark rather closely. The greatest changes are in the second third (Mt. 13:10-17). In Mark one can not notice the different setting yet.

— In v. 11 Matthew adds “to you it is given to know the mysteries . . .” Mark has: “To you is given the mystery of the kingdom.”

— Matthew adds v. 12 from Mk. 4:25.

— In v. 13 Matthew changes the *hina* (“in order that”) of Mark to *hoti* (“because”).

— Verses 14-15 include a quotation from Is. 6:9f. Christ speaks in parables so that those who are in (disciples, members of Church) will understand, but those outside (Jews) will hear but not understand. Here the prophecy of Is. 6:9f will be fulfilled. Since people’s hearts are sluggish and their eyes closed they will hear but not understand. It’s the punishment for their sins. — Isaiah in the Hebrew text says this much stronger: “Make sluggish (literally: fat) their heart and dull their ears, lest they be healed.” It could look as if God wanted the “obstination” directly. But we can explain this only in the sense that God permits that the hearts become hardened, because of their lack of cooperation.

— Verses 16-17 are from Q (= Quelle, the source with sayings of Christ, common to Matthew and Luke; here also in Lk. 10:23-24).

## HOMILY

### A SOWER WENT OUT TO SOW HIS SEED

I. 1. Jesus was a self-made man according to the standards of the Scribes and Pharisees. He did not attend one of the famous colleges for Rabbis in Jerusalem or Jamnia. He was not sitting at the feet of a famous Rabbi as did St. Paul. His disciples did not have a special training either. Many of them would perhaps have never qualified for secondary education. Some of the contempt against Jesus and his disciples, which one can sense in the gospels, goes back to this lack of special education. The Scribes and Pharisees would let Jesus know in different ways: “You will never amount to anything in your life with your self-made education and with your uneducated



followers. Why do you not just forget about your ambitious plans of trying to be a Rabbi without formal training and of setting up school without true license.

2. To such critics Jesus one day told the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-9) as if to say: "You tell me that I will never succeed with my plan of electing followers and slowly build my own congregation. Would you ever tell a farmer in springtime that he never will harvest something worthwhile because in wintertime his field has been used as a shortcut to reach places by many travellers so that it is full of trampled paths and because it is full of thorns and thistles, grown in the long winter nights and the short days!" We have to keep in mind that in Palestine the fields lay fallow during the long winter months and looked quite desolate when the farmer often enough, as it seems, would start sowing on these trampled paths and into these thorns and only then would start plowing and harrowing. "Fact is," Jesus would continue, "that I will have success with my preaching. For God's word is efficacious. It does what it says.

3. Thus the parable of the sower is a message of optimism, as Christianity is a religion of optimism. Our human words are often just words, and we often contrast them with deeds. Not so with God. *Dabar* in Hebrew means "word" and "deed" at the same time. Thus we find in Gen. 24:66: "The servant recounted to Isaac all the things (*hadabarim*) he had done." Or in Judges 6:29 we read "Their inquiry led them to the conclusion that Gideon, son of Joash, had done this thing (*hadabar*)." And Amos 3:7 tells us: "The Lord God does nothing (*lo...dabar*) without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets." In all these cases actions or events are meant, rendered with *dabar* = word + event.

4. We see already in the creation story how powerful God's word is. Eight times the works of God are introduced with "And God said." "And God said, 'Let there be light'" (Gen. 1:3). And hardly has God said anything, the things come into existence. There is no struggle, no hesitation, no delay. What God says happens instantly: The firmament comes into existence in a moment (Gen. 1:6); the waters gather into a single basin right away (Gen. 1:9); the earth brings forth vegetation without delay (eGn. 1:11); sun, moon and stars start shining instantly (Gen. 1:14); fish and birds and animals begin living their lives (Gen. 1:20,24). Only for the creation of man God (humanly speaking) takes his time to underline the dignity and greatness of man, and thus he "deliberates": "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26).

5. Nothing can resist God's powerful word. Isaiah had well observed how after a long dry season suddenly it starts raining and the rain makes grass, flowers, and grain sprout up almost over night (Is. 55:10-11). God's word does just this when it falls into a human heart.

6. With intention Jesus exaggerates: The seed brings forth hundredfold fruit, although in human life the proportion is seven and one half, with ten as an outside possibility. God's word, God's power will overcome frustrations in our life. There were many frustrations in Christ's life: Few followed; there was much hostility from the authorities, and Jesus was misunderstood by the crowds (Jn. 6:66); he was even crucified. But this dying he compared to the placing of the seed into the ground: "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). Even his death could not hinder, but rather brought about, the culmination of his life work: the people of God, consisting of all the different nations, was formed.

II. The parable of the sower is basically a shout of triumph for Christ and for us. We must trust in the power of God, of God's word. But early Christians had experienced that participation on our part is also basic. And thus the simple, short parable, was unfolded and widened into an allegory.

1. "Part of the seed landed on a *footpath*, where birds came and ate it up (13:4)." This signified men who hear the message without understanding it (13:18). The path is not intended to receive the seed. Its function is to enable people to walk upon it. It is beaten down and quite smooth. There are even asphalted paths and asphalted hearts too. They are smooth and often they look quite presentable. Paths and streets also have names. One must know them to get somewhere. There are a great many people whom we must know, just as one must know these streets, if one wants to get somewhere. They hold key positions, they are influential, and only through them will one get somewhere. This is good and quite in order. Nobody will blame a person for being influential. And nobody will blame a path for not being a field or for being hard. But what is an advantage in one way can be a hindrance in another. Fact is: seed cannot very well take root on a much travelled and smooth-beaten path. A man who is no more than a busy street where there is never a moment of rest: will hardly provide the soil in which the eternal seed can grow. People who are always on the go are the most in danger. A person

who can no longer be receptive "soil" for at least fifteen minutes each day, who never allows himself to be "plowed" and opened up, and never waits for what God drops into his furrow, that person has already lost the game. Traffic and bustle are not fruit, but only lost motion.

We must not think only of the great people with well-known names. We smaller folks are in this picture too. For the birds haunt not only the great highways but also the humble field paths. If the word of God fails to take root in us it's because of forces in us: Thoughts and desires which prevent us from pausing to hear God's call: our desire for recognition and prestige, our urge to power and our desire for love, or even sex. Against them we must meditate and pray. The word of God demands a stretch of time in our day. In the early morning we must not right away think of bingo or numbers, the next letter we have to write, or the coming meeting. These would be birds that snap the seed away.

The spirit of care and worry are also birds that pick away the seed. We cannot stop the birds from flying over our heads, but we must take heed lest they build their nests in our hair.

2. "Part of the seed fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprouted at once since the soil had no depth, but when the sun rose and scorched it, it began to wither for lack of roots" (13:5-6). This signifies the man "who hears the message and at first receives it with joy. But he has no roots, so he lasts only for a time. When some setback of persecution involving the message occurs, he soon falters" (13:20-21). These people at least received the seed. There is at least a thin layer of soil. These people begin to take root. They have been touched. Perhaps, they even speak about "being converted". They are thrilled. But it is emotion more than anything else. They are superficial. When the word of God really takes root, a man must die, must be born again. Birth is painful. There are many cords that must be cut. It must cause wounds. We must not be "brushed" Christians, people without depth. It is the half-Christians who always flop in the face of the first catastrophe that happens. This is the wood from which the anti-christians too are cut. They are almost always former half-Christians. A person who lets Jesus only half way into his heart is far poorer than a one hundred percent worldling. It is better to be a "salty pagan", full of juices of life than to be a half-Christian.

3. "Part of the seed fell among thorns which grew up and choked it" (13:7). These are the men "who hear the message, but then the worldly anxiety and the lure of money choke it off" (13:22). These are the defeated Christians, not so much by intellectual doubts about the possibility of a miracle, the resurrection, but by sins, dependencies, secret bondages. These prevent us from finding peace and block full surrender. These are the thorns preventing the seed from producing fruit. Everyone has a hidden axis around which his life revolves. Everyone has a price for which he is prepared to sell himself and his salvation. Where is our axis in life?

4. "Part of the seed, finally, landed on good soil and yielded grain a hundred - or sixty - or thirtyfold" (13:8). This signifies the "man who hears the message, takes it in and bears a yield of a hundredfold" (13:23). Here we have a person who hears God's word, takes it in, lets it sink in deeply, gives it time to change him. What looks like inactivity is in reality greatest activity and productivity. For, finally such a person will do what he clearly recognizes as God's will. Lk. 11:28 sums it up as the greatness of a Christian: "Blest are they who hear the word of God and keep it."

5. Nothing is said in this allegorical parable about the number of those comparable to seed fallen on the paths, the rock, among the thorns and on good soil. Certainly the parable does not want to say that only a fourth part of hearers will receive it with a receptive heart. One thing, however is clear: We must be receptive soil if the seed shall produce a hundredfold fruit.

### **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 19, 1981)**

The liturgy of today tells as about the forbearance of God. He judges with clemency (first reading). He waits with patience before he separates the good from the bad ones (gospel). The independent theme of the second reading is: The Holy Spirit prays in us and for us and with us.

### **First Reading: Wisdom 12:13.16-19**

The Book of Wisdom speaks about wisdom as sources of temporal and eternal happiness in its first part (Wish. 1:1-5:24) explains its origin and value for rulers in the second part (6:1-

9:19), and illustrates the work of wisdom in the history of Israel in the third and last part (10:1-19:20).

The third part opens with a description of the work of wisdom from the time of Adam till the entrance of Israel into the promised land (10:1-12:27). Here in particular, God's wisdom guided and protected the Israelites but punished the Egyptians and Canaanites. And yet (and from this section our second reading of today is taken), God even showed clemency toward the Egyptians and Canaanites.

After all, God is a just judge. He is merciful. He judges everybody with full knowledge of the case. His justice rests on his power (12:16). Since there is no god besides him (v. 13) but he is in charge of all and everything, nobody can challenge him. Not because he does not ask anybody anything, but because he has all power and lacks nothing. Only people with limited power try to repress those who oppose them. God does not have to do that. He also has plenty of time at his disposal and can wait and judges with clemency. He shows his power only when his power is disbelieved (v. 17) or known but not acknowledged (v. 17).

He is merciful and wants to give everybody a chance for repentance (12:19). After all God has created everybody and everything and therefore cannot hate anything he has made. If he would hate (and therefore want to destroy anybody) he would not have created him (11:24).

### **Second Reading: Romans 8:26-27**

Our new life, which we live since baptism, is a life in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:1-39). Thus we must live by the Holy Spirit and not by the desires of the flesh (8:1-13). We are children of God by the Holy Spirit (8:14-30), and as such destined to heavenly glory (8:18-27). Last Sunday we saw that the whole creation longs to be taken up into the redemption of man (Rom. 8:18-22). The Holy Spirit is our installment of this eternal glory (Rom. 8:23-2). These three verses are skipped over. And today's second reading goes on to talking about another groaning, which it picks up from v. 23. The inward groaning (weakness) of those who possess the first fruits of the Spirit is assisted by the Spirit who intercedes for us "with groanings which cannot be expressed in speech". Some would think that the Holy Spirit intercedes in an unintelligible fashion,



e.g. in glossalia. But perhaps it is better to think that the Holy Spirit condescends and takes up our infirm prayers and bears them up to God and presents them before him in the form of intelligible speech. Thus God is for us not someone high above and we somebody way below. Rather, the Spirit within me prays to the God high above. He prays in me, for me, and with me.

### Reading of the Good News: Matthew 13:24-43

The parable of the weeds, proper to Matthew, has been reported in different ways before it reached the final form it has in the gospel today, as the parable of the sower.

(1) There is first the setting in the time Jesus (Mt. 13:24-30). Jesus is criticized by his contemporaries for inviting sinners and outcasts and for eating with them. Christ answers with a parable that it is up to the Lord to make the separation between good and bad, and only at the end of time. Who are we to judge what is good wheat and what are tares!

(2) The early Christian Church added (as in the parable of the sower) the allegorical features: In the early Church there are tares as well as wheat. The Church is not the community of saints, but is on the way (Mt. 13:36-43). One must not prematurely try to separate good and bad ones.

(3) Between the parable and the allegorical explanation Matthew inserted two parables, found also in the other Synoptic gospels: the parable of the mustard seed (also in Mk. 4:30-33 and Lk. 13:18-19) and the parable of the leaven (also in Lk. 13:20-21). The interpretation of Christ's talking in parables (Mt. 13:34-35) contains the setting for the Church in Matthew's time, and all the pericopes show us (as last Sunday) that Matthew is disappointed over the failure of the mission to Israel, that Israel has rejected Christ. Matthew takes consolation in the fact that the message of Jesus came, as foretold by Ps. 78(77):2, as a *parabole*, a riddle, which only the Church can comprehend. At the moment we cannot distinguish the tares from the wheat. We must wait patiently. At the end God will separate both.

At each level the point remains the forbearance of God. Only the identity of the wheat and the tares change. For the Lord it was the outcast and the authorities of the people, for the early Christian community it was the good and the bad Christians, and for the evangelist it was the nonbelieving Israel and the believing Church, the new and the true Israel.

The main idea of the two short parables of the mustard seed and the leaven is the power of the word of God and the kingdom, different from the idea of God's forbearance. Therefore, one better omits it from the homily, especially since the first parable is used in the version of Mark (4:30-32) on the eleventh Sunday of year B.

## HOMILY

### **"LET THE WEEDS GROW WITH THE WHEAT!" — GOD'S FORBEARANCE**

1. We face a painful fact. The Church should be the great sign of God that points to the mysterious strength of God. It should be like the archangel Michael, fighting the battles of God. In its Popes one must see the awe-inspiring form of Christ, in its bishops one must feel the spirit of the apostles. In the lives of the priests one should see that in their hands the miracles of the multiplication of the loaves takes place. The religious must mirror the happiness of someone completely dedicated to God, and the faithful must all reflect inner peace of soul that goes along with being a Christ-bearer. And yet the reality looks often different. The history of the Church shows us many examples of failures in the official church. Believing men are often enough not different from the unbelieving. There is much false sentimentality in people's devotion and wrong piety. There is false activism and egoism. The shadow is so great that many are scandalized and want a reform, a radical change, nothing less. This all too human in the Church must disappear.

2. The Lord in the parable of the tares tell us something different. It may sound like a commonplace. But the Lord wants to tell us in plain language: The Church is not the community of saints, but rather a mixed community of saints and sinners who strive to become better. And this is then, not such a commonplace after all. There is no reason to be scandalized. Imperfections and great faults and even sins are to be expected. They belong to the Church too. We have to accept this fact. Otherwise we would not be realistic but heretical by expecting too much, which even God does not expect.

3. The parable and the allegory of the tares and the liturgy of today brings home that admonition quite strongly. Since God is forbearing and patient we must be forbearing and patient also. "Let them (the wheat and the tares) grow together until harvest" (Mt. 13:30)! St. Paul explains this forbearance as a principal virtue of Christians: "Have a life worthy of the calling you have received, with perfect humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another lovingly" (Eph. 4:1-2). "Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another" (Col. 3:13). And in the eulogy on charity the apostle singles out: "Love is patient; love is kind . . . There is no limit to love's forbearance" (1 Cor. 13:4.7).

4. The reason why the master does not want wheat and tares to be separated right away is that both look very much alike. One could easily mistake the one for the other and tear out the wheat instead of the tares. Applied to our life it means that we often enough are poor in our judgment of other people, although we think we know somebody perfectly. Do we really know how much of a weed somebody is. Are we not perhaps mistaken. Have we not often enough make the experience that we had to correct our judgment of a certain person, that somebody whom we could not stand became even a close friend of ours. And how often have we been disappointed because another person was not really that ideal we thought him to be. Only the Lord can search the hearts and can judge perfectly.

5. It is true that people do not change easily. Only God can change people. Yet, people do change (for the better) after all. This is another reason why the Lord wants the weeds to grow also, they may turn into wheat after all. Here of course the picture is limping. The reality of spiritual life is different from the natural life.

6. One good way of overcoming the weed is to be strong wheat. Where the wheat grows there is no space for the tares. If we want to improve bad people we better try to live a good life ourselves.

7. If we have to live and to work with people who are weeds, who are not our type it can help us to be better wheat because we have to apply ourselves harder.

8. The Book of Wisdom has another wonderful reason for God's forbearance which we seldom hear:

For with you great strength abides always;  
who can resist the might of your arm?

Indeed, before you the whole universe is a grain from a balance,

or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth.  
But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things;  
and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent.  
For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that  
you have made;

for what you hated, you would not have fashioned.  
and how could a thing remain, unless you willed it;  
or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you?  
But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord and  
Lover of life (Wisd. 11:21-12:1).

In other words, God has created everything and everybody because he likes everything and everybody. He is a lover of life. And thus he cannot hate anything. Inasmuch as he is concerned everybody shall become good and thus accomplish the meaning of being. Should it not be possible that we can get along with somebody who is not sympathetic to us and whom we judge unbearable!

9. God will finally judge. God will finally separate the good from the bad ones. But he takes his time and judges every case individually. We should not easily assume the role of a judge, especially if we are not asked to judge.

### **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 26, 1981)**

Today we are encouraged to choose the real treasure of God, enables us to sell everything to get it (gospel). Solomon considered wisdom to govern God's people wisely the great treasure for which he asked the Lord (first reading). In the independent theme of the second reading Paul tells us God's plan of salvation: Christ is the firstborn of many brothers (and sisters).

#### **First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5.7-12**

For Greek philosophy, wisdom meant philosophical speculation. For Oriental and also for Jewish Wisdom Literature, wisdom had a practical note. It signified the art to live well, a

morally good life. For a Hebrew it implied the fear of the Lord, the doing of God's will. It also included the practical know-how in various fields of life.

This same concept we also find in 1 Kings. Solomon is wise because he knows how to settle the difficult case of two prostitutes the son of one had died during the night and each woman claimed that the surviving child was hers (3:16-28). He is wise as administrator (ch. 4), as builder (chs. 5-7), as merchant (ch-9).

Solomon mainly considers the art of governing God's people rightly as wisdom. This wisdom is for him the treasure and the pearl, of which the gospel speaks. And thus he asks God for this pearl in prayer. This same prayer of 1 Kgs. 3:2-15 is also reported in Wisdom 7:1-14.

### **Second Reading: Romans 8:28-30**

We saw already on several Sundays a part of Romans 8:1-39: The life of a Christian is a life in the Holy Spirit. Today's second reading tells us that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love him (8:28) and outlines God's plan of salvation: We all shall become brothers (and sisters) of Christ who is the firstborn of many brothers. The line of events is:

- All those who shall become brothers of Christ, God foreknew,
- he predestined,
- he called,
- he justified,
- he glorified.

As often, Paul (and other Biblical authors) stress God's activity so much that it could look like predestination, irrespective of human cooperation. But the latter is presupposed. Furthermore, Paul is not speaking so much about individuals, but he considers Christians as a body. For him their call to the faith and their justification are a sure pledge of salvation. Their cooperation with God's grace is presupposed.

### **Reading of the Good News: Matthew 13:44-52**

Today's gospel brings the last three parables of Matthew's parable discourse, the discourse on the kingdom (Mt. 13): the twin parables of the treasure (Mt. 13:44) and the pearl, (Mt.



13:45-46), and the parable of the dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50). They are followed by the concluding saying of the Christian scribe (Mt. 13:51-52).

The parable of the dragnet has the same content as the parable of the tares among the wheat: God can wait with separating the good and the bad Christians till the judgment. So should we.

The concluding saying of the Christian scribe (13:51-52) gives us the self-understanding of Matthew as evangelist and of every homilist for that matter. He reinterprets Christ's words, taking the "things old", the gospel tradition as he has received it and reapplies them to the new situation of his time and his Church. Scholars call this "redaction criticism" on the part of the New Testament author. This process of reinterpreting the traditions of Jesus goes on today when we are called to apply the teaching of Jesus to our modern problems. "Old things" refers also to our own knowledge and our education we bring along when we approach the word of God to be illumined and uplifted by the "new things" of Christ's word. But both belong together. Christ does not speak into a vacuum.

The main idea of the gospel today, however, is the content of the twin parable: the joy and the transformation that goes on in a man who found the treasure in his field. He sells everything he has in order to acquire the field and thus the treasure, and the joy and change in a man who after a long search finds a most precious pearl: he sells everything he has just to buy that really valuable pearl.

## HOMILY

### THE HIDDEN TREASURE — THE PEARL OF GREAT WORTH

1. Palestine is certainly one of the most embattled countries, due to its center position between Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as Asia Minor. In such wars often enough there was only one way of saving money and precious things, i.e. burying them in the ground, in a field, in the hope of getting them back after the war. This is the outlook of the one with the one talent in the parable of the talents (Mt. 25:25): he buries it in the ground to make sure it will not be stolen. But often enough in such cases the owner died or did not return and thus somebody

else could find that treasure. This is the situation in the gospel which everybody in Palestine would understand. A tenant is plowing the field, turning furrow after furrow, until the work is suddenly interrupted by a harsh metallic noise. The animal stops, the farmer goes after the curious something and discovers a large earthen pot with precious jewels. He looks around to see whether somebody had observed him, heaps the earth over the treasure again, and places a huge stone as marker there. From now on there is only one thought in his mind: "That treasure must be mine." He can hardly sleep at night. He sells the few possessions he has, borrows some money from his friends to buy the field. Those close to him think he is no longer normal. But what do they know about the real motive! He buys the field and the treasure is his and with it all financial problems are solved.

2. Was he not a little dishonest by not telling the owner about the hidden treasure? Scholars refer to the treaty Kid-dushi of the Talmud, the oral and later written explanation of the Pentateuch. This treaty contains regulations concerning the legal acquisition of real estates and says in chapter 1, verse 5: If somebody buys real estates (immovables) he also acquires the movable (effects, goods and chattels). But in any case, Jesus did not want to go after that question and in the case of the shrewed manager (Lk. 16:1-13) he apparently praised the dishonesty of the manager. In both cases, not the dishonesty is the point of comparison, but the total effort which these persons make and we often fail to make.

3. "The kingdom of heaven is like a *buried* treasure". The kingdom stands for all the goods of salvation God gives us, for our union with God and thus for all the means that enable and bring about this union: Scripture, the sacraments, God's grace; and in concrete our call to this goal, our vocation in life, our own place in the kingdom, our share to materialize God's rule among people more perfectly. This treasure is hidden. We often enough do not realize these supernatural realities, we often enough do not believe that God has something special for us in mind.

4. Then all of a sudden it may hit us. So speak in the picture of the parable, just by chance we stumble on the treasure. It is just a happy run of events which we then later call providential. How many "conversions" in life started that way. God suddenly opens our eyes to the hidden realities of the kingdom; we realize our call. And that changes everything, our whole outlook on life.

5. The first reaction is a *great joy*. The farmer was quite excited for joy. We often stress the hardships, sacrifices in our religious life. The Lord wants to tell us that joy is equally important.

6. The reason is clear from the result of this great joy: The farmer is too taken in by the joy over the found treasure that he wants to have it at any cost. He goes and sells all the small possessions he has and buys the treasure. His friends are probably shaking their heads, as if to say: "How can somebody be so foolish! He must be out of his mind." It's something of the love of a sweetheart who does not act rationally either. But love does such things. Joy does such things. It enables us to make the hardest sacrifices. Love feels no burden. And if there is a burden, it loves the burden. It is true that we have to make sacrifices, if we want to enter the kingdom. But one can doubt if the parable wants to stress this. Rather it underlines the great discovery of the kingdom and the ensuing joy which enables us to make these sacrifices that we hardly take them as sacrifices.

7. We see such a change of outlook, the resulting happiness in the life of godly men. It starts already with young men who have finally committed themselves in a retreat, e.g., before graduation from college. One can see how a young man or woman who finally commits himself or herself to the religious life changes or a young man when he commits himself before ordination. They have discovered the hidden treasure.

8. For most of us it is true that we discover the worth of the pearl after long study, not just by mere chance as with the treasure. A life of dedicated service and fulfillment of duty may finally open our eyes to the deeper values and realities of our life. This fact one could perhaps even see in the first parable of the treasure: The farmer found the treasure by chance, without looking for it, it is true. But he found it, after all, when he was doing his duty, plowing the field of his master.

9. A particular pearl to look forward to could be the pearl of Solomon. Wisdom has always been compared to pearl. But Solomon did not just ask for knowledge (this he received besides), but for an understanding heart. He wanted to feel with people. He asked for the understanding that penetrates the very depths of the person, but with a gentleness and consideration that makes him feel good, because he is understood and not so much because of an advice given.

## SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

JUAN PABLO II: *Redemptor Hominis* — *Con un comentario de Bernhard Häring* — Versión castellana de Marciano Villanueva. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1980 — 148 págs. — Rústica 240 pesetas.

In this his first encyclical Pope John Paul II situates the Church on the horizon of the 20th century. The centric themes are: Christ; Man, the Church, developed into the following chapters: The mystery of redemption; Man redeemed and his place in the contemporary world; The mission of the Church and the fate of man. This encyclical was described by the media as "realistic beyond expectation for a pontifical document."

The internationally renowned theologian, Bernhard Häring, gives an illuminating and practical commentary.

AUER, JOHANN and RATZINGER, JOSEPH: *Curso de Teología Dogmática. Tomo IX, Escatología: la muerte y la vida eterna.* — Versión castellana de Severiano Talavera Tovar. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1980 — 232 págs. — Rústica 680 pesetas.

This is the 9th and last volume of this *Curso de Teología Dogmática* by two well known theologians, whose methodology consists in looking for scriptural bases of doctrine, in studying the historical development of the interpretation of such scripturistic sources and of the doctrine based on them, and an internal systematization of the doctrine as a cog in a whole system of dogma.

This particular treatise on Eschatology takes into account all relevant contributions of contemporary erudition.

GILEN, LEONARD: *Amor Propio y Humildad.* — Versión castellana de Claudio Gancho. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1980 — 172 págs. — Rústica 450 pesetas.

This book leads us to the adequate comprehension of the psychological phase of humility and its function in personality development. The accomplishment of this function is conditioned by the different conceptions, situations and life styles of each and sundry.

Humility is portrayed as the true total gauging of oneself. Together with respect and awe towards oneself and others it plays an important role on how one should behave. Thus the author renders a signal service to whosoever are concerned in giving a deeper psychological dimension to the spiritual life of everyone.

PIEPER, JOSEF: *El Concepto de Pecado*. — Versión castellana de Raul Gabas Pallas. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1979 — 120 págs. — Rústica 250 pesetas.

Josef Pieper, an internationally well-known professor, lecturer and writer, especially in his native Germany, has made five revisions of this book since 1953 to the present. Short of defining sin ontologically, he chronicles its historical concept in Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and mainly St. Thomas Aquinas, his proclaimed mentor. Then he examines all the latest ideas, insights, thrusts and aperçus on this theme. Indeed this small and short book provides a very valuable and substantial fare for the mind and spirit.

MILCENT, PAUL: *Juana Jugan. Humilde para amar*. — Versión castellana de Luisa Medrano. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1980 — 316 págs. 12 págs. ilustraciones — Rústica 450 pesetas.

Juana Jugan, a poor maid from Brétagne, France, worked as a part-time servant of a wealthy family. Her own time was devoted to prayer and to the care of the sick. She rented a room at St. Servan *rue* in Paris.

In 1839, at age 47, she brought to that room the first sick woman to care for. Then another, and more and more without count. Other pious girls joined her in this apostolate, and thus was born the Congregation of the *Sister of the Poor*, of which there were already 2,400 members when Juana Jugan died 40 years later at age 87. By a quirk of fate she had been disowned by her very Sisters long before her demise.

Nowadays her Congregation thrives in 31 countries in all the five continents.

On July 13, 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed the heroicity of her virtues, thus paving the way for her beatification.



## JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

dilecto filio LEONTIO LAT Y LEVISTE, e clero archidioecesis Lipensis, Apostolico Visitatori seminariorum maiorum in Insulis Philippinis, electo Auxiliari Praesulis Malolosini atque Episcopo titulo Silensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum Venerabilis frater Cyrillus Almario, Episcopus Malolosinus, ob suorum Christifidelium copiam, Auxiliarem petivisset, Nos, eius precibus concedentes, putavimus te, dilecte fili, eidem posse Pastori destinari. Notae enim sunt Nobis egregiae tuae animi ingeniique dotes rerumque agendarum usus haud minimus. De sententia igitur Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium qui Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis praepositi sunt, summa Nostra potestate te Auxiliarem nominamus Praesulis, quem diximus, simulque Episcopum vacantis Sedis titulo SILENSIS, iustis factis iuribus congruisque impositis obligationibus, sicut explicatur in Apostolicis Litteris — Ecclesiae Sanctae — a Paulo VI, Decessore Nostro, motu proprio datis die VI mensis Augusti anno MCMLXVI. Permittimus insuper ut episcopalem ordinationem accipias a quolibet catholico Episcopo extra urbem Romam, cui duo assistant eiusdem ordinis episcopalis viri consecratores, sicut leges liturgicae praescribunt. Antea autem tuum erit, teste quovis rectae fidei Episcopo, catholicae fidei professionem facere atque iusiurandum dare fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros, ad statutas formulas, quas ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes, de more signatas sigilloque impressas. Fac denique, dilecte fili, ut Christi exempla secutus impiger ita adlabores, ut sive Episcopo Malolosino sive ei commissis fidelibus valeas uberrime ministrare. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die tricesimo mensis Octobris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo, Pontificatus Nostri tertio.

✠ AUGUSTINUS CARD. CASAROLI  
*A Publicis Eccl. Negotiis*

GODEFRIDUS MARCIANI, *Proton. Apost.*

## DATE FOR THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF BLESSED LORENZO RUIZ

SACRA CONGREGATIO  
PRO SACRAMENTIS  
ET CULTU DIVINO

Prot. CD 449/81

### INSULARUM PHILIPPINARUM

Instante Excellentissimo Domino Gulielmo Brasseur, Episcopo tit. Agathoniciano, Vicario Apostolico Montano, Praeside Commissionis liturgicae Nationalis Insularum Philippinarum, litteris die 1 martii 1981 datis, vigore facultatum huic Sacrae Congregationi a Summo Pontifice IOANNE PAULO II tributarum, libenter concedimus ut celebratio Beati LAURENTII RUIZ, martyris, in Calendarium dioecesium Insularum Philippinarum inseri valeat, quotannis die 27 septembris gradu memoriae obligatoriae per agenda.

Contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Sacrae Congregationis pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino, die 17 martii 1981.

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

/s/ VERGILIUS NOE  
*a Secretis a.*

# ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FERNANDO

## CIRCULAR LETTER

### ON THE ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE IN HONOR OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

TO: THE REV. MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESAN CLERGY,  
THE MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS, AND THE  
LAITY CONCERNED

RE: ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF  
LOURDES  
CABETICAN, BACOLOR  
PAMPANGA

The LOVE and PEACE of CHRIST!

For your kind information and due guidance, allow me to herewith send you the Official Instrument relative to the newly established ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE in honor of OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

The said Instrument has three parts: *First*, DECREE OF ESTABLISHMENT. *Second*, STATUTES. *Third*, ORDINANCES.

Whereas this is the first venture of the Archdiocese in the constitution of a Shrine, it is good to have this reality rendered definite and defined.

Thank you for the kind attention.

Very sincerely yours in the GOOD LORD,

(Sgd.) ✠ OSCAR V. CRUZ, DD  
Archbishop  
San Fernando, Pampanga  
11 March, 1981

# OFFICIAL PAPERS OF A SHRINE

## I

### DECREE OF ESTABLISHMENT

*ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES*  
CABETICAN, BACOLOR, PAMPANGA  
PHILIPPINES

GREETINGS in the GOOD LORD!

Know ALL MEN by these presents that fervently invoking the PROVIDENCE of ALMIGHTY GOD and sincerely trusting in the GOOD WILL of HIS PEOPLE as the ONLY ENDOWMENT of this CANONICAL ENACTMENT, We hereunto DECREE pursuant to LAW, the ESTABLISHMENT of the ARCHDIOCESAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES at CABETICAN, BACOLOR, PAMPANGA.

Wherefore, duly established with its OWN STATUTES and ORDINANCES, We reverently commend the SHRINE to the PATRONAGE of OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

Given this FEASTDAY OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, this eleventh day of February in the year of OUR LORD, nineteen hundred and eighty one.

(Sgd.) ✠ OSCAR V. CRUZ, DD  
Archbishop  
San Fernando, Pampanga

(Sgd.) SERAFIN A. OCAMPO  
Chancellor

## II

## STATUTES

A. *SHRINE*:

A Shrine is a church that is dedicated to the eminent exercise of public worship, that is the terminal objective of pilgrimages on account of a particular devotion, and that is constituted as such by the competent Ecclesiastical Authority (*cfr. S. C. SEM.* 8 February 1956; *B. A. DE VAL.*, 1956, p. 115).

The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is duly constituted in the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga, by the Local Ordinary, to confirm and enhance the exercise of public worship thereat, to strengthen and propagate the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, to certify and promote Marian Pilgrimages thereto.

B. *RECTOR*:

A Rector of a church is a priest freely and directly appointed by the competent Ecclesiastical Authority pursuant to law governing rectorship and churches concerned, for the ministerial care of a particular or given place of worship that is neither parochial nor capitular in nature, nor appended to a Religious Community (*cfr. cc.* 479, *par.* 1; 480 *CIC.*).

The Rector of the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is freely and directly appointed by the Local Ordinary of the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga, for the ministerial care of the church, particularly with reference to the due observance of Liturgy, the purity of devotional practices, the christian welfare of the Faithful, and the sound administration of the church temporalities.

C. *RECTORAL COUNCIL*:

Particular councils of specific nature in accord with their specified finalities, should be set up in various ecclesial levels whereby, through the wholesome coordination and collaboration among God's People, the due apostolic work of the Church acquires effectivity and continuity whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification, in the sphere of charity, socio-temporal relations or other concerns (*cfr. VAT. II, Decr. On the Apost. Of The Laity, par.* 26).



The Rectoral Council of the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is a collegial body with the Rector as Apostolate Director thereof, the nature, composition and functions of which should be determined and continuously updated subject to the explicit approval by the Local Ordinary, so that the prime ministerial objectives of the Shrine and the apostolate charge of the Rector could be adequately attended to.

#### D. MINISTRY:

To glorify the Name of God through proper worship and to render service to His People through needed works of charity, the Church has established across the centuries, various Ministries responding to the imperatives of the times and consonant to the call of God upon His individual children as priests, religious and lay persons (*cfr. PAUL VI, Motu Proprio "Ministeria Quaedam"*, Introduc., AAS 64, 1972, 527ss).

The ministry of the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, by reason of its constitution as a Shrine and its dedication to Our Lady of Lourdes, is preferential in favor of the sick, the disabled, the poor, the ignorant, and the sinners, for whom Christ has special salvific predilection and the Blessed Virgin Mary has particular maternal solicitude.

#### E. PARISH:

A Parish is a given community and portion of God's people with their own Pastor and Parish Church, accordingly determined by the competent Ecclesiastical Authority usually by virtue of territorial confines wherein the Pastor exercises jurisdictional faculties (*cfr. c. 216, par. 1 CIC; E.D. REGATILLO, Institutiones Iuris Canonici, Vol. I, 1963, no. 588*).

The Parish of San Guillermo, Bacolor, Pampanga, and the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, Cabetican, Bacolor, Pampanga, and the Parish Priest of San Guillermo and the Rector of the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, have the following ecclesial relationship:

1. The Parish of San Guillermo shall hold in deep respect the internal ministerial autonomy and ecclesial self-determination of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in accord with common law, diocesan statutes, approved customs and duly sanctioned traditions.
2. The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes shall be well observant of the pastoral norms governing the Archdiocese as a whole, pertaining to Parishes in general, and concerning the Parish of San Guillermo in particular.

3. The Parish Priest of San Guillermo, for purposes of law, retains jurisdictional faculties on the Faithful residing at Cabetican, Bacolor, Pampanga.
4. The Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, for purposes of ministerial out-reach, acquires preferential ministerial solicitude for the Faithful residing at Cabetican, Bacolor, Pampanga.
5. The Parish Priest of San Guillermo, in deference to pastoral order and presbyteral respect, shall leave to the ministerial responsibility and accountability of the Rector of the Archdiocesan Shrine, the Faithful who frequent the Shrine at whatever time and from whatever place.
6. The Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes has his ministerial faculties and privileges, not from the Parish Priest of San Guillermo, but from the provisions of law regarding church rectorship and from the jurisdictional competence of the Local Ordinary.

#### F. LOCAL ORDINARY:

The Local Ordinary stands in possession of both the sacred right and grave duty to exercise the pastoral government of the Particular Church assigned to his administrative care, with integrated legislative, executive and judicial authority, consonant with the Sacred Canons and responsive to the particular circumstances of time and place (*cfr. c. 335 par. - CIC; PAUL VI Motu Proprio "Pastorale Munus"* Introduc. AAS 56, 1964, 5-12).

The Local Ordinary of the Archdiocese of San Fernando, Pampanga, reserves to his Episcopal Office the pasoral supervision on and administrative guidance of the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, and hereto extends special pastoral solicitude and patronage.

(Sgd.) ✠ OSCAR V. CRUZ, DD  
Archbishop  
San Fernando, Pampanga

(Sgd.) SERAFIN A. OCAMPO  
Chancellor  
EFFECTIVE: 11 March 1981

## III

## ORDINANCES

1. The *SHRINE* shall be the terminal place of the Concordia Pilgrimages in the Archdiocese, and of all Marian Pilgrimages the various Religious Organizations in the Archdiocese may want to undertake for devotional or penitential purposes.
2. The *SHRINE* shall have to excel in Liturgical Celebrations, foremost of which are the daily Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the regular exposition, procession and benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament particularly on days dedicated to and during feasts in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
3. The *SHRINE* shall hold a Perpetual Novena devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, preferably every Saturday, and shall provide preferential services to the Faithful who frequent it for spiritual, physical and temporal favors.
4. The *RECTOR* shall have for his personal and equitable subsidy — aside from the perception of the customary stipends on the occasion of the celebration of the Holy Mass — any and all duly approved stipends for the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony for which he shall have habitual but temporary ministerial faculties, in addition to any and all donations in kind or in cash given to him for strictly personal reasons on the part of the donors.
5. The *RECTOR* shall have the habitual and permanent ministerial faculties for hearing confessions, for distributing Holy Communion, for preaching the Word of God, for anointing the sick and hereto giving Holy Communion, for blessing things, places and persons — except in the case of funerals which are strictly reserved to the Parish Priest of San Guillermo — and for presiding at all the liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations at the Shrine.
6. The *RECTOR* shall have the habitual and permanent ministerial faculties for absolving from all Reserved Sins, and for delegating his own faculties to any guest or visiting Deacon or Priest of good moral and canonical standing in the Archdiocese or in another Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction or Religious Community whereto he belongs pursuant to law.

7. The *RECTORAL COUNCIL* in close coordination and collaboration with the Rector, shall establish Standing and Ad Hoc Committees to ascertain the realization of the ministerial preferences of the Shrine and the ministerial charges of the Rector.
8. The *RECTORAL COUNCIL* in close coordination and collaboration with the Rector, shall receive and administer all and whatever donations and collections are made specifically in favor of the Shrine, in or outside hereof, shall undertake the Shrine maintenance, repair and opted construction, and shall assure the due remuneration of the Shrine clerical and manual personnel, and the subvention of the Rector — in the event that this is needed — but only from the collections perceived at the Shrine on the occasion of liturgical and devotional celebrations.
9. The *RECTORAL COUNCIL* in close coordination and collaboration with the Rector, shall assiduously keep the Book of Accounts of receipt and expenditure, the Book of Inventory of the movable and immovable properties of the Shrine, and the Bank Books if any.
10. There shall be regular spiritual and medical *MINISTRY* at the Shrine in favor of the sick and the disabled.
11. There shall be regular evangelical and temporal *MINISTRY* at the Shrine to help the poor of Christ.
12. There shall be regular catechetical and reconciliatory *MINISTRY* at the Shrine for the instruction of those ignorant of the Catholic Faith and Morals and for the individual sacramental confession of sinners.
13. The *PARISH PRIEST* of San Guillermo by strength of his jurisdictional prerogative, shall perceive 20% of any stipend given for the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony at the Shrine.
14. The *PARISH PRIEST* of San Guillermo shall provide the Shrine with the Canonical Books of Baptism and Matrimony which should carry the heading of the Parish and the subheading of the Shrine, shall keep these Books in custody when already filled up with the pertinent entries, and shall have the right of issuing the pursuant Baptismal and Matrimonial Certificates thereafter.

15. The *PARISH PRIEST* of San Guillermo shall hold in high pastoral regard and esteem the ministerial outreach of the Rector of the Shrine for the evangelization of the Faithful specifically residing at Cabetican, Bacolor.
16. The *ARCHBISHOP OF SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA*, shall have the immediate and ultimate jurisdictional competence to officially resolve doubts, to formally decide conflicts, to duly enact provisions, and to abrogate, derogate or subrogate the *DECREE OF ESTABLISHMENT*, the *STATUTES* and *ORDINANCES* all pertaining to the *SHRINE OUR LADY OF LOURDES*, pursuant to law, ecclesial order and pastoral prudence.

(Sgd.) ✠ OSCAR V. CRUZ, DD  
Archbishop  
San Fernando, Pampanga

(Sgd.) SERAFIN A. OCAMPO  
Chancellor

EFFECTIVE: 11 March 1981