



# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

Pope John Paul II

PENITENTIAL DAYS AND PRACTICES FOR THE  
FILIPINO CATHOLIC

Florencio Testera, O.P.

REPORT ON THE ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON ACTIVE AGING

The Social Research Center  
University of Santo Tomas

ON LAY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION,  
MASTERS OF CEREMONIES AND CHOIR-DIRECTORS

Herman Graf, SVD

VOLUME LVI, NOS. 630-631

MAY - JUNE, 1982

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

<b>EDITOR</b>	EFREN RIVERA, O.P.
<b>ASSOCIATE EDITORS</b>	PEDRO LUIS GONZALEZ, O.P. JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P.
<b>EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS</b>	FRANCISCO DEL RIO, O.P. JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P. BONIFACIO SOLIS, O.P.
<b>PUBLICATION ASSISTANT</b>	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, 1982). Yearly subscription in the Philippines.

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Newsprint	P45	P85	P125
Bookpaper	P55	P100	P150

Price per copy: Newsprint — P8.00. Bookpaper — P10.00. Back issue, P8.00. Abroad, \$25.00 per year. Back issue, \$6.00. 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 communications to:

**BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS**

Fathers' Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
Manila, Philippines



---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

**EDITORIAL**

290 IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MA(R)Y

**DOCUMENTATION**

- Pope John Paul VI 293 FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

**FEATURES**

- Florencio Testera, O.P. 337 PENITENTIAL DAYS AND PRACTICES FOR THE FILIPINO CATHOLIC
- The Social Research Center  
University of Santo Tomas 344 REPORT ON THE ASIAN REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON ACTIVE AGING
- The Social Research Center  
University of Santo Tomas 348 ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
ACTIVE AGING (Conclusions)

**HISTORY**

- Pablo Fernandez, O.P. 354 III. DOMINICAN MISSIONS IN BATAAN

**LITURGY**

- Herman Graf, S.V.D. 361 ON LAY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION,  
MASTERS OF CEREMONIES, AND  
CHOIR-DIRECTORS

**HOMILETICS**

- Herman Mueller, S.V.D. 366 BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES  
FOR HOMILIES (June-July 1982)
-

## EDITORIAL

# IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MA(R)Y

A news item which was reported recently in one of the local dailies (*Daily Express*, April 20) informs us of recent findings concerning the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe venerated in Mexico City. Already unexplainable is the fact that throughout the centuries the "serape" of Juan Diego, the poor peasant, on which the image of the Virgin was miraculously depicted has been wondrously preserved. The painting itself is unique and the pigment is different from hitherto known paintings. What was immensely surprising was the discovery of tiny frames in the iris of the Virgin's eyes, which, when greatly enlarged, were found to contain portraits of personages who figured prominently in the story of the Guadalupe apparitions, like Juan Diego, the bishop, some Franciscans

We speak of wonders, surprises, miracles, but, then, in the Church, where the supernatural is the reality, these are ordinary occurrences. It would be of interest to note that in Sacred Scripture especially in St. John, God's acts are not termed "miracles" but "signs". They are signs that the divine has enveloped the world. In this perspective the Church herself is a miracle, the sacraments are miracles, the palpable patronage of the Blessed Virgin in favor of her children are miracles. But since the supernatural has become ordinary those who are aware of the divine reality enveloping the world are not anymore surprised, do not anymore wonder.

Thus, the ever recurring apparitions of the Blessed Virgin are signs of the continuous presence of the divine or the supernatural within us, the Immanuel or God-with-us.

Unfortunately false manifestations and apparitions do happen and the Church guided by the Holy Spirit reserves to herself the prerogative of judging the authenticity, supernaturality and relevance of such occurrences.

Some apparitions, in fact, have been confirmed as genuine by the Church and as we enter this month of May the apparitions of Fatima immediately catch our attention since it was on the 13th of May that the monthly manifestations of Our Lady to the three children began and ended in October, another month of Mary, with the famous miracle of the sun.

A further interest has centered on Fatima because of the scheduled visit of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, to fulfill his act of thanksgiving for escaping the attempted assassination on precisely May 13 last year.

Speculations as to the relationships between the tragic event of last and the Holy Father's visit to the site of the apparitions this year with the hitherto undisclosed third secret of Fatima have again emerged. We are not in a position to give an answer.

Nevertheless, related or not, the Holy Father, knowing his great devotion to the Mother of God and his providential escape on such a noteworthy date, did make a vow to thank the Blessed Virgin at Fatima, which promise he would surely fulfil this May.

The presently known message of Fatima and the fulfilled predictions are widely known. It is the "third secret" that intrigues the curious. Some have even concocted a version of this secret.

I do believe nothing new would be added to the message which was already revealed. If it again contains predictions of future events, just like the forecast of the second World War, we must realize that this would be all part of God's providential act on mankind.



Shall any future divine act on redeemed humanity build God's kingdom more? Is another time for cutting dead branches and pruning the vine imminent? Will gross materialism be set fire upon the earth so that the spiritual would brightly emerge anew? Our Blessed Mother has already answered these questions when she said: "In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph, Russia will be converted and the world will enjoy a period of peace."

To the believers, then, and to Mary's children the message of Fatima, including the unrevealed ones, is surely a great warmth, to the curious and indifferent, a gnawing worm, but to the unbelievers, a grim warning.

## **APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION**

### **FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO**

*(Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II  
on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World)*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **The Church at the service of the family**

1. The family in the modern world, as much as and perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture. Many families are living this situation in fidelity to those values that constitute the foundation of the institution of the family. Others have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful and almost unaware of the ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life. Finally, there are others who are hindered by various situations of injustice in the realization of their fundamental rights.

Knowing that marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values, the Church wishes to speak and offer her help to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for the truth, and to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives. Supporting the first, illuminating the second and assisting the others, the Church offers her services to every person who wonders about the destiny of marriage and the family.<sup>1</sup>

In a particular way the Church addresses the young, who are beginning their journey towards marriage and family life, for the purpose of presenting them with new horizons, helping them to discover the beauty and grandeur of the vocation to love and the service of life.

##### **The Synod of 1980 in continuity with preceding Synods**

2. A sign of this profound interest of the Church in the family was the last Synod of Bishops, held in Rome from 26

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.

September to 25 October 1980. This was a natural continuation of the two preceding Synods:<sup>2</sup> the Christian family, in fact, is the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her, through a progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity.

Furthermore, the recent Synod is logically connected in some way as well with that on the ministerial priesthood and on justice in the modern world. In fact, as an educating community, the family must help man to discern his own vocation and to accept responsibility in the search for greater justice, educating him from the beginning in interpersonal relationships, rich in justice and love.

At the close of their assembly, the Synod Fathers presented me with a long list of proposals in which they had gathered the fruits of their reflections, which had matured over intense days of work, and they asked me unanimously to be a spokesman before humanity of the Church's lively care for the family and to give suitable indications for renewed pastoral effort in this fundamental sector of the life of man and of the Church.

As I fulfil that mission with this Exhortation, thus actualizing in a particular matter the apostolic ministry with which I am entrusted, I wish to thank all the members of the Synod for the very valuable contribution of teaching and experience that they made, especially through the *Propositiones*, the text of which I am entrusting to the Pontifical Council for the Family with instructions to study it so as to bring out every aspect of its rich content.

### **The precious value of marriage and of the family**

3. Illuminated by the faith that gives her an understanding of all the truth concerning the great value of marriage and the family and their deepest meaning, the Church once again feels the pressing need to proclaim the Gospel, that is the "good news", to all people without exception, in particular to all those who are called to marriage and are preparing for it, to all married couples and parents in the world.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Homily for the Opening of the Sixth Synod of Bishops (26 September 1980), 2: AAS 72 (1980), 1008.



The Church is deeply convinced that only by the acceptance of the Gospel are the hopes that man legitimately places in marriage and in the family capable of being fulfilled.

Willed by God in the very act of creation,<sup>3</sup> marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfilment in Christ<sup>4</sup> and have need of his graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin<sup>5</sup> and restored to their "beginning",<sup>6</sup> that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God's plan.

At a moment of history in which the family is the object of numerous forces that seek to destroy it or in some way to deform it, and aware that the well-being of society and her own good are intimately tied to the good of the family,<sup>7</sup> the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God.

## PART ONE

### BRIGHT SPOTS AND SHADOWS FOR THE FAMILY TODAY

#### The need to understand the situation

4. Since God's plan for marriage and the family touches men and women in the concreteness of their daily existence in specific social and cultural situations, the Church ought to apply herself to understanding the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today, in order to fulfil her task of serving.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 5.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 47; Pope John Paul II, Letter *Appropinquat Iam* (15 August, 1980), 1: AAS 72 (1980), 791.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Mt.* 19:4.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops (23 February, 1980); *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, III, 1 (1980), 472-476.

This understanding is, therefore, an inescapable requirement of the work of evangelization. It is, in fact, to the families of our times that the Church must bring the unchangeable and ever new Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as it is the families involved in the present conditions of the world that are called to accept and to live the plan of God that pertains to them. Moreover, the call and demands of the Spirit resound in the very events of history, and so the Church can also be guided to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family by the circumstances, the questions and the anxieties and hopes of the young people, married couples and parents of today.<sup>9</sup>

To this ought to be added a further reflection of particular importance at the present time. Not infrequently ideas and solutions which are very appealing, but which obscure in varying degrees the truth and the dignity of the human person, are offered to the men and women of today, in their sincere and deep search for a response to the important daily problems that affect their married and family life. These views are often supported by the powerful and pervasive organization of the means of social communication, which subtly endanger freedom and the capacity for objective judgment.

Many are already aware of this danger to the human person and are working for the truth. The Church, with her evangelical discernment, joins with them, offering her own service to the truth, to freedom and to the dignity of every man and every woman.

### Evangelical discernment

5. The discernment effected by the Church becomes the offering of an orientation in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized.

This discernment is accomplished through the sense of faith,<sup>10</sup> which is a gift that the Spirit gives to all the faithful,<sup>11</sup> and is therefore the work of the whole Church according to the diversity of the various gifts and charisms that, together with and according to the responsibility proper to each one, work

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. 1 Jn. 2:20.

together for a more profound understanding and activation of the word of God. The Church, therefore, does not accomplish this discernment only through the Pastors, who teach in the name and with the power of Christ, but also through the laity: Christ "made them his witnesses and gave them understanding of the faith and the grace of speech (cf. *Acts* 2:17-18; *Rev.* 19:10), so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life".<sup>12</sup> The laity, moreover, by reason of their particular vocation have the specific role of interpreting the history of the world in the light of Christ, in as much as they are called to illuminate and organize temporal realities according to the plan of God, Creator and Redeemer.

The "supernatural sense of faith"<sup>13</sup> however does not consist solely or necessarily in the consensus of the faith. Following Christ, the Church seeks the truth, which is not always the same as the majority opinion. She listens to conscience and not to power, and in this way she defends the poor and the downtrodden. The Church values sociological and statistical research, when it proves helpful in understanding the historical context in which pastoral action has to be developed and when it leads to a better understanding of the truth. Such research alone, however, is not to be considered in itself an expression of the sense of faith.

Because it is the task of the apostolic ministry to ensure that the Church remains in the truth of Christ and to lead her ever more deeply into that truth, the Pastors must promote the sense of the faith in all the faithful, examine and authoritatively judge the genuineness of its expressions, and educate the faithful in an ever more mature evangelical discernment.<sup>14</sup>

Christian spouses and parents can and should offer their unique and irreplaceable contribution to the elaboration of an authentic evangelical discernment in the various situations and cultures in which men and women live their marriage and their family life. They are qualified for this role by their charism or specific gift, the gift of the sacrament of matrimony.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 35.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 12; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, 2: AAS 65 (1973), 398-400.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 12; Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Homily for the opening of the Sixth Synod of Bishops (26 September, 1980), 3: AAS 72 (1980), 1008.



**The situation of the family in the world today**

6. The situation in which the family finds itself presents positive and negative aspects: the first are a sign of the salvation of Christ operating in the world; the second, a sign of the refusal that man gives to the love of God.

On the one hand, in fact, there is a more lively awareness of personal freedom and greater attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage, to promoting the dignity of women, to responsible procreation, to the education of children. There is also an awareness of the need for the development of interfamily relationships, for reciprocal spiritual and material assistance, the rediscovery of the ecclesial mission proper to the family and its responsibility for the building of a more just society. On the other hand, however, signs are not lacking of a disturbing degradation of some fundamental values: a mistaken theoretical and practical concept of the independence of the spouses in relation to each other; serious misconceptions regarding the relationship of authority between parents and children; the concrete difficulties that the family itself experiences in the transmission of values; the growing number of divorces; the scourge of abortion; the ever more frequent recourse to sterilization; the appearance of a truly contraceptive mentality.

At the root of these negative phenomena there frequently lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God's plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others, for one's own selfish well-being.

Worthy of our attention also is the fact that, in the countries of the so-called Third World, families often lack both the means necessary for survival, such as food, work, housing and medicine, and the most elementary freedoms. In the richer countries, on the contrary, excessive prosperity and the consumer mentality, paradoxically joined to a certain anguish and uncertainty about the future, deprive married couples of the generosity and courage needed for raising up new human life: thus life is often perceived not as a blessing, but as a danger from which to defend oneself.

The historical situation in which the family lives therefore appears as an interplay of light and darkness.

This shows that history is not simply a fixed progression towards what is better, but rather an event of freedom, and even a struggle between freedoms that are in mutual conflict, that is, according to the well-known expression of Saint Augustine, a conflict between two loves: the love of God to the point of disregarding self, and the love of self to the point of disregarding God.<sup>16</sup>

It follows that only an education for love rooted in faith can lead to the capacity of interpreting "the signs of the times", which are the historical expression of this twofold love.

### **The influence of circumstances on the consciences of the faithful**

7. Living in such a world, under the pressures coming above all from the mass media, the faithful do not always remain immune from the obscuring of certain fundamental values, nor set themselves up as the critical conscience of family culture and as active agents in the building of an authentic family humanism.

Among the more troubling signs of this phenomenon, the Synod Fathers stressed the following, in particular: the spread of divorce and of recourse to a new union, even on the part of the faithful; the acceptance of purely civil marriage in contradiction to the vocation of the baptized to "be married in the Lord"; the celebration of the marriage sacrament without living faith, but for other motives; the rejection of the moral norms that guide and promote the human and Christian exercise of sexuality in marriage.

### **Our age needs wisdom**

8. The whole Church is obliged to a deep reflection and commitment, so that the new culture now emerging may be evangelized in depth, true values acknowledged, the rights of men and women defended, and justice promoted in the very structures of society. In this way the "new humanism" will not distract people from their relationship with God, but will lead them to it more fully.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28 CSEL 40, II, 56-57.

Science and its technical applications offer new and immense possibilities in the construction of such a humanism. Still, as a consequence of political choices that decide the direction of research and its applications, science is often used against its original purpose, which is the advancement of the human person.

It becomes necessary, therefore, on the part of all, to recover an awareness of the primacy of moral values, which are the values of the human person as such. The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values. Only an awareness of the primacy of these values enables man to use the immense possibilities given him by science in such a way as to bring about the true advancement of the human person in his or her whole truth, in his or her freedom and dignity. Science is called to ally itself with wisdom.

The following words of the Second Vatican Council can therefore be applied to the problems of the family: "Our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages if the discoveries made by man are to be further humanized. For the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser people are forthcoming".<sup>17</sup>

The education of the moral conscience, which makes every human being capable of judging and of discerning the proper ways to achieve self-realization according to his or her original truth, thus becomes a pressing requirement that cannot be renounced.

Modern culture must be led to a more profoundly restored covenant with divine Wisdom. Every man is given a share of such Wisdom through the creating action of God. And it is only in faithfulness to this covenant that the families of today will be in a position to influence positively the building of a more just and fraternal world.

### **Gradualness and conversion**

9. To the injustice originating from sin — which has profoundly penetrated the structures of today's world — and often hindering the family's full realization of itself and of its fundamental rights, we must all set ourselves in opposition through a conversion of mind and heart, following Christ Crucified by

<sup>17</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 15.



denying our own selfishness: such a conversion cannot fail to have a beneficial and renewing influence even on the structures of society.

What is needed is a continuous, permanent conversion which, while requiring an interior detachment from every evil and an adherence to good in its fullness, is brought about concretely in steps which lead us ever forward. Thus a dynamic process develops, one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God and the demands of his definitive and absolute love in the entire personal and social life of man. Therefore an educational growth process is necessary, in order that individual believers, families and peoples, even civilization itself, by beginning from what they have already received of the mystery of Christ, may patiently be led forward, arriving at a richer understanding and a fuller integration of this mystery in their lives.

### **Inculturation**

10. In conformity with her constant tradition, the Church receives from the various cultures everything that is able to express better the unsearchable riches of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Only with the help of all the cultures will it be possible for these riches to be manifested ever more clearly, and for the Church to progress towards a daily more complete and profound awareness of the truth, which has already been given to her in its entirety by the Lord.

Holding fast to the two principles of the compatibility with the Gospel of the various cultures to be taken up and of communion with the universal Church, there must be further study, particularly by the Episcopal Conferences and the appropriate departments of the Roman Curia, and greater pastoral diligence so that this "inculturation" of the Christian faith may come about ever more extensively, in the context of marriage and the family as well as in other fields.

It is by means of "inculturation" that one proceeds towards the full restoration of the covenant with the Wisdom of God, which is Christ himself. The whole Church will be enriched also by the cultures which, though lacking technology, abound in human wisdom and are enlivened by profound moral values.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 3:8; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 44; Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 15, 22.

So that the goal of this journey might be clear and consequently the way plainly indicated, the Synod was right to begin by considering in depth the original design of God for marriage and the family: it "went back to the beginning", in deference to the teaching of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

## PART TWO

### THE PLAN OF GOD FOR MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

#### Man, the image of the God who is love

11. God created man in his own image and likeness:<sup>20</sup> calling him to existence *through love*, he called him at the same time *for love*.

God is love<sup>21</sup> and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.<sup>22</sup> Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.

As an incarnate spirit, that is a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love.

Christian revelation recognizes two specific ways of realizing the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love: marriage and virginity or celibacy. Either one is, in its own proper form, an actuation of the most profound truth of man, of his being "created in the image of God".

Consequently, sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Mt.* 19:4-6.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 1:26-27.

<sup>21</sup> *1 Jn.* 4:8.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 12.

purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally.

This totality which is required by conjugal love also corresponds to the demands of responsible fertility. This fertility is directed to the generation of a human being, and so by its nature it surpasses the purely biological order and involves a whole series of personal values. For the harmonious growth of these values a persevering and unified contribution by both parents is necessary.

The only "place" in which this self-giving in its whole truth is made possible is marriage, the covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God himself,<sup>23</sup> which only in this light manifests its true meaning. The institution of marriage is not an undue interference by society or authority, nor the extrinsic imposition of a form. Rather it is an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publicly affirmed as unique and exclusive, in order to live in complete fidelity to the plan of God, the Creator. A person's freedom, far from being restricted by this fidelity, is secured against every form of subjectivism or relativism and is made a sharer in creative Wisdom.

### **Marriage and communion between God and people**

12. The communion of love between God and people, a fundamental part of the Revelation and faith experience of Israel, finds a meaningful expression in the marriage covenant which is established between a man and a woman.

For this reason the central word of Revelation, "God loves his people", is likewise proclaimed through the living and concrete word whereby a man and a woman express their conjugal love. Their bond of love becomes the image and the symbol

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 48.

of the covenant which unites God and his people.<sup>24</sup> And the same sin which can harm the conjugal covenant becomes an image of the infidelity of the people to their God: idolatry is prostitution,<sup>25</sup> infidelity is adultery, disobedience to the law is abandonment of the spousal love of the Lord. But the infidelity of Israel does not destroy the eternal fidelity of the Lord, and therefore the ever faithful love of God is put forward as the model of the relations of faithful love which should exist between spouses.<sup>26</sup>

### **Jesus Christ, Bridegroom of the Church, and the sacrament of Matrimony**

13. The communion between God and his people finds its definitive fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom who loves and gives himself as the Saviour of humanity, uniting it to himself as his body.

He reveals the original truth of marriage, the truth of the "beginning",<sup>27</sup> and, freeing man from his hardness of heart, he makes man capable of realizing this truth in its entirety.

This revelation reaches its definitive fullness in the gift of love which the Word of God makes to humanity in assuming a human nature, and in the sacrifice which Jesus Christ makes of himself on the Cross for his bride, the Church. In this sacrifice there is entirely revealed that plan which God has imprinted on the humanity of man and woman since their creation;<sup>28</sup> the marriage of baptized persons thus becomes a real symbol of that new and eternal covenant sanctioned in the blood of Christ. The Spirit which the Lord pours forth gives a new heart, and renders man and woman capable of loving one another as Christ has loved us. Conjugal love reaches that fullness to which it is interiorly ordained, conjugal charity, which is the proper and specific way in which the spouses participate in and are called to live the very charity of Christ who gave himself on the Cross.

In a deservedly famous page, Tertullian has well expressed the greatness of this conjugal life in Christ and its beauty: "How can I ever express the happiness of the marriage that is joined

<sup>24</sup> Cf. e.g. *Hos.* 2:21; *Jer.* 3:6-13; *Is.* 54.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Ezek.* 16:25.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Hos.* 3.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 2:24; *Mt.* 19:5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 5:32-33.

together by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels and ratified by the Father?... How wonderful the bond between two believers, with a single hope, a single desire, a single observance, a single service! They are both brethren and both fellow-servants; there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh; in fact they are truly two in one flesh, and where the flesh is one, one is the spirit".<sup>29</sup>

Receiving and meditating faithfully on the word of God, the Church has solemnly taught and continues to teach that the marriage of the baptized is one of the seven sacraments of the New Covenant.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, by means of baptism, man and woman are definitely placed within the new and eternal covenant, in the spousal covenant of Christ with the Church. And it is because of this indestructible insertion that the intimate community of conjugal life and love, founded by the Creator,<sup>31</sup> is elevated and assumed into the spousal charity of Christ, sustained and enriched by his redeeming power.

By virtue of the sacramentality of their marriage, spouses are bound to one another in the most profoundly indissoluble manner. Their belonging to each other is the real representation, by means of the sacramental sign, of the very relationship of Christ with the Church.

Spouses are therefore the permanent reminder to the Church of what happened on the Cross; they are for one another and for the children witnesses to the salvation in which the sacrament makes them sharers. Of this salvation event marriage, like every sacrament, is a memorial, actuation and prophecy. "As a memorial, the sacrament gives them the grace and duty of commemorating the great works of God and of bearing witness to them before their children. As actuation, it gives them the grace and duty of putting into practice in the present, towards each other and their children, the demands of a love which forgives and redeems. As prophecy, it gives them the grace and duty of living and bearing witness to the hope of the future encounter with Christ".<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Uxorem*, II, VIII, 6-8: CCL, I, 393.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXIV, canon 1: I.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, 33, 149-150.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Delegates of the Centre de Liaison des Equipes de Recherche (3 November 1979), 3: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II, 2 (1979), 1038.

Like each of the seven sacraments, so also marriage is a real symbol of the event of salvation, but in its own way. "The spouses participate in it as spouses, together, as a couple, so that the first and immediate effect of marriage (*res et sacramentum*) is not supernatural grace itself, but the Christian conjugal bond, a typically Christian communion of two persons because it represents the mystery of Christ's incarnation and the mystery of his covenant. The content of participation in Christ's life is also specific: conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter — appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility (cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 9). In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values".<sup>33</sup>

### Children, the precious gift of marriage

14. According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning.<sup>34</sup>

In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal "knowledge" which makes them "one flesh",<sup>35</sup> does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: *loc. cit.*, 1032.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 2:24.



When they become parents, spouses receive from God the gift of a new responsibility. Their parental love is called to become for the children the visible sign of the very love of God. "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named".<sup>36</sup>

It must not be forgotten however that, even when procreation is not possible, conjugal life does not for this reason lose its value. Physical sterility in fact can be for spouses the occasion for other important services to the life of the human person, for example, adoption, various form of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children.

### **The family, a communion of persons**

15. In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up — married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity — through which each human person is introduced into the "human family" and into the "family of God", which is the Church.

Christian marriage and the Christian family build up the Church: for in the family the human person is not only brought into being and progressively introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of the rebirth of baptism and education in the faith the child is also introduced into God's family, which is the Church.

The human family, disunited by sin, is reconstituted in its unity by the redemptive power of the death and Resurrection of Christ.<sup>37</sup> Christian marriage, by participating in the salvific efficacy of this event, constitutes the natural setting in which the human person is introduced into the great family of the Church.

The commandment to grow and multiply, given to man and woman in the beginning, in this way reaches its whole truth and full realization.

The Church thus finds in the family, born from the sacrament, the cradle and the setting in which she can enter the human generations, and where these in their turn can enter the Church.

<sup>36</sup> *Eph.* 3:15.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 78.

**Marriage and virginity or celibacy**

16. Virginity or celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God not only does not contradict the dignity of marriage but presupposes it and confirms it. Marriage and virginity or celibacy are two ways of expressing and living the one mystery of the covenant of God with his people. When marriage is not esteemed, neither can consecrated virginity or celibacy exist; when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven loses its meaning.

Rightly indeed does Saint John Chrysostom say: "Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be particularly good. It is something better than what is admitted to be good that is the most excellent good".<sup>38</sup>

In virginity or celibacy, the human being is awaiting, also in a bodily way, the eschatological marriage of Christ with the Church, giving himself or herself completely to the Church in the hope that Christ may give himself to the Church in the full truth of eternal life. The celibate person thus anticipates in his or her flesh the new world of the future resurrection.<sup>39</sup>

By virtue of this witness, virginity or celibacy keeps alive in the Church a consciousness of the mystery of marriage and defends it from any reduction and impoverishment.

Virginity or celibacy, by liberating the human heart in a unique way,<sup>40</sup> "so as to make it burn with greater love for God and all humanity",<sup>41</sup> bears witness that the Kingdom of God and his justice is that pearl of great price which is preferred to every other value no matter how great, and hence must be sought as the only definitive value. It is for this reason that the Church, throughout her history, has always defended the superiority of this charism to that of marriage, by reason of the wholly singular link which it has with the Kingdom of God.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Saint John Chrysostom *Virginity*, X: PG 48:540.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Mt.* 22:30.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *1 Cor.* 7:32-35.

<sup>41</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Renewal of Religious Life *Perfectae Caritatis*, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical *Sacra Virginitas*, II: AAS 46 (1954), 174 ff.

In spite of having renounced physical fecundity, the celibate person becomes spiritually fruitful, the father and mother of many, cooperating in the realization of the family according to God's plan.

Christian couples therefore have the right to expect from celibate persons a good example and a witness of fidelity to their vocation until death. Just as fidelity at times becomes difficult for married people and requires sacrifice, mortification and self-denial, the same can happen to celibate persons, and their fidelity, even in the trials that may occur, should strengthen the fidelity of married couples.<sup>43</sup>

These reflections on virginity or celibacy can enlighten and help those who, for reasons independent of their own will, have been unable to marry and have then accepted their situation in a spirit of service.

### PART THREE

## THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

### Family, become what you are

17. The family finds in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer not only its *identity*, what it *is*, but also its *mission*, what it can and should *do*. The role that God calls the family to perform in history derives from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, *become what you are*.

Accordingly, the family must go back to the "beginning" of God's creative act, if it is to attain self-knowledge and self-realization in accordance with the inner truth not only of what it is but also of what it does in history. And since in God's plan it has been established as an "intimate community of life and love",<sup>44</sup> the family has the mission to become more and more what it is, that is to say, a community of life and love,

<sup>43</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Letter *Novo Incipiente* (8 April, 1979), 9: AAS 71 (1979), 410-411.

<sup>44</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

in an effort that will find fulfillment, as will everything created and redeemed, in the Kingdom of God. Looking at it in such a way as to reach its very roots, we must say that the essence and role of the family are in the final analysis specified by love. Hence the family has *the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love*, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church his bride.

Every particular task of the family is an expression and concrete actuation of that fundamental mission. We must therefore go deeper into the unique riches of the family's mission and probe its contents, which are both manifold and unified.

Thus, with love as its point of departure and making constant reference to it, the recent Synod emphasized four general tasks for the family:

- 1) forming a community of persons;
- 2) serving life;
- 3) participating in the development of society;
- 4) sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

## I — FORMING A COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

### Love as the principle and power of communion

18. The family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons.

The inner principle of that task, its permanent power and its final goal is love: without love the family is not a community of persons and, in the same way, *without love the family cannot live, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons*. What I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* applies primarily and especially within the family as such: "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it".<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, 10: AAS 71 (1979), 274.

The love between husband and wife and, in a derivatory and broader way, the love between members of the same family — between parents and children, brothers and sisters and relatives and members of the household — is given life and sustenance by an unceasing inner dynamism leading the family to ever deeper and more intense *communion*, which is the foundation and soul of the *community* of marriage and the family.

### The indivisible unity of conjugal communion

19. The first communion is the one which is established and which develops between husband and wife: by virtue of the covenant of married life, the man and woman "are no longer two but one flesh"<sup>46</sup> and they are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving.

This conjugal communion sinks its roots in the natural complementarity that exists between man and woman, and is nurtured through the personal willingness of the spouses to share their entire life-project, what they have and what they are: for this reason such communion is the fruit and the sign of a profoundly human need. But in the Lord Christ God takes up this human need, confirms it, purifies it and elevates it, leading it to perfection through the sacrament of Matrimony: the Holy Spirit who is poured out in the sacramental celebration offers Christian couples the gift of a new communion of love that is the living and real image of that unique unity which makes of the Church the indivisible Mystical Body of the Lord Jesus.

The gift of the Spirit is a commandment of life for Christian spouses and at the same time a stimulating impulse so that every day they may progress towards an ever richer union with each other on all levels — of the body, of the character, of the heart, of the intelligence and will, of the soul<sup>47</sup> — revealing in this way to the Church and to the world the new communion of love, given by the grace of Christ.

Such a communion is radically contradicted by polygamy: this, in fact, directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal

<sup>46</sup> Mt. 19:6; cf. Gen. 2:24.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Address to Married People at Kinshasa (3 May, 1980), 4: AAS 72 (1980), 426-427.

dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive. As the Second Vatican Council writes: "Firmly established by the Lord, the unity of marriage will radiate from the equal personal dignity of husband and wife, a dignity acknowledged by mutual and total love".<sup>48</sup>

### **An indissoluble communion**

20. Conjugal communion is characterized not only by its unity but also by its indissolubility: "As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them".<sup>49</sup>

It is a fundamental duty of the Church to reaffirm strongly, as the Synod Fathers did, the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. To all those who, in our times, consider it too difficult, or indeed impossible, to be bound to one person for the whole of life, and to those caught up in a culture that rejects the indissolubility of marriage and openly mocks the commitment of spouses to fidelity, it is necessary to reconfirm the good news of the definitive nature of that conjugal love that has in Christ its foundation and strength.<sup>50</sup>

Being rooted in the personal and total self-giving of the couple, and being required by the good of the children, the indissolubility of marriage finds its ultimate truth in the plan that God has manifested in his revelation: he wills and he communicates the indissolubility of marriage as a fruit, a sign and a requirement of the absolutely faithful love that God has for man and that the Lord Jesus has for the Church.

Christ renews the first plan that the Creator inscribed in the hearts of man and woman, and in the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony offers "a new heart": thus the couples are not only able to overcome "hardness of heart",<sup>51</sup> but also and above all they are able to share the full and definitive love

<sup>48</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 49; cf. John Paul II, Address to Married People at Kinshasa (3 May 1980), 4: *loc. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 5:25.

<sup>51</sup> *Mt.* 19:8.



of Christ, the new and eternal Covenant made flesh. Just as the Lord Jesus is the "faithful witness",<sup>52</sup> the "yes" of the promises of God<sup>53</sup> and thus the supreme realization of the unconditional faithfulness with which God loves his people, so Christian couples are called to participate truly in the irrevocable indissolubility that binds Christ to the Church his bride, loved by him to the end.<sup>54</sup>

The gift of the sacrament is at the same time a vocation and commandment for the Christian spouses, that they may remain faithful to each other forever, beyond every trial and difficulty, in generous obedience to the holy will of the Lord: 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder'.<sup>55</sup>

To bear witness to the inestimable value of the indissolubility and fidelity of marriage is one of the most precious and most urgent tasks of Christian couples in our time. So, with all my Brothers who participated in the Synod of Bishops, I praise and encourage those numerous couples who, though encountering no small difficulty, preserve and develop the value of indissolubility: thus, in a humble and courageous manner, they perform the role committed to them of being in the world a "sign" — a small and precious sign, sometimes also subjected to temptation, but always renewed — of the unfailing fidelity with which God and Jesus Christ love each and every human being. But it is also proper to recognize the value of the witness of those spouses who, even when abandoned by their partner, with the strength of faith and of Christian hope have not entered a new union: these spouses too give an authentic witness to fidelity, of which the world today has a great need. For this reason they must be encouraged and helped by the pastors and the faithful of the Church.

### The broader communion of the family

21. Conjugal communion constitutes the foundation on which is built the broader communion of the family, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters with each other, of relatives and other members of the household.

<sup>52</sup> *Rev.* 3:14.

<sup>53</sup> *Cf.* 2 *Cor.* 1:20.

<sup>54</sup> *Cf.* *Jn.* 13:1.

<sup>55</sup> *Mt.* 19:6.

This communion is rooted in the natural bonds of flesh and blood, and grows to its specifically human perfection with the establishment and maturing of the still deeper and richer bonds of the spirit: the love that animates the interpersonal relationships of the different members of the family constitutes the interior strength that shapes and animates the family communion and community.

The Christian family is also called to experience a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural and human communion. In fact the grace of Jesus Christ, "the first-born among many brethren",<sup>56</sup> is by its nature and interior dynamism "a grace of brotherhood", as Saint Thomas Aquinas calls it.<sup>57</sup> The Holy Spirit, who is poured forth in the celebration of the sacraments, is the living source and inexhaustible sustenance of the supernatural communion that gathers believers and links them, with Christ and with each other in the unity of the Church of God. The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called "the domestic Church".<sup>58</sup>

All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family "a school of deeper humanity":<sup>59</sup> this happens where there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the aged; where there is mutual service every day; when there is a sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows.

A fundamental opportunity for building such a communion is constituted by the educational exchange between parents and children,<sup>60</sup> in which each gives and receives. By means of love, respect and obedience towards their parents, children offer their specific and irreplaceable contribution to the construction of an authentically human and Christian family.<sup>61</sup> They will be aided in this if parents exercise their unrenounceable authority as a

<sup>56</sup> *Rom.* 8:29.

<sup>57</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 14, art. 2, ad 4.

<sup>58</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 11; cf. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 6:1-4; *Col.* 3:20-21.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

true and proper "ministry", that is, as a service to the human and Christian well-being of their children, and in particular as a service aimed at helping them acquire a truly responsible freedom, and if parents maintain a living awareness of the "gift" they continually receive from their children.

Family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a great spirit of sacrifice. It requires, in fact, a ready and generous openness of each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon, to reconciliation. There is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion: hence there arise the many and varied forms of division in family life. But, at the same time, every family is called by the God of peace to have the joyous and renewing experience of "reconciliation", that is, communion reestablished, unity restored. In particular, participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation and in the banquet of the one Body of Christ offers to the Christian family the grace and the responsibility of overcoming every division and of moving towards the fullness of communion willed by God, responding in this way to the ardent desire of the Lord: "that they may be one".<sup>62</sup>

### The rights and role of women

22. In that it is, and ought always to become, a communion and community of persons, the family finds in love the source and the constant impetus for welcoming, respecting and promoting each one of its members in his or her lofty dignity as a person, that is, as a living image of God. As the Synod Fathers rightly stated, the moral criterion for the authenticity of conjugal and family relationships consists in fostering the dignity and vocation of the individual persons, who achieve their fullness by sincere self-giving.<sup>63</sup>

In this perspective the Synod devoted special attention to women, to their rights and role within the family and society. In the same perspective are also to be considered men as husbands and fathers, and likewise children and the elderly.

Above all it is important to underline the equal dignity and responsibility of women with men. This equality is realized in

<sup>62</sup> *Jn.* 17:21.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 24.

a unique manner in that reciprocal self-giving by each one to the other and by both to the children which is proper to marriage and the family. What human reason intuitively perceives and acknowledges is fully revealed by the word of God: the history of salvation, in fact, is a continuous and luminous testimony to the dignity of women.

In creating the human race "male and female",<sup>64</sup> God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with the inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person. God then manifests the dignity of women in the highest form possible, by assuming human flesh from the Virgin Mary, whom the Church honours as the Mother of God, calling her the new Eve and presenting her as the model of redeemed woman. The sensitive respect of Jesus towards the women that he called to his following and his friendship, his appearing on Easter morning to a woman before the other disciples, the mission entrusted to women to carry the good news of the Resurrection to the Apostles — these are all signs that confirm the special esteem of the Lord Jesus for women. The Apostle Paul will say: "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus".<sup>65</sup>

### Women and society

23. Without intending to deal with all the various aspects of the vast and complex theme of the relationships between women and society, and limiting these remarks to a few essential points, one cannot but observe that in the specific area of family life a widespread social and cultural tradition has considered women's role to be exclusively that of wife and mother, without adequate access to public functions, which have generally been reserved for men.

There is no doubt that the equal dignity and responsibility of men and women fully justifies women's access to public functions. On the other hand the true advancement of women requires that clear recognition be given to the value of their maternal and family role, by comparison with all other public

<sup>64</sup> *Gen.* 1:27.

<sup>65</sup> *Gal.* 3:26, 28.

roles and all other professions. Furthermore, these roles and professions should be harmoniously combined, if we wish the evolution of society and culture to be truly and fully human.

This will come about more easily if, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Synod, a renewed "theology of work" can shed light upon and study in depth the meaning of work in the Christian life and determine the fundamental bond between work and the family and therefore the original and irreplaceable meaning of work in the home and in rearing children.<sup>66</sup> Therefore the Church can and should help modern society by tirelessly insisting that the work of women in the home be recognized and respected by all in its irreplaceable value. This is of particular importance in education: for possible discrimination between the different types of work and professions is eliminated at its very root once it is clear that all people, in every area, are working with equal rights and equal responsibilities. The image of God in man and in woman will thus be seen with added lustre.

While it must be recognized that women have the same right as men to perform various public functions, society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are *not in practice compelled* to work outside the home, and that their families can live and prosper in a dignified way even when they themselves devote their full time to their own family.

Furthermore, the mentality which honours women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome. This requires that men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and that society should create and develop conditions favouring work in the home.

With due respect to the different vocations of men and women, the Church must in her own life promote as far as possible their equality of rights and dignity: and this for the good of all, the family, the Church and society.

But clearly all of this does not mean for women a renunciation of their femininity or an imitation of the male role, but the fullness of true feminine humanity which should be expressed in their activity, whether in the family or outside of it, without disregarding the differences of customs and cultures in this sphere.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, 19: AAS 73 (1981), 625.

**Offences against women's dignity**

24. Unfortunately the Christian message about the dignity of women is contradicted by that persistent mentality which considers the human being not as a person but as a thing, as an object of trade, at the service of selfish interest and mere pleasure: the first victims of this mentality are women.

This mentality produces very bitter fruits, such as contempt for men and for women, slavery, oppression of the weak, pornography, prostitution — especially in an organized form — and all those various forms of discrimination that exist in the fields of education, employment, wages, etc.

Besides, many forms of degrading discrimination still persist today in a great part of our society that affect and seriously harm particular categories of women, as for example childless wives, widows, separated or divorced women, and unmarried mothers.

The Synod Fathers deplored these and other forms of discriminations as strongly as possible. I therefore ask that vigorous and incisive pastoral action be taken by all to overcome them definitively so that the image of God that shines in all human beings without exception may be fully respected.

**Men and husbands and fathers**

25. Within the conjugal and family communion-community, the man is called upon to live his gift and role as husband and father.

In his wife he sees the fulfillment of God's intention: "It is not good that the man should be alone; "I will make him a helper fit for him";<sup>67</sup> and he makes his own the cry of Adam, the first husband: "This at last is bone by my bones and flesh of my flesh".<sup>68</sup>

Authentic conjugal love presupposes and requires that a man have a profound respect for the equal dignity of his wife: "You are not her master", writes Saint Ambrose, "but her husband; she was not given to you to be your slave, but your wife... Reciprocate her attentiveness to you and be grateful

<sup>67</sup> *Gen.* 2:18.

<sup>68</sup> *Gen.* 2:23.

to her for her love".<sup>69</sup> With his wife a man should live "a very special form of personal friendship".<sup>70</sup> As for the Christian, he is called upon to develop a new attitude of love, manifesting towards his wife a charity that is both gentle and strong like that which Christ has for the Church.<sup>71</sup>

Love for his wife as mother of their children and love for the children themselves are for the man the natural way of understanding and fulfilling his own fatherhood. Above all where social and cultural conditions so easily encourage a father to be less concerned with his family or at any rate less involved in the work of education, efforts must be made to restore socially the conviction that the place and task of the father in and for the family is of unique and irreplaceable importance.<sup>72</sup> As experience teaches, the absence of a father causes psychological and moral imbalance and notable difficulties in family relationships, as does, in contrary circumstances, the oppressive presence of a father, especially where there still prevails the phenomenon of "machismo", or a wrong superiority of male prerogatives which humiliates women and inhibits the development of healthy family relationships.

In revealing and in reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God,<sup>73</sup> a man is called upon to ensure the harmonious and united development of all the members of the family: he will perform this task by exercising generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother, by a more solicitous commitment to education, a task he shares with his wife<sup>74</sup> by work which is never a cause of division in the family but promotes its unity and stability, and by means of the witness he gives of an adult Christian life which effectively introduces the children into the living experience of Christ and the Church.

### The rights of children

26. In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to the children, by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and

<sup>69</sup> Saint Ambrose, *Exameron*, V, 7, 19: CSEL 32, I, 154.

<sup>70</sup> Paul VI, *Encyclical Humanae Vitae*, 9: AAS 60 (1968), 486.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 5:25.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Homily to the faithful of Terni (19 March 1981), 3-5: AAS 73 (1981), 268-271.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Eph.* 3:15.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World Gaudium et Spes*, 52.



generous concern for their rights. This is true for every child, but it becomes all the more urgent the smaller the child is and the more it is in need of everything, when it is sick, suffering or handicapped.

By fostering and exercising a tender and strong concern for every child that comes into this world, the Church fulfills a fundamental mission: for she is called upon to reveal and put forward anew in history the example and the commandment of Christ the Lord, who placed the child at the heart of the Kingdom of God: "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven".<sup>75</sup>

I repeat once again what I said to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 2 October 1979: "I wish to express the joy that we all find in children, the springtime of life, the anticipation of the future history of each of our present earthly homelands. No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nation to which they belong and of the whole human family. Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another. And so, what better wish can I express for every nation and for the whole of mankind, and for all the children of the world than a better future in which respect for human rights will become a complete reality throughout the third millennium, which is drawing near".<sup>76</sup>

Acceptance, love, esteem, many sided and united material, emotional, educational and spiritual concern for every child that comes into this world should always constitute a distinctive, essential characteristic of all Christians, in particular of the Christian family: thus children, while they are able to grow "in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man",<sup>77</sup> offer their own precious contribution to building up the family community and even to the sanctification of their parents.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Lk. 18:16; cf. Mt. 19:14; Mk. 18:16.

<sup>76</sup> John Paul II, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations (2 October 1979), 21: AAS 71 (1979), 1159.

<sup>77</sup> Lk. 2:52.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

### **The elderly in the family**

27. There are cultures which manifest a unique veneration and great love for the elderly: far from being outcasts from the family or merely tolerated as a useless burden, they continue to be present and to take an active and responsible part in family life, though having to respect the autonomy of the new family; above all they carry out the important mission of being a witness to the past and a source of wisdom for the young and for the future.

Other cultures, however, especially in the wake of disordered industrial and urban development, have both in the past and in the present set the elderly aside in unacceptable ways. This causes acute suffering to them and spiritually impoverishes many families.

The pastoral activity of the Church must help everyone to discover and to make good use of the role of the elderly within the civil and ecclesial community, in particular within the family. In fact, "the life of the aging helps to clarify a scale of human values; it shows the continuity of generations and marvellously demonstrates the interdependence of God's people. The elderly often have the charism to bridge generation gaps before they are made: how many children have found understanding and love in the eyes and words and caresses of the aging! And how many old people have willingly subscribed to the inspired word that the 'crown of the aged is their children's children' (*Prov. 17:6*)!"<sup>79</sup>

## **II — SERVING LIFE**

### **1) *The transmission of life***

#### **Cooperators in the love of God the Creator**

28. With the creation of man and woman in his own image and likeness, God crowns and brings to perfection the work of his hands: he calls them to a special sharing in his love and in his power as Creator and Father, through their free and res-

<sup>79</sup> John Paul II, Address to the participants in the International Forum on Active Aging (5 September 1980), 5; *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, III, 2 (1980), 539.

possible cooperation in transmitting the gift of human life: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it' ".<sup>80</sup>

Thus the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator — that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person.<sup>81</sup>

Fecundity is the fruit and the sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the full reciprocal self-giving of the spouses: "While not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of the family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and the Saviour, who through them will enlarge and enrich his own family day by day".<sup>82</sup>

However, the fruitfulness of conjugal love is not restricted solely to the procreation of children, even understood in its specifically human dimension: it is enlarged and enriched by all those fruits of moral, spiritual and supernatural life which the father and mother are called to hand on to their children, and through the children to the Church and to the world.

### **The Church's teaching and norm, always old yet always new**

29. Precisely because the love of husband and wife is a unique participation in the mystery of life and of the love of God himself, the Church knows that she has received the special mission of guarding and protecting the lofty dignity of marriage and the most serious responsibility of the transmission of human life.

Thus, in continuity with the living tradition of the ecclesial community throughout history, the recent Second Vatican Council and the magisterium of my predecessor Paul VI, expressed above all in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, have handed on to our times a truly prophetic proclamation, which reaffirms and repropose with clarity the Church's teaching and norm, always old yet always new, regarding marriage and regarding the transmission of human life.

<sup>80</sup> *Gen.* 1:28.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Gen.* 5:1-3.

<sup>82</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

For this reason the Synod Fathers made the following declaration at their last assembly: "This Sacred Synod, gathered together with the Successor of Peter in the unity of faith, firmly holds what has been set forth in the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50) and afterwards in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, particularly that love between husband and wife must be fully human, exclusive and open to new life (*Humanae Vitae*, 11; cf. 9, 12)".<sup>83</sup>

### The Church stands for life

30. The teaching of the Church in our day is placed in a social and cultural context which renders it more difficult to understand and yet more urgent and irreplaceable for promoting the true good of men and women.

Scientific and technical progress, which contemporary man is continually expanding in his dominion over nature, not only offers the hope of creating a new and better humanity, but also causes ever greater anxiety regarding the future. Some ask themselves if it is a good thing to be alive or if it would be better never to have been born; they doubt therefore if it is right to bring others into life when perhaps they will curse their existence in a cruel world with unforeseeable terrors. Others consider themselves to be the only ones for whom the advantages of technology are intended and they exclude others by imposing on them contraceptives or even worse means. Still others, imprisoned in a consumer mentality and whose sole concern is to bring about a continual growth of material goods, finish by ceasing to understand, and thus by refusing, the spiritual riches of a new human life. The ultimate reason for these mentalities is the absence in people's hearts of God, whose love alone is stronger than all the world's fears and can conquer them.

Thus an anti-life mentality is born, as can be seen in many current issues: one thinks, for example of a certain panic deriving from the studies of ecologists and futurologists on population growth, which sometimes exaggerate the danger of demographic increase to the quality of life.

<sup>83</sup> *Propositio* 21. Section 11 of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* ends with the statement: "The Church, calling people back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by her constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life (*ut quilibet matrimonii usus ad vitam humanam procreandam per se destinatus permaneat*)": AAS 60 (1968), 488.

But the Church firmly believes that human life, even if weak and suffering, is always a splendid gift of God's goodness. Against the pessimism and selfishness which cast a shadow over the world, the Church stands for life: in each human life she sees the splendour of that "Yes", that "Amen", who is Christ himself.<sup>84</sup> To the "No" which assails and afflicts the world, she replies with this living "Yes", thus defending the human person and the world from all who plot against and harm life.

The Church is called upon to manifest anew to everyone, with clear and stronger conviction, her will to promote human life by every means and to defend it against all attacks, in whatever condition or state of development it is found.

Thus the Church condemns as a grave offence against human dignity and justice all those activities of governments or other public authorities which attempt to limit in any way the freedom of couples in deciding about children. Consequently any violence applied by such authorities in favour of contraception or, still worse, of sterilization and procured abortion, must be altogether condemned and forcefully rejected. Likewise to be denounced as gravely unjust are cases where, in international relations, economic help given for the advancement of peoples is made conditional on programmes of contraception, sterilization and procured abortion.<sup>85</sup>

### **That God's design may be ever more completely fulfilled**

31. The Church is certainly aware of the many complex problems which couples in many countries face today in their task of transmitting life in a responsible way. She also recognizes the serious problem of population growth in the form it has taken in many parts of the world and its moral implications.

However, she holds that consideration in depth of all the aspects of these problems offers a new and stronger confirmation of the importance of the authentic teaching on birth regulation repropounded in the Second Vatican Council and in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.

For this reason, together with the Synod Fathers I feel it is my duty to extend a pressing invitation to theologians, asking them to unite their efforts in order to collaborate with the

<sup>84</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 1:19; Rev. 3:14.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. the Sixth Synod of Bishops' Message to Christian Families in the Modern World (24 October 1980), 5.

hierarchical Magisterium and to commit themselves to the task of illustrating ever more clearly the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds and the personalistic reasons behind this doctrine. Thus it will be possible, in the context of an organic exposition, to render the teaching of the Church on this fundamental question truly accessible to all people of good will, fostering a daily more enlightened and profound understanding of it: in this way God's plan will be ever more completely fulfilled for the salvation of humanity and for the glory of the Creator.

A united effort by theologians in this regard, inspired by a convinced adherence to the Magisterium, which is the one authentic guide for the People of God, is particularly urgent for reasons that include the close link between Catholic teaching on this matter and the view of the human person that the Church proposes: doubt or error in the field of marriage or the family involves obscuring to a serious extent the integral truth about the human person, in a cultural situation that is already so often confused and contradictory. In fulfilment of their specific role, theologians are called upon to provide enlightenment and a deeper understanding, and their contribution is of incomparable value and represents a unique and highly meritorious service to the family and humanity.

### **In an integral vision of the human person and of his or her vocation**

32. In the context of a culture which seriously distorts or entirely misinterprets the true meaning of human sexuality, because it separates it from its essential reference to the person, the Church more urgently feels how irreplaceable is her mission of presenting sexuality as a value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God.

In this perspective the Second Vatican Council clearly affirmed that "when there is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by *objective standards*. These, *based on the nature of the human person and his or her acts*, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practised".<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 51.

It is precisely by moving from "an integral vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation",<sup>87</sup> that Paul VI affirmed that the teaching of the Church "is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning".<sup>88</sup> And he concluded by re-emphasizing that there must be excluded as intrinsically immoral "every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible".<sup>89</sup>

When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as "arbiters" of the divine plan and they "manipulate" and degrade human sexuality — and with it themselves and their married partner — by altering its value of "total" self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.

When, instead, by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as "ministers" of God's plan and they "benefit from" their sexuality according to the original dynamism of "total" self-giving, without manipulation or alteration.<sup>90</sup>

In the light of the experience of many couples and of the data provided by the different human sciences, theological reflection is able to perceive and is called to study further *the difference, both anthropological and moral*, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle: it is a difference which is much wider and deeper than is usually thought, one which involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts

<sup>87</sup> *Encyclical Humanae Vitae*, 7: AAS 60 (1968), 485.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 12: *loc. cit.*, 488-489.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 14: *loc. cit.*, 490.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 13: *loc. cit.*, 489.



of the human person and of human sexuality. The choice of the natural rhythms involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is the woman, and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control. To accept the cycle and to enter into dialogue means to recognize both the spiritual and corporal character of conjugal communion, and to live personal love with its requirement of fidelity. In this context the couple comes to experience how conjugal communion is enriched with those values of tenderness and affection which constitute the inner soul of human sexuality, in its physical dimension also. In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension, and is never "used" as an "object" that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person.

### **The Church as Teacher and Mother for couples in difficulty**

33. In the field of conjugal morality the Church is Teacher and Mother and acts as such.

As Teacher, she never tires of proclaiming the moral norm that must guide the responsible transmission of life. The Church is in no way the author or the arbiter of this norm. In obedience to the truth which is Christ, whose image is reflected in the nature and dignity of the human person, the Church interprets the moral norm and proposes it to all people of good will, without concealing its demands of radicalness and perfection.

As Mother, the Church is close to the many married couples who find themselves in difficulty over this important point of the moral life: she knows well their situation, which is often very arduous and at times truly tormented by difficulties of every kind, not only individual difficulties but social ones as well; she knows that many couples encounter difficulties not only in the concrete fulfillment of the moral norm but even in understanding its inherent values.

But it is one and the same Church that is both Teacher and Mother. And so the Church never ceases to exhort and encourage all to resolve whatever conjugal difficulties may arise without ever falsifying or compromising the truth: she is convinced that there can be no true contradiction between the divine law on transmitting life and that on fostering authentic married

love.<sup>91</sup> Accordingly, the concrete pedagogy of the Church must always remain linked with her doctrine and never be separated from it. With the same conviction as my predecessor, I therefore repeat: "To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls".<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, authentic ecclesial pedagogy displays its realism and wisdom only by making a tenacious and courageous effort to create and uphold all the human conditions — psychological, moral and spiritual — indispensable for understanding and living the moral value and norm.

There is no doubt that these conditions must include persistence and patience, humility and strength of mind, filial trust in God and in his grace, and frequent recourse to prayer and to the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation.<sup>93</sup> Thus strengthened, Christian husbands and wives will be able to keep alive their awareness of the unique influence that the grace of the sacrament of marriage has on every aspect of married life, including therefore their sexuality: the gift of the Spirit, accepted and responded to by husband and wife, helps them to live their human sexuality in accordance with God's plan and as a sign of the unitive and fruitful love of Christ for his Church.

But the necessary conditions also include knowledge of the bodily aspect and the body's rhythms of fertility. Accordingly, every effort must be made to render such knowledge accessible to all married people and also to young adults before marriage, through clear, timely and serious instruction and education given by married couples, doctors and experts. Knowledge must then lead to education in self-control: hence the absolute necessity for the virtue of chastity and for permanent education in it. In the Christian view, chastity by no means signifies rejection of human sexuality or lack of esteem for it: rather it signifies spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness, and able to advance it towards its full realization.

With deeply wise and loving intuition, Paul VI was only voicing the experience of many married couples when he wrote in his Encyclical: "To dominate instinct by means of one's rea-

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 51.

<sup>92</sup> Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 29: AAS 60 (1968), 501.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 25: *loc. cit.*, 498-499.

son and free will undoubtedly requires ascetical practices, so that the affective manifestations of conjugal life may observe the correct order, in particular with regard to the observance of periodic continence. Yet this discipline which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort, yet, thanks to its beneficent influence, husband and wife fully develop their personalities, being enriched with spiritual values. Such discipline bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace and facilitates the solution of other problems; it favours attention for one's partner, helps both parties to drive out selfishness, the enemy of true love, and deepens their sense of responsibility. By its means, parents acquire the capacity of having a deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring".<sup>94</sup>

### **The moral progress of married people**

34. It is always very important to have a right notion of the moral order, its values and its norms; and the importance is all the greater when the difficulties in the way or respecting them become more numerous and serious.

Since the moral order reveals and sets forth the plan of God the Creator, for this very reason it cannot be something that harms man, something impersonal. On the contrary, by responding to the deepest demands of the human being created by God, it places itself at the service of that person's full humanity with the delicate and binding love whereby God himself inspires, sustains and guides every creature towards its happiness.

But man, who has been called to live God's wise and loving design in a responsible manner, is an historical being who day by day builds himself up through his many free decisions; and so he knows, loves and accomplishes moral good by stages of growth.

Married people too are called upon to progress unceasingly in their moral life, with the support of a sincere and active desire to gain ever better knowledge of the values enshrined in and fostered by the law of God. They must also be supported by an upright and generous willingness to embody these values

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 21: *loc. cit.*, 496.

in their concrete decisions. They cannot however look on the law as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future: they must consider it as a command of Christ the Lord to overcome difficulties with constancy. "And so what is known as 'the law of gradualness or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualness of the law', as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations. In God's plan, all husbands and wives are called in marriage to holiness, and this lofty vocation is fulfilled to the extent that the human person is able to respond to God's command with serene confidence in God's grace and in his or her own will".<sup>95</sup> On the same lines, it is part of the Church's pedagogy that husbands and wives should first of all recognize clearly the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* as indicating the norm for the exercise of their sexuality, and that they should endeavour to establish the conditions necessary for observing that norm.

As the Synod noted, this pedagogy embraces the whole of married life. Accordingly, the function of transmitting life must be integrated into the overall mission of Christian life as a whole, which without the Cross cannot reach the Resurrection. In such a context it is understandable that sacrifice cannot be removed from family life, but must in fact be wholeheartedly accepted if the love between husband and wife is to be deepened and become a source of intimate joy.

This shared progress demands reflection, instruction and suitable education on the part of the priests, religious and lay people engaged in family pastoral work: they will all be able to assist married people in their human and spiritual progress, a progress that demands awareness of sin, a sincere commitment to observe the moral law, and the ministry of reconciliation. It must also be kept in mind that conjugal intimacy involves the wills of two persons, who are however called to harmonize their mentality and behaviour: this requires much patience, understanding and time. Uniquely important in this field is unity of moral and pastoral judgment by priests, a unity that must be carefully sought and ensured, in order that the faithful may not have to suffer anxiety of conscience.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> John Paul II, Homily at the close of the Sixth Synod of Bishops (25 October, 1980), 8: AAS 72 (1980), 1083.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 28: AAS 60 (1968), 501.

It will be easier for married people to make progress if, with respect for the Church's teaching and with trust in the grace of Christ, and with the help and support of the pastors of souls and the entire ecclesial community, they are able to discover and experience the liberating and inspiring value of the authentic love that is offered by the Gospel and set before us by the Lord's commandment.

### **Instilling conviction and offering practical help**

35. With regard to the question of lawful birth regulation, the ecclesial community at the present time must take on the task of instilling conviction and offering practical help to those who wish to live out their parenthood in a truly responsible way.

In this matter, while the Church notes with satisfaction the results achieved by scientific research aimed at a more precise knowledge of the rhythms of women's fertility, and while it encourages a more decisive and wide-ranging extension of that research, it cannot fail to call with renewed vigour on the responsibility of all — doctors, experts, marriage counsellors, teachers and married couples — who can actually help married people to live their love with respect for the structure and finalities of the conjugal act which expresses that love. This implies a broader, more decisive and more systematic effort to make the natural methods of regulating fertility known, respected and applied.<sup>97</sup>

A very valuable witness can and should be given by those husbands and wives who through the joint exercise of periodic continence have reached a more mature personal responsibility with regard to love and life. As Paul VI wrote: "To them the Lord entrusts the task of making visible to people the holiness and sweetness of the law which unites the mutual love of husband and wife with their cooperation with the love of God the author of human life".<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Address to the Delegates of the Centre de Liaison des Equipes de Recherche (3 November 1979), 9: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, II, 2 (1979), 1035; and cf. Address to the participants in the First Congress for the Family of Africa and Europe (15 January 1981): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 January, 1981.

<sup>98</sup> Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 25: AAS 60 (1968), 499.

2) *Education***The right and duty of parents regarding education**

36. The task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God's creative activity: by begetting in love and for love a new person who has within himself or herself the vocation to growth and development, parents by that very fact take on the task of helping that person effectively to live a fully human life. As the Second Vatican Council recalled, "since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. Hence, the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs".<sup>99</sup>

The right and duty of parents to give education is *essential*, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is *original and primary* with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is *irreplaceable and inalienable*, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.

In addition to these characteristics, it cannot be forgotten that the most basic element, so basic that it qualifies the educational role of parents, is *parental love*, which finds fulfillment in the task of education as it completes and perfects its service of life: as well as being a *source*, the parents' love is also the *animating principle* and therefore the *norm* inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity, enriching it with the values of kindness, constancy, goodness, service, disinterestedness and self-sacrifice that are the most precious fruit of love.

**Educating in the essential values of human life**

37. Even amid the difficulties of the work of education, difficulties which are often greater today, parents must trust-

<sup>99</sup> Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, 3.

ingly and courageously train their children in the essential values of human life. Children must grow up with a correct attitude of freedom with regard to material goods, by adopting a simple and austere life style and being fully convinced that "man is more precious for what he is than for what he has".<sup>100</sup>

In a society shaken and split by tensions and conflicts caused by the violent clash of various kinds of individualism and selfishness, children must be enriched not only with a sense of true justice, which alone leads to respect for the personal dignity of each individual, but also and more powerfully by a sense of true love, understood as sincere solicitude and disinterested service with regard to others, especially the poorest and those in most need. The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practised in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society.

Education in love as self-giving is also the indispensable premise for parents called to give their children a clear and delicate *sex education*. Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person — body, emotions and soul — and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.

Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the laws of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents.

<sup>100</sup> Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*. 35.



In this context *education for chastity* is absolutely essential, for it is a virtue that develops a person's authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the "nuptial meaning" of the body. Indeed Christian parents, discerning the signs of God's call, will devote special attention and care to education in virginity or celibacy as the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality.

In view of the close links between the sexual dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to a knowledge of and respect for the moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality.

For this reason the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles. That would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity — while still in the years of innocence — by opening the way to vice.

### **The mission to educate and the sacrament of marriage**

38. For Christian parents the mission to educate, a mission rooted, as we have said, in their participation in God's creating activity, has a new specific source in the sacrament of marriage, which consecrates them for the strictly Christian education of their children: that is to say, it calls upon them to share in the very authority and love of God the Father and Christ the Shepherd, and in the motherly love of the Church, and it enriches them with wisdom, counsel, fortitude and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to help the children in their growth as human beings and as Christians.

The sacrament of marriage gives to the educational role the dignity and vocation of being really and truly a "ministry" of the Church at the service of the building up of her members. So great and splendid is the educational ministry of Christian parents that Saint Thomas has no hesitation in comparing it with the ministry of priests: "Some only propagate and guard spiritual life by a spiritual ministry: this is the role of the sacrament of Orders; others do this for both corporal and spiri-

tual life, and this is brought about by the sacrament of marriage, by which a man and a woman join in order to beget offspring and bring them up to worship God".<sup>101</sup>

A vivid and attentive awareness of the mission that they have received with the sacrament of marriage will help Christian parents to place themselves at the service of their children's education with great serenity and trustfulness, and also with a sense of responsibility before God, who calls them and gives them the mission of building up the Church in their children. Thus in the case of baptized people, the family, called together by word and sacrament as the Church of the home, is both teacher and mother, the same as the world-wide Church.

### First experience of the Church

39. The mission to educate demands that Christian parents should present to their children all the topics that are necessary for the gradual maturing of their personality from a Christian and ecclesial point of view. They will therefore follow the educational lines mentioned above, taking care to show their children the depths of significance to which the faith and love of Jesus Christ can lead. Furthermore, their awareness that the Lord is entrusting to them the growth of a child of God, a brother or sister of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, a member of the Church, will support Christian parents in their task of strengthening the gift of divine grace in their children's souls.

The Second Vatican Council describes the content of Christian education as follows: "Such an education does not merely strive to foster maturity... in the human person. Rather, its principal aims are these: that as baptized persons are gradually introduced into a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, they may daily grow more conscious of the gift of faith which they have received; that they may learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth (cf. *Jn.* 4:23), especially through liturgical worship; that they may be trained to conduct their personal life in true righteousness and holiness, according to their new nature (*Eph.* 4:22-24), and thus grow to maturity, to the stature of the fullness of Christ (cf. *Eph.* 4:13), and devote themselves to the upbuilding of the Mystical Body. Moreover, aware of

<sup>101</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, 58.

their calling, they should grow accustomed to giving witness to the hope that is in them (cf. 1 Pt. 3:15), and to promoting the Christian transformation of the world".<sup>102</sup>

The Synod too, taking up and developing the indications of the Council, presented the educational mission of the Christian family as a true ministry through which the Gospel is transmitted and radiated, so that family life itself becomes an itinerary of faith and in some way a Christian initiation and a school of following Christ. Within a family that is aware of this gift, as Paul VI wrote, "all the members evangelize and are evangelized".<sup>103</sup>

By virtue of their ministry of educating, parents are, through the witness of their lives, the first heralds of the Gospel for their children. Furthermore, by praying with their children, by reading the word of God with them and by introducing them deeply through Christian initiation into the Body of Christ—both the Eucharistic and the ecclesial Body—they become fully parents, in that they are begetters not only of bodily life but also of the life that through the Spirit's renewal flows from the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

In order that Christian parents may worthily carry out their ministry of educating, the Synod Fathers expressed the hope that a suitable *catechism for families* would be prepared, one that would be clear, brief and easily assimilated by all. The Episcopal Conferences were warmly invited to contribute to producing this catechism.

(To be continued)

<sup>102</sup> Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, 2.

<sup>103</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 71: AAS 68 (1976), 60-61.

## **FEATURES**

# **PENITENTIAL DAYS AND PRACTICES FOR THE FILIPINO CATHOLIC**

**By**

**Florencio Testera, O.P.**

Penance is insistently recommended in both the old and the new Testaments as a necessary condition for the forgiveness of sins (Ezeq. 18:21; Joel 2:12; Eccl. 2:22; Mat. 3:2; Jn. 1:8; Acts 2:38...)

The fact of sin, the Scriptures declare further, is a universal phenomenon from which man can claim no exception: "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not with us" (Jn. 1:8). Hence the constant recognition of the Church that its members are in continuous need of conversion and renewal and thus bound by the divine precept of penitence. (*Lumen Gent.*, n. 8; *Const. on the Lit.*, n. 110).

Moreover, while reasserting the primary of the supernatural value of penitence, the Church has always urged its faithful to accompany the inner conversion of the spirit—metanoia—with external acts of penance-asceticism. For this reason Christians have observed from the beginning penitential practices and seasons or days which have varied according to the needs and conditions of the various peoples and cultures.

The Church has reorganized its penitential discipline anew with practices more suited to modern times and conditions. Acknowledging, however, the fact that it is no longer feasible and practical to adopt a uniform rule valid for all peoples and times, the Church has limited itself to set apart certain penitential days and seasons which are to be observed by all united in a common celebration of penitence, leaving it up to the local Bishops' Conference to establish the specific norms which, in their pastoral solicitude and prudence and with the direct knowledge they have of local conditions, they consider the most appropriate and efficacious for their faithful.

It is, therefore, fitting to expound on the later penitential norms adopted by the local Bishops' Conference—CBCP—which are binding on all Filipino faithful. Such is the main objective of this brief study.

1. *Penitential Seasons and Days.*

All times and days are good for penitential prayers and practices. As a matter of fact, the faithful should be earnestly encouraged to extraordinary acts of penance for the purpose of expiation and petition all throughout the liturgical year, including the seasons and days which are no longer set aside by law for penitential purposes (*Const. "paenitemini"*, IX, 1).

The Church from its early days has observed certain seasons and days of penance even if these have varied in accordance with the different ages and regions. Of all these ancient seasons only a few have survived and reached us, namely, advent, lent, ember days and vigils. Current legislation, however, has officially retained the penitential character of lent of all Fridays of the year, when penance is to be considered an important requirement of christian life.

Advent has lost by now most of its role of a penitential preparation for the Nativity of the Lord as the early anticipation of the holiday mood of Christmas has contributed in many ways to the alienation of the genuine spirit of the season. Vigils and ember days, likewise, no longer carry a penitential meaning. The old saying, "a fast before a feast", does no longer hold in a highly materialistic world.

The penitential discipline in the Philippines follows the general pattern set for the universal church, which makes the entire lenten season a period of penitential observance with special reference to Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Lent remains to be a time of penitential preparation for Easter, and, unlike Advent, it still appeals to the penitential spirit of our people. The moral obligation to abstain or substitute therefore acts of charity or piety on fridays is retained as it is a part of the normal duty of penance for every christian (*Lit. Inf. Bulletin*, 1976, p. 108). Thus every Friday of the year becomes a day of self-denial and mortification in grateful remembrance of the Passion of the Lord.

It is lastly to be noted that the penitential discipline adopted by the CBCP for the faithful of the nation, while abrogating all privileges and indults of the past, in no way affects or changes the vows of any person —juridical or physical— nor the constitutions and rules of any religious or other approved institute (*Paenit. V*).

## 2. *Penitential Practices.*

The forms of penitence have indeed varied from time to time according to the needs of the different localities and epochs. The "privileged" forms which by reason of their evangelical or traditional values have prevailed through the centuries are fasting and abstinence, alms giving, prayers, works of mercy ...

The Church in its latest legislation still imposes the obligation of fast and abstinence from meat as a common requirement for the practice of penance. Other forms of penitence, however, are ratified as well, provided it seems opportune to the local bishops to replace the traditional fast and abstinence in favor of more effective penitential exercises. The spirit of penance asks for the renunciation of those things which we enjoy most, which is not always the case with the eating of meat. Meat was once an exceptional form of food. Today, the economic, social, dietary conditions of some communities have altered that old pattern.

The present penitential discipline binding the filipino catholic follows once more the common pattern for the universal Church. The CBCP has officially prescribed, as a part of the normal duty of penance for a christian, fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and abstinence from meat—which can be substituted with acts of piety or charity—on all fridays of the year, (LIB., 1976, p. 108).

The law of abstinence forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs, milk products—cheese, butter, margarine...—, or condiments made of animal fats—lard, grease...— (*Paenit.*, III, 1).

The eating of broth or soup made of meat and meat gravies is now permitted on an abstinence day. In case of doubt as to whether a given food is to be considered as meat, the legitimate customs accepted in the locality should be followed.

The law of fasting allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some nourishment in the morning and evening, but one should observe—as far as quality and quantity are concerned—approved local customs (*Paenit.*, III, 2).

The essence of the law of fasting consists in the taking of just one full meal to a day. Therefore, the food taken as morning and evening nourishments should not together amount in quantity to another full meal. The nourishment should be enough, however, for the person to discharge the ordinary tasks

of the day with due regard for the spirit of penance. It is not practical, therefore, to fix the amount of food that ought to be taken as nourishment or as a full meal. The needs of each person and the demand of penance should dictate the practice to be followed in each case.

As a corollary to the doctrine expounded above, eating between meals is not permitted. Liquids, however, such as milk, fruit juices, chocolate or soft drinks... are allowed as they do not come under the denomination of food and are taken as drinks.

An interchange of the time of the main meal with the morning or evening nourishment is held to be lawful as it will not really affect the essence of the law of fast.

Local customs or common usage ought to be considered in determining the quantity and quality of food to be taken both by way of nourishment or as main repast for the day.

### 3. *The Obligation to Fast and Abstain.*

The ecclesiastical precept of penitence is juridically and morally binding just on all Fridays of the year—unless they occur on a feast of obligation—and on Ash Wednesday. The law of abstinence is binding on those who have completed their fourteenth year. Old age in itself does not excuse from abstinence. Fasting is obligatory from the twenty first year of age to the beginning of the sixtieth (*Paenit.*, VI). In such cases the substantial observance of fast and abstinence is a grave obligation.

Moralists had hitherto commonly held that a deliberate violation of the law of fast and abstinence on a single occasion would constitute a grave sin. Such was and still is the belief of the faithful going to confession for having eaten meat on Friday.

Obviously this is no longer true today, as the new ruling on the matter holds that only the “*substantial observance* of fasting and abstinence days is a grave obligation” (*Paenit.*, II, § 2). The interpretation of the clause *substantial observance* entails some difficulties. An article that appeared in the semi-official organ of the Vatican—*L'Osservatore Romano* of Feb. 20, 1966—a few days after the publication of the *Const. “Paenite-mini”*, offers this interpretation of the word “substantial”:



"We think the word *substantial* was chosen designedly especially in order the better to show the personal responsibility of each one before God, so that every one may practice penance in spirit and in truth without insisting too much on the traditional distinctions of casuistry between grave and light matter in the violation of the law. Consequently, a single violation could not be considered a grave sin, but the repeated and habitual violation would certainly be grave."

"Hence the more serious and sincere is the will to practice penance in the days and in the manner prescribed by the Church, the less inclined one should be to consider a partial violation as grave. The more serious the reason which prevents the observance of the law, the less grave will be the transgression. If the reason is really proportionately grave, it is certain that all obligation ceases. This may occur in cases of illness, where one can not take other food because of infirmity, where meals must be taken in common, in travelling when there is no choice, and so on. But when these excuses occur, there remains the obligation of divine law to practice penance in some other way according to the particular condition of the person."

Later on a query was brought to the Cong. of the Council on: I. Whether the *substantial* observance of days of penance, which is declared to be of grave obligation in the dispositive part of the Const. *Paenitemini*, II § 2, of 17 feb., 1966, refers to the individual days of penance which are to be observed as a matter of obligation in the whole Church;

II. Or does it refer rather to the whole complexus of penitential days to be observed with the penances attached to them. The Cong. of the Council replied, with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI:

I. *In the negative.*

II. *In the affirmative*; that is, one sins gravely against the law, who, without an excusing cause, omit a notable part, quantitative or qualitative, of the penitential observance which is prescribed as a whole". (AAS., 1967, p. 229; Canon Law Digest, VI, p. 684).

Individual violations of the law of penitence, therefore, are no longer to be considered seriously sinful. In this con-

text one who deliberately fails to fast on Good Friday can not be held guilty of grave sin. It is rather the substantial disregard of the law what constitutes grave matter. A substantial violation in this case would mean the repeated transgressions of the law of fast and abstinence, so that only when a person has habitually failed against one of these laws can the obligation be urged under pain of sin.

But what is an habitual violation of fast and abstinence? How often should one break the law to acquire the habit? It is difficult indeed to answer such questions. Still more, an attempt to do so could easily open the door to the much hated casuistry of the past and even defeat the very purpose of the law of penitence. One thing seems clear, though, that an intensive and well-coordinated catechesis on the matter of fast and abstinence is now imperative in order to develop in the faithful the type of well-informed conscience which in the final analysis will decide whether a substantial breach of the law has taken place in a given case.

#### 4. *The Transferring of Penitential Days and the Substitution of Penitential Practices.*

In keeping with the spirit of Vatican II (*Chr. Dom.*, n. 38, 4), Episcopal Conferences have been granted a couple of rather singular and relevant faculties on the matter of fast and abstinence.

The first one has to do with the transferring of days of penance. It is within the power of the local Conference to transfer days of penance for a just cause, always taking into account the time of Lent (*Paenit.*, VI, § 1, a).

The transferring of penitential days is made for the whole nation and, therefore, the cause for the change should be one of a rather general nature even if it does not affect each and all christians in the country.

There is no need to recourse to the transferring of days in cases where in the obligation of the obligation of fasting and abstinence can be legitimately dispensed with or it does no longer binds on account of certain circumstances.

The second faculty empowers the local Conference to substitute for abstinence and fast, either wholly or in part, other forms of penance, especially works of charity and exercises of piety (*Paenit.*, VI, §1, b.).

Though nothing to the effect is said in the law, it is understood that the commutation of penance must be premised on the existence of a just, reasonable ground.

The decision of the Conference on the matter becomes juridically binding once it is approved by two thirds of the members with voting rights (*Chr. Dom.*, n. 38, 4). The Conference should notify the Holy See by way of information only on whatever was decreed on the matter. The reduction of days of penance, however, will require the permission of the Holy See.

##### 5. *Dispensation from Fast and Abstinence.*

Individual diocesan bishops have no power to transfer the days of penance or to substitute for fast and abstinence other forms of penitence. In particular cases, however, they can grant a dispensation from the law to their subjects if this is for their spiritual benefit (*Chr. Dom.*, n. 8, b).

For a just and proportionate reason, therefore, the bishop can use this faculty to grant a dispensation from fast and abstinence to an entire family and even to the whole diocese. He can likewise delegate the power to others as the faculty is a part of the ordinary jurisdiction.

The pastor, too, can, for a just cause and observing the prescriptions of the Ordinary, grant to the individual faithful and particular families a dispensation from abstinence and fast or their commutation to other pious works (*Paenit.*, VIII). This faculty can likewise be delegated even habitually. A dispensation for the whole parish community can not be given by the pastor. He may, however, dispense several individuals or families through a single act, vgr., all persons attending a seminar, those taking part in a graduation, wedding celebration...

Superiors (including the local ones) of clerical religious institutes and those of clerical societies, which are not religious in the strict sense, like secular institutes, societies of clerics living in common without vows, enjoy the same faculty as the pastors and can, therefore, dispense their subjects from fast and abstinence or commute them to other pious exercises. (*Paenit.*, VII).

Lastly, it is to be observed that a dispensation granted for a just and reasonable cause is not to be considered as a permanent relaxation of the law in favor of a person or group of persons, and it shall hold for as long as the cause for the dispensation exists.

# REPORT ON THE ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACTIVE AGING

January 24-28, 1982

**The Social Research Center  
University of Santo Tomas**

## BACKGROUND OF THE CONFERENCE

The realization that hundreds of millions of the aging are creating a new, unprecedented global problem, has been the main reason for the United Nations' decision to "organize in consultation with Member States, a World Assembly on Aging in 1982"<sup>1</sup> and "to call upon governments, specialized agencies, regional economic commissions and non-governmental organizations to participate fully in the preparatory work for the World Assembly on the Aging".<sup>2</sup>

In response to the United Nations' call, Opera Pia International, a non-government and humanitarian organization, based in New York, is sponsoring a three-phase Project for Active Aging. The purpose of the project is to formulate and develop action-oriented concepts and programs for the aging. It is being conducted in consultation with the United Nations Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and other organizations concerned.

The Project on Active Aging intends to focus attention and interest on the ethical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of aging. Emphasis is on the resources of active aging: that is to say, active as distinguished from passive participation in daily life; the aged as giver, not only as recipient.<sup>3</sup>

The realization of the Project is well under way. Its first phase took place in September 1979, when a small group of selected experts, consultants, UN and church representatives

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 33/52; full text in appendix 1, Castelgandolfo Document on Active Aging, The Opera Pia International Forum on Active Aging August 31 — September 5, 1980, Castelgandolfo, Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Resolution E/1980/C.2/L.5; appendix 11: *ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Castelgandolfo Document on Active Aging* (New York: OPI, 1980, p. 6).

met in Civitella del Tronto, Italy to prepare the basic documentation and to design the objectives and the organization of the International Forum on Active Aging of the following year which was actually the second phase.

The third phase partly realized in 1981 and partly to be realized in 1982, constitutes perhaps the most significant and effective stage of the entire Project in terms of identifying the specific needs and possibilities for successful action at the local level. It consists of follow-up regional meetings to implement the resolutions of the International Forum. Meetings were already held in Europe (Castelgandolfo, September 1981), Latin American (Bogota, October 1981), Africa (Nairobi, December 1981), Asia (Manila, January 1982). Meetings will also be held in the Middle East and the Mediterranean (Beirut, Spring 1982 and North America (Toronto, Spring 1982).

The International Forum on Active Aging was held in Castelgandolfo, Italy from August 31 to September 5, 1980. It included 85 participants: international experts and consultants, representatives of the United Nations, governments, the Church, and several organizations involved with the aging from different areas of the world.

The Forum formulated sets of guidelines on various aspects of aging to be utilized as a) input to the United Nations 1982 World Assembly on Aging, and b) suggestions for innovative action-oriented pastoral programs for and with the aging.

## THE ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Asian Regional Conference, in turn, was convened in Manila from January 24-28, 1982 as one of six follow-up forums of the International Forum on Active Aging and as a preparation and Asian contribution for the World Assembly in Vienna on July-August, 1982. The conference was held at the Pius XII Catholic Center and was attended by 32 delegates and observers from 16 Asian countries and international organizations. The general theme of the Conference was "The Changing Situation of the Aging in Asia: Some Options for the Future." It was sponsored by the Opera Pia International, in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the Archdiocese of Manila. Acting as Secretariat for the Conference was the Social Research Center of the University of Santo Tomas.

## OBJECTIVES AND SUBTHEMES

In most of Asia, ample evidence exists indicating the high esteem in which older people are held. The traditional values which give respect and an honored position to the aging in society have not been fully eroded by modernization and industrialization. The aging continue to be economically sufficient even when physically or mentally incapacitated or both, because they have a well-established place and role in the framework of the extended family or other primary groups.

The richness of the aging in many of the developing countries of Asia can therefore be truly tapped in the formulation of action-oriented concepts and programs for active aging.

With this in mind, the four (4) sub-themes of the Conference which are *Economic Security, Health, Education and Leisure*, and *Spiritual Dimension* were discussed according to four levels of responsibility: the individual, the family, the government and the non-government organizations.

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

In the opening session, reflective and informative talks on the aging were delivered. This was preceded by an Invocation given by Bishop Leo Nanayakkara from Sri Lanka. To stress that the aging are total persons, to highlight the humanist end of the Conference and to situate the delegates more fully in the Asian setting, reflections from Asia's major religions opened each conference day — from Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.

The Archbishop of Manila, Jaime L. Cardinal Sin gave the Welcome Address which spoke of both the opportunity and challenge to work for and with the aging. Msgr. Ettore di Filippo, Director of Opera Pia International explained the commitment of Opera Pia to serve the aging of the world. Mr. Stephen Viederman, Deputy Chief, Regional and Global Projects Branch of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, gave the delegates and observers an insight into the activities of the UN and the problem of the aging especially in developing societies. Minister Sylvia Montes of the Ministry of Social Services and Development delivered an inspiring talk on the Elderly: Beholden Sector of Modern Times.

In the afternoon session of the first day, Conference participants were introduced to one another, after which there was a presentation of the conference objectives and the explanation of the working schemes done by the conference overall coordinator Fr. Fausto Gomez, O.P., Director of the UST Social Research Center. Sub-regional group meetings among the various delegates and observers were held in separate rooms for the purpose of arriving at some consensus on the sub-regional paper to be read the following day.

The second day of the Conference started with the reading of Sub-regional Papers on South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Australasia. The Sub-regional Papers meant to provide the delegates with some baseline information on the situation of the aging in Asia.

Workshops and assemblies were organized to enable the participants to scientifically analyze the situation of the aging in Asia; to evaluate the situation of the aging and formulate principles and; above all, to give a summary of recommendations for action programs.

The third and fourth days of the Conference were spent in long hours of workshop discussions by both the delegates and the observers. On these days, readings of the partial conclusions of the numerous workshop were held too.

The series of workshop discussions culminated in the presentation of principles and summary of recommendations for action programs by the conference participants.

During the fifth and last day of the Conference these principles and recommendations on economic security, health, education and leisure and spiritual dimension of the aging were read in a plenary session. The general assembly unanimously approved the conference conclusions.

## CONCLUSION

Should these recommendations be realized as it is earnestly hoped, then indeed the Asian Regional Conference on Active Aging has made some contribution to better the lives of Asia's aging.



# **ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACTIVE AGING**

**January 24-28, 1982  
Manila, Philippines**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **PART ONE**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Asian Regional Conference on Active Aging was held in Manila from January 24-28, 1982 at the Pius XII Catholic Center. Attended by 32 delegates and observers from 16 Asian countries and international organizations, the general theme of the Conference was "The Changing Situation of the Aging in Asia: Some Options for the Future". It was sponsored by the Opera Pia International in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the Archdiocese of Manila

The Asian Regional Conference on Active Aging was convened as a follow-up of the International Forum on Active Aging held at Castelgandolfo, Italy from August 31-September 5, 1980 and as a preparation and Asian contribution for the World Assembly on Aging to be held in Vienna on July-August, 1982.

The specific objectives of the Conference were:

1. to describe, analyze and evaluate the situation of the aging in Asia;
2. to identify the ethical principles, religious traditions and cultural values which influence the situation of the aging; and
3. to arrive at a consensus in terms of concrete action programs in favor of the aging in Asia.

The four sub-themes of the Conference which are Economic Security, Health, Education and Leisure, and Spiritual Dimension were discussed according to four levels of responsibility: the individual, family, government,

and non-government organizations. The workshops and assemblies were organized in such a way as to scientifically analyze the situation of the aging in Asia through the presentation and discussion of sub-regional papers, to evaluate the situation of the aging through the formulation of principles and, above all, to formulate a summary of recommendations for action programs.

## II. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

1. The situation of the aging in Asia has to be considered within the milieu of poverty in the region. The aging deserve special attention precisely because they are so many and so poor. More and more, families in Asia suffer from tension arising from the conflict between filial piety and the inability to provide for material needs of the elderly.
2. Ample evidence, however, exists indicating the high esteem in which older people are held in most of Asia. Fortunately, the traditional values which give respect and an honored position in society to the aging have not been fully eroded by modernization and industrialization. It is imperative that the precious aspects of village and extended family life are not lost altogether; the industrialized nations can certainly learn the richness of the aging from so-called developing countries.
3. The United Nations, through the World Assembly on Aging, the Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Fund for Population Activities, are recognized as instrumental in making known and useful the conclusions of this Conference. The specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) are strongly called upon to seriously consider the complex needs of the aging who comprise an unattended sector of the world population.

The banyan tree logo that has been chosen as the symbol of the World Assembly on Aging has positive

symbolic significance in many parts of Asia. Unfortunately, in other areas of the world, such as Micronesia and Australasia, it is considered the abode of evil spirits and is the object of dread.

4. The Conference conclusions are mostly true of the developing economies of Asia. Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand are considered, in general, as exceptions to the prevailing Asian situation.

### III. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

These recommendations are being submitted as the most urgent issues concerning the elderly in Asia needing, therefore, immediate attention.

#### A. ECONOMIC SECURITY

1. Aging is not a process that suddenly begins at an arbitrary age of, say 60, which is derived from Western experience and hence may not be necessarily relevant to Asia. Therefore it is strongly recommended that in the Asian context where 'premature aging' is the crux of the problem, aging must be considered in its proper socio-economic and biological context. The World Assembly on Aging should adopt 'premature aging' as an operational concept to make its deliberation and recommendations valid and meaningful for Asia and much of the poor world.

2. Planners and policy makers in the Asian region must evolve policies, plans and programmes within the context of the family life-cycle which, given the economic situation in Asia, is a meaningful and practical way in which care for the aging can reach those most in need. To this end, it is strongly recommended that all policies for the aging should be primarily aimed at strengthening the family. This recommendation is made on the basis of the following considerations:

- a. The family will remain as the primary source of economic security for the immediate future;
- b. The increasing economic pressures on the family;

- c. The relatively high degree of deprivation among the aging especially women many of whom are widowed.

## B. HEALTH

1. In the context of Asian poverty affecting the majority of the people and more acutely the elderly population, provision for basic health needs is distressingly inadequate. Impoverished families of Asia are unable to provide even for these basic health needs. It is urged that the WHO:

- a. call on member states to provide for more basic and comprehensive health needs of peoples in Asia, with special reference to the needs of the aging;
- b. invite the developed countries to become more sensitive, responsible and actively concerned with the health needs of the aging in Asia, presently an unattended sector; and
- c. suggest that UN agencies encourage and support countries in developing massive information drives on the basic health needs of all age groups, taking cognizance of the special care of the aging.

2. The reality in most of Asia precludes the use of advanced and expensive technology for the health care of the aging. It is suggested that governments allocate additional funds that will increase access to primary health care facilities especially in destitute areas of the region, both urban and rural.

## C. EDUCATION AND LEISURE

1. Because formal education is available only to a limited number of people and because beliefs, attitudes, and practices of people can be changed through the impact of education, it is strongly recommended that non-formal education be given priority in ensuring the continued integration of the aging into the life of society. Non-formal education may hopefully result in higher literacy rates, improved agricultural practices, greater technical skills on the part of its reci-

pients. Likewise, non-formal education is oriented to building up a critical awareness in the people and is acknowledged as a process that will enable them to motivate and organize themselves. In this regard, the use of the mass media, particularly the radio, is of utmost importance. Radio is available to practically all. TV is limited and press is also not always available. Therefore, radio should be accepted as the most effective available tool of mass communication designed to educate/re-educate the aging.

2. In providing suitable leisure time opportunities for the aging, it is strongly recommended that research be conducted in order to find out from the aging what their concept of leisure is; what their leisure activities are, so that modifications or changes could follow. Leisure might become an established expectation for the later years just as work is an expectation of adulthood.

3. In these priorities, the family would come in, with parents enacting the role of "cultural models" to the young, i.e. setting good examples with regard to filial piety and respect for their elders. Common activities may likewise make the aging in the family feel they are still and will always be that important to the rest of the family. Setting good examples to the young is part of the education of the young who are to be the aging of tomorrow.

#### D. SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

1. As the first priority, the aging are called to a more conscientious fulfillment of their role as bearers and transmitters of spiritual values. They are urged to take a more positive attitude toward the technological and social changes they see taking place in the world around them. They are likewise asked to listen humbly to the ideas, hopes and aspirations of the young among whom they live so that they may broaden their own outlook and deepen their understanding of the world around them. They are urged, moreover, to take seriously their responsibilities to society and to take an active part in the development of their communities and countries.

2. It is strongly recommended that churches and religious bodies make clear their preferential option on behalf of the poor and marginalized, and that the churches and religious bodies acknowledge that among the poorest and marginalized are the aging poor and most particularly the aging poor women.

3. It is also strongly recommended to governments and international organizations to positively promote as essential to true integral development, respect for life in all its stages. In collaboration with mass media and educational systems, respect for life must be taught as essential to the humanizing of man in industrialized and highly technological societies.

## **HISTORY**

### **III. DOMINICAN MISSIONS IN BATAAN**

**By**

**Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.**

Soon after the Dominican fathers arrived in Manila, some proceeded almost at once to Bataan, which was at that time a part of the province of Pampanga, in order to scatter there the seeds of the Catholic faith. But before we speak of their labours it will be in order to give a few general facts about the region itself.

Bataan, one of the provinces of the Philippines since 1754, is approximately in the center of Luzon, near Manila. It is bounded in the north by the province of Zambales; in the northeast by Pampanga; in the east by the Manila Bay; in the west by the China sea; and in the south by a canal, known before as Boca Chica, which separates the point of Mariveles from the island of Corregidor.

At present it comprises the following towns: in its northern part, near Pampanga, Dinalupihan and Hermosa; Orani, Samal, Abucay,, Balanga, Pilar and Orion on its eastern side along the shores of the Manila Bay; on its southern tip, facing Corregidor, the town of Mariveles; and on the west, bathed by the waves of the China sea, Bagac and Morong.

In the evangelization of Bataan, that is the area which lies along Manila Bay, generally flat and agriculturally rich, fell to the lot of the Dominicans, while the western side, more hilly and rather poor, went to the Recollects.

Immediately after the Spaniards settled in Manila, the Augustinian missionaries began to fan out to the provinces of Luzon. However, due to their limited numbers, they could not establish any permanent mission station in Bataan, but had to content themselves with sporadic visits, very probably from bases of Pampanga. Such visits could bear but little spiritual harvest, of which not a vestige remained in the region and almost none is recounted in the pages of history.

Regarding the Franciscans we only know from their historians that their first – and perhaps only – apostle in this

province was the Rev. Father Sebastián de Baeza, who seems to have labored in Bataan for a brief period and to have centered his apostolic endeavors in and around the region of Mariveles.

If the missionary work of the Augustinians and Franciscans in this province does not rest on sufficiently satisfactory historical bases, the apostolic effort attributed to the Jesuits also in the same area is still less clear. Perhaps they extended their evangelizing action on to Bataan from Maragondon, Cavite, through occasional visits.

On the other hand, it is a historical fact that Father Cristóbal de Salvatierra, a Dominican and Vicar General of the diocese of Manila, made frequent trips to the peninsula to minister to its scanty Christian community, as the *Anales Eclesiásticos* attests to with the following words: "... he was the first minister of the island (?) of Bataan, which was most abundant (?) in parishioners and, leaving ministers (?) there, he returned to this City."<sup>1</sup>

#### *Arrival of the Dominicans in Bataan (1587).*

In and around Abucay, where our Fathers erected at once a residence and a Chapel, there lived only about seven hundred Filipinos, tributes the majority of which were heathen, for, although other priests had been there before, they had been able to accomplish almost nothing, as already for stated. Those who had received baptism years earlier, were now living like the rest of the townfolk. At the beginning there were frequent instances of heathens pretending to be Christians in order to avoid being baptised, and of others, who were really Christians, publicly denying having ever received the sacrament in order to escape the obligations imposed by the faith.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries exerted their utmost, particularly the deacon, Fray Domingo de Nieva, to disentangle the situation and to set aright these mistaken attitudes. Soon the superstitions that were well entrenched in the province, and the vices of usury and drunkenness gave way before the zeal of the preaches of the Gospel. Once the weeds had been uprooted, the sowing of the good seed presented less trouble. From the very beginning the missionaries were convinced that it was necessary to bring the scattered inhabitants together and to organize them into towns.

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. "Philippiniana Records" in *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. II, Number 5, May-August, 1967, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> ADUARTE, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63, 65.



This highly civilizing policy made possible—at the price, of course, of countless labours, money and patience—the incorporation to civilized society and to Christianity of the peoples evangelized by the Order in the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> Thus before the close of the 16th century, the towns of Abucay (1587) and Samal (1596) came into existence in Bataan.

*Social and cultural achievements of the first missionaries.*

The first Superior of Abucay was Father Juan de Ormaza who had gone there together with three companions in September of 1587. There he carried out a most impressive civilizing task despite the initial difficulties of missionary efforts for, as Father Santa Cruz says, “he gathered the people scattered all about in thirty or more ranches into two towns with their visitas, thus initiating them into the social life. He opened roads, built several bridges, put a check on the inroads of the sea into the land by means of palissades (which they call *tabong*), thus sheltering the fields, and through a constant vigilance and with the aid of his companions, carefully selected for this purpose, he introduced them into a well organized Christian life, and when he saw them good and ready, he started the work of Evangelization without the hindrance of temporal obstacles, thus healing with his sweetness their ancient habits”.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding such works of mercy as to healing the sick and teaching the ignorant, Father Aduarte has this to say: “God blessed them with abundant harvests, something that they—being farmers—prize very highly.”<sup>5</sup> They also experienced fewer diseases and deaths than when they had been still infidels, and to this contributed the diligence of the Fathers who procured that in every village a house was built in the manner of a hospital where they saw to it that the sick and the poor were brought in, and these were assisted with all punctuality in regards to medication, sustenance and spiritual life.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 65.

<sup>4</sup> BALTASAR DE SANTA CRUZ, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Zaragoza, 1693, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> ADUARTE, *Op. cit.*, p. 93. However, in 1670 farming conditions had taken a turn for the worse, for, as Father Juan de los Angeles remarks: “They harvest some rice, though not much, because they live by the sea-shore and the salt water enters their fields, and they cannot stop this but with difficulty, and still less so now that they are fewer” (*Relación breve de lo que pertenece a la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas*, etc., MS in APSR, Section “Historia de la Provincia”, Vol. II, p. 637.

<sup>6</sup> ADUARTE, p. 93, col. 2.

"The Fathers visit them in the hospitals, console and comfort the sick and in due time administer the last Sacraments to them. "The great utility of these hospitals was clearly seen during a wide-spread epidemic, which the natives experienced, in their land, and where there were these hospitals those who died were few and numberless, those who passed away in the neighbouring village where there were not (hospitals). As a result that "Partido" has constantly increased in population, while almost all of these Islands have decreased".<sup>7</sup>

"He (Father Pedro Bolaños) was one of those sent to Bataan where, through his kindness and gentleness won over the wills of the natives; and, to win over the grown ups, he began by the children, setting up a school for reading and praying, teaching both of these to the younger ones, and instructing in singing those whom he found more proficient".<sup>8</sup>

### *Tragedy of Abucay*

The year following the miraculous victories obtained against the powerful Dutch fleet through the intercession of our Lady of the Holy Rosary, thirteen Dutch men-o'-war appeared suddenly before the port of Cavite with the intention of capturing it. However, they were routed by the combined fire from the forts and the galleon *San Diego*.<sup>9</sup>

The Dutch sought better fortune on the other side of the bay, and landed in Abucay, capital of the region. Six hundred Pampango soldiers under the command of Don Diego Antonio de Cabrera, Alcalde Mayor of the province of Pampanga, defended the town. Unfortunately, Cabrera lacked the military qualities of command required by the circumstances. He failed also to take advantage of the courage of his men. The Pampangos opted to fight in the open; but Cabrera retired instead behind the weak walls of the convent and church, where after hardly a token resistance, he raised the flag of surrender. The enemy ordered the whole Pampango garrison shot in cold blood, against all the laws of a just war. The Spanish commander and the two Spanish priests, Frs. Jerónimo Sotomayor and Tomás Ramos, were spared and kept as hostages by the Dutch who hoped to obtain a large ransom for their liberty.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94, col. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64, col. 1.

<sup>9</sup> SANTA CRUZ, *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

The Fr. Provincial presented himself to Governor Fajardo in an attempt to interest him in the rescue of the priests; but Fajardo excused himself on the pretext that they had fallen war prisoners and were more fortunate than their comrades who were all shot to death.

Meanwhile, the Dutch wearied of the wait, and transferred the prisoners to Djakarta. The Province kept on making other unsuccessful attempts to obtain their liberty. Finally, the Alcalde Mayor of Pampanga, the man to blame for all these misfortunes, died of shame. And the two Dominican priests were drowned at sea being at last sent back to the Philippines.

To avenge the dead, and to prevent the returning Dutch from establishing any foothold in same strategic point which could serve them as a base of operations for future attacks, Fajardo despatched Capt. Juan de Chaves at the head of a company of Spaniards and Filipinos who fell on the Dutch from three sides, inflicting on them a bloody defeat. Some fell on the field of battle, others cast themselves into the sea, and the rest managed to reach their ships with difficulty. An epidemic still caused a greater havoc on the enemy that had retreated to Mariveles Point.<sup>10</sup>

### *Erection of the Province of Bataan*

Bataan became a province in 1754, during the incumbency of Governor General Don Pedro Manuel Arandía. The new province comprised the town of Mariveles and its dependencies of Morong and Bagac, and the other towns of Orion, Balanga Abucay, Samal and Orani, which heretofore were part of the province of Pampanga. The dialect was Tagalog. The new territorial division abolished the *corregimiento* of Mariveles, and Marigondon, which belonged to it, was annexed to the province of Cavite. Thus, a better division was made of the three provinces of Cavite, Bataan and Pampanga which facilitated both their civil and spiritual administrations.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>11</sup> *Ensayo Físico-descriptivo, Estadístico y Religioso de la provincia de Bataan*, por un Religioso dominico, Manila, 1848, Imprenta del colegio de Santo Tomás, p. 24.

*The Dominican Parishes in Bataan are  
Turned Over to the Secular Clergy.*

The province of Bataan was in a flourishing state and daily making strides, when, for reasons which it is beyond our scope to detail, the higher government addressed a request and a commission to the Alcalde Mayor, dated 18 June 1768, the tenor of which ordered the removal of the religious from the parishes and their turnover to members of the secular clergy, whose names were written on an accompanying list. The disposition was executed on 25 June. The document provided for the transfer of the parishes to the secular clergy on a provisional basis only. This notwithstanding, the secular priests occupied them later on a proprietary basis. This state of affairs continued until the King, by Royal Cedula of 8 June, 1826, ordered the return to the regular clergy of the parishes that had formerly been theirs. In consequence, the higher government, by common understanding with the Archbishop of Manila and the Provincial of the Dominicans disposed that the religious should take over the parishes gradually upon the death of the incumbent secular pastors. This procedure was strictly followed.

The only thing worth mentioning during the secular clergy's administration is the separation and creation of the town of Pilar on 10 April, 1901, with the merger of the barrios of Santa Rosa, Balibago and Panilao which were set apart from the municipality of Balanga.<sup>12</sup>

*The Negrito Problem.*

About two hundred Negrito families inhabited the hills bordering the parishes administered by the Dominicans in Bataan. One of the missionaries describes them as follows: "They are a physically poor race with black, kinky hair, whose origin, ancestry, language or dialect are not well-established, despite the fact that they are found in the Malacca peninsula, in the islands of Sumatra, Java, Hainan, Formosa, New Guinea, and in many places of the Philippines. In all the places mentioned, they speak a language similar to that of the towns of settlements in the vicinity of the mountains which they inhabit; there are, consequently, good grounds for doubting whether they have a language of their own."

About the middle of the 19th century, two Dominican missionaries devised a plan for settling on the plains the two

<sup>12</sup> UN RELIGIOSIO DOMINICO, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

hundred Negrito families that roamed the nearby jungles. Their plan consisted in grouping them together in small settlements at the foot of the hills, where houses would be constructed for them, and they would be taught the arts of farming and the truths of the Gospel. Fr. Benito Rivas and Fr. Alberto Planas were the men behind this plan to civilize and christianize a race that had stubbornly resisted all attempts to bring them to the main stream of society and progress. Unfortunately, their efforts failed as other previous attempts had — the Negritos ended up by going back to the mountains.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Dominicans Leave Bataan*

On 28 May, 1898, the townspeople of Balanga joined the Revolution at Aguinaldo's invitation. The same day the Dominican priests, Fr. Vicente Fernández and Fr. Gerardo Ramiro, who were in charge of the parish, fell into the hands of the victorious Filipino forces, with the surrender of the town.

During the fighting for the possession of Pilar, Fr. Francisco García sustained a deep wound in the nose and another slight one on his left arm.

On 30 May, the Filipino forces took the church of Orion after overpowering its seven defenders in an intense exchange of fire. Fathers Ulpiano Terrero and Julian Misol were made prisoners, and together with the other three already mentioned, they were marched, under guard, to Cavite where a harsh imprisonment awaited them.

Meanwhile, the parish priests of Abucay, Samal, Orani, and Mana-Hermosa were evacuated to Pampanga under the protection of the troops commanded by Col. Don Lucas de Francia. This protection failed them in Hagonoy, and the priests fell into the hands of the revolutionists.<sup>16</sup>

Thus ended the Dominican apostolate in Bataan. There was one glorious exception, however. In or about 1901, a Dominican priest Father Fermin Sanjulian returned to take charge of the parish of Pilar, at the insistent invitation of the townspeople themselves, who received him with cheers and applause, and there he stayed until his death on June 1, 1931.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> HILARIO MA. OCIO, O.P., *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica*, etc. Manila, 1895, p. 684.

<sup>16</sup> HERRERO, ULPIANO, *Nuestra Prison, Manila*, 1900, pp. 1-36.

<sup>17</sup> ARNAIZ, GREGORIO, O.P., *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas, desde 1871 hasta 1940*, MS in APSR, Section "Biografoas", p. 119.

## LITURGY

### ON LAY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION, MASTERS OF CEREMONIES, AND CHOIR-DIRECTORS

By

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

- I. *May a master of ceremonies, who is a layman, open the tabernacle, get the ciborium, give it to the lay ministers of communion, and repose it after communion? May he consume the holy Blood and the remaining hosts from the ciborium after communion? May he purify the chalice after communion?*

What is the task of a master of ceremonies? According to the Missal (i.e., the Sacramentary), "especially in larger churches and communities, a person should be designated to arrange the services and see that they are carried out by the ministers in a devout and orderly manner."<sup>1</sup>

What is a lay minister of holy communion? He is either an officially installed acolyte, or he has been called by the Church to serve on a more permanent basis as auxiliary minister of holy communion. Acolytes are installed according to the rite found in the reformed Roman Pontifical.<sup>2</sup> Their ministry and installation is reserved to men. Their institution does not change their status as laymen.

The other group of auxiliary ministers of holy communion should be installed in a rite which was published together with the Instruction "Immensae caritatis" (January 29, 1973) by the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments.<sup>3</sup> According to this second rite women may also be installed as extraordinary ministers of holy communion.

It does not appear from the question whether the lay ministers of holy communion in that parish have been installed

---

<sup>1</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal (= GIRM) no. 69.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman Pontifical I (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1978) 125-130.

<sup>3</sup> A preliminary translation has been published in the Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines 8 (1973) 36-41.

as acolytes, or in line with the Instruction "Immensae caritatis." It seems that the master of ceremonies in that same parish, has also been installed as lay minister of communion.

In a liturgical celebration, where other auxiliary ministers of holy communion exercise their ministry, the person in question should act either as master of ceremonies, or as extraordinary minister of communion, because "in liturgical celebrations, each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform should carry out all and *only* those parts which pertain to his office by nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy."<sup>4</sup> As a consequence of this regulation of Vatican II priests are no longer to act as deacons in liturgical celebrations. In a solemn Mass they should concelebrate, but not pretend to be deacons. Since the parish in question has a number of laymen who have been installed as auxiliary ministers of communion, they should perform their tasks, while the master of ceremonies should do his part and *only* his. After these preliminary observations the questions can be answered.

1. *May the master of ceremonies open the tabernacle and get the ciborium, give it to the lay ministers of communion, and repose it after communion?*

As master of ceremonies, this is none of his business.

2. *May a lay minister of communion during Mass open the tabernacle and get the ciborium, give it to his fellow ministers of communion, and repose it after communion?*

As far as possible, the priest who celebrates the Mass, should consecrate the hosts to be distributed during the Mass. In large parishes, like those in Metro Manila, this is not always possible. If hosts have to be taken from the tabernacle, it would certainly be preferable that the celebrating priest himself open the tabernacle and bring the ciborium(s) to the altar. After his own communion, he communicates the lay ministers of holy communion.<sup>5</sup> Then the priest hands over the ciborium to each one of the lay ministers. In this way he makes it obvious by a sign, that he is the ordinary minister of holy communion while the lay ministers are extraordinary ministers only.

<sup>4</sup> Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 28.

<sup>5</sup> They may receive communion under both kinds.

In a similar way, in a concelebrated Confirmation, in which the bishop associates to himself simple priests, he has to hand over to each priest individually the vessel with chrism.<sup>6</sup> In this way he shows that the sacrament of Confirmation has its origin in the bishop, who alone can consecrate the chrism, and therefore is the *minister originarius* of the sacrament.

By giving the ciborium to the lay minister, the celebrating priest shows that he acts as priest in the person of Christ, that he is the ordinary minister of communion. On the other hand, a priest, who assists a fellow priest in the distribution of communion during Mass, may take the ciborium directly from the altar (or tabernacle) and begin to communicate the people. Priests have to become more aware of the sign-dimension of the liturgy. As a matter of fact, the liturgy consists entirely of signs.

Priests and deacons have to become aware that installed acolytes and other lay ministers of holy communion are extraordinary ministers of the sacrament, who are to step in only when ordinary ministers, priests and deacons, are either physically or morally unable to distribute the sacrament, or when there are so many people present who want to receive the Lord in the eucharist that the ordinary ministers are so few, or the time allotted for the celebration of the Mass is too short, especially on Sundays and holidays of obligation, in parishes with many Masses following one another.

There is no reason why these same lay ministers after the distribution of holy communion — each one for himself — should not repose the ciborium in the tabernacle. There is no need for someone else, to do this, neither a priest nor a master of ceremonies. The latter has to care for the orderly execution of the ceremonies, but should not intervene in the ministry of others.

3. *May the master of ceremonies (or a lay minister of holy communion) consume the holy Blood and the remaining hosts from the ciborium, after communion?*

Once again: this is certainly not the task of the master of ceremonies. In a Mass it should also not be a task of one of the lay ministers of holy communion. It is the task of the celebrating priest.

<sup>6</sup> "If priests assist the bishop in conferring the sacrament...each of the priests comes to the bishop, who gives him a vessel of chrism" (The Roman Pontifical I, p. 78, no. 28).



4. *May the master of ceremonies (or a lay minister of holy communion) purify the chalice (and ciborium) after communion?*

The master of ceremonies should not do this. Acolytes who have been instituted, and established lay ministers of holy communion may purify the sacred vessels. Concerning this matter the General Instruction of the Roman Missal states: "After communion, the acolytes help the priest and deacon to wash the vessels and arrange them." Usually they do this by offering the cruets, or pouring the water into the vessel, held by the priest. But "if there is no deacon, the acolyte takes the vessel(s) to the side table (i.e., the credence table) where he washes them and arranges them" (no. 147).

If acolytes and installed lay ministers of holy communion conduct priestless Sunday services with the distribution of holy communion, they bring the hosts in a well-sealed container with them from the parish center, and consume, at the end of the service, the last hosts (if the place has no tabernacle) and purify the vessel in which the hosts were before the service.

- II. *Can a priest-choir director, performing his duties, as such concelebrate in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass?*

A priest-choir director performing his tasks "exercises a liturgical function within the assembly."<sup>7</sup> The Instruction "Musicam Sacram" of March 5, 1967<sup>8</sup> encourages choirs "especially in cathedrals and other major churches, in seminaries and religious houses of studies" (no. 19). But the same Instruction adds a warning that directors of choirs "should take care that the people always associate themselves with the singing by performing at least the easier sections of those parts which belong to them" (no. 20). In other words, a choir should never deprive the people from taking part in the singing. The singing in a liturgical celebration must not become a monopoly of the choir.

<sup>7</sup> GIRM, no. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Published in: Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents (ed. by A. Flannery) 80-97.

The liturgical ministry of the priest-choir director reaches its climax when he concelebrates. In order to be able to do this, it is highly recommendable that the choir has its place not on a far-off choir loft, but in some other place closer to the sanctuary. In such a situation the priest-choir director can be with the choir until the prayer over the gifts, or, exceptionally, also until the Sanctus. Then he takes his place with the other concelebrants around the altar, where he stays until after communion.

In this case choir leaves, in line with the recommendations of the Instruction "Musicam Sacram" the singing of the Sanctus, the Our Father and the Agnus Dei to the entire community. Only after his own communion at the altar, the priest-choir director may return to the choir.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> On the foregoing see *Notitiae* 5 (1969) 405, no. 22 (for a priest-organist).

# **BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES**

**JUNE-JULY 1982**

**By**

**Fr. Herman Mueller, S.V.D.**

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

**(June 6, 1982)**

Feasts in honor of a doctrine rather than an event of salvation history as this, are rare. First it was celebrated in 1030 on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Pope XXII approved it in 1334 as feast of the universal Church.

The doctrine of the Trinity is implicit rather than explicit in Scripture, economic rather than metaphysical. Basic Christian experience expressed itself in triadic formulas: for blessing (2 Cor. 13:13) and baptism (Mt. 28:19). Slowly the Church defined the dogma of the Blessed Trinity in terms of Greek philosophy: three persons and one nature, rather than in terms taken from the Bible. But if we want to put life into these philosophical terms, if we want to come closer to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and try to understand it somehow, we better try to unfold the economic way of the Scripture texts. After all, the Triune God revealed and continues revealing himself in nature, in history and in our heart.

God is high above in heaven, he is transcendent. At the same time he is on the earth beneath, he is immanent (first reading). But God is also Father (second reading).

God revealed himself by creating everything through his Son (first reading), by speaking out of the fire in giving the law on Mount Sinai, and by redeeming his people from Egypt through the exodus (first reading). Even more, we are made

sons of the Father, brothers of Christ (second reading). At the same time it is true that we are made disciples of Christ (gospel).

Sons of God, brothers of Christ, however we can become only through the Spirit of the sons of God. He alone testifies to our adoption, he alone prays in us and with us the prayer of the children of God, the "Our Father", the Abba = Father (second reading).

### FIRST READING: DEUTERONOMY 4:32-34.39-40

The great theme of the Book of Deuteronomy is: "If you continue to heed the voice of the Lord, your God, and are careful to observe all his commandments which I enjoin on you today, the Lord your God will raise you high above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1)." The final edition stems from the time after the exile (after 538 B.C.), being the result of a long oral and written transmission of the Deuteronomic Source. Much of the material may go back to Moses. Thus the unknown author places the legal, narrative and hortatory material in the mouth of Moses in three long discourses (1:1-4:43; 4:44-28:69; 29:1-30:20). The narration of the exodus is continued till the death of Moses and the laws are expounded (especially in the Ten Commandments (5:1-22) and the Deuteronomic Code (12:1-26:19), being partly a repetition (thus the name "Deuteronomy" = second law, which however is true only to a small extent) but more a new explanation.

In today's first reading we have the end of the first part of the Book, the end of the first discourse of Moses. He speaks about the unique vocation of Israel in the covenant. It is a magnificent homily on the election of Israel, a stylistic and theological high point of the book, taken from the unheard of signs and wonders by which Yahweh revealed himself to Israel and thus confirmed the law which he announced from heaven, that Yahweh is the only and true God. And this God has elected Israel before all other nations to be his own. This knowledge shall be incentive to keep God's commandments.

God even spoke to Israel, in a way they saw him face to face, yet they did not die (4:32-33). He brought them out of Egypt (4:34).

**SECOND READING: ROMANS 8:14-17**

The main theme of the Letter to the Romans is: We are justified by faith in Christ. This Paul explains in the first part of the letter (Rom. 1:16-11:36). In the first subdivision of this first part he unfolds this justice which makes us upright through the gospel (1:16-4:25) and tells us in the second subdivision (5:1-11:36): The love of God assures salvation to the justified. Paul announces the theme: The reconciled Christian will be saved, sharing with hope in the risen life of Christ (5:1-11). Then he explains the theme: The new Christian life brings a threefold freedom (5:12-7:25): from death and sin (5:12-21), from self through union with Christ in baptism (6:1-23), and from the Law (7:1-25). Thereupon the Apostle develops the theme (8:1-39): Christian life is lived in the Spirit and is destined for glory. That means in detail: Christian life is empowered by the Spirit (8:1-13). Through the Spirit the Christian becomes a child of God and is destined for glory (8:14-30).

Today's second reading makes up the first half of the last pericope: We become children of God by the Holy Spirit (8:14-17). By nature we were children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). But then by Christ's death we became children of God. This happened in our personal life in baptism, where we became adopted children of God (8:15) through the Holy Spirit.

The result of our adoption is: We became brothers and sisters of Christ and thus heirs with Christ (8:17), under one condition: that we suffer with Christ.

Another consequence of the adoption: The Spirit as the Spirit of the children of God prays in us the prayer Christ always prayed: "Abba = Father."

**READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MATTHEW 28:16-20**

This same gospel we saw already on Ascension Day of the year A. By his resurrection (and exaltation) full authority is given to Christ. He has become the Lord (*kyrios*) (Phil. 2:11), as it was foretold in Dan. 7:14.

Thus he sends out his apostles to make disciples of *all* nations, not just of the Jews. They are not supposed to become mere listeners but followers, becoming one with Christ (Mt. 28:19).

Thus they shall be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19). This is one of the clearest Trinitarian formulas in the New Testament. It may not be the very words of Christ, but the formulation of the early Church. If in Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5 a baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus" is mentioned or "in the name of Jesus Christ" this does not contradict Mt. 28:19. "In the name of" means by the authority of somebody. The apostles baptized by the authority of Jesus, as he had told them to do. To baptize in the name of Jesus Christ would be implicitly also Trinitarian, since the Christ is the Messiah sent by the Father and the one who fulfills his work through the Holy Spirit. When the exact Trinitarian baptismal formula of today came into existence we have to leave open. Some would say at the end of the first century, and perhaps outside of Palestine (cf. Didache). Others say: A study of the ancient liturgical books shows that this formula did not appear in the Roman liturgy before the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century. However in the earlier period baptism by a triple immersion was practiced with a profession in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Adrian Nocent).

*The Liturgical Year Vol. 3: The Easter Season.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1977, p. 283.

The apostles shall teach those baptized, i.e., deepen their faith so that they will keep God's commandments.

Christ is exalted into heaven. But he remains with us till the end of times (28:20). He was promised as Emmanuel Mt. 1:23 and he leaves us with the promise to be our Emmanuel (28:20).

## HOMILY

### **GOD THE FATHER TRANSCENDENT AND IMMANENT LORD AND FATHER — GOD THE SON CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND SON — GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT UNITING BOND OF PRAYER**

1. Most feasts of the liturgical year are dedicated to an event in the history of salvation, which makes it easy to meditate on. The Feast of the Blessed Trinity is dedicated to a doctrine, the most metaphysical of all: There is only one God,

since he has only one divine nature; but there are three persons in this Triune God. Thus some will reason: This great mystery is only for the scholars among the theologians. We ordinary people can only bow in awe and reverence before this mystery.

2. It is true, the Triune God is a great mystery which we will never fully understand. But as with every mystery, mysteries can be lived. And thus one comes closer to the mystery, although the mystery remains a mystery. This is also true with the Triune God. He has revealed himself already in the Old Testament, although the Jews did not understand him yet because the prophets were hammering, as it were, into their heads: "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)." This so-called "Shema" (because of the first Hebrew word *Shema* = listen) was one main credal form of the Jews. Moses and all the prophets and leaders wanted to make sure that the Jews would not succumb to the danger of idolatry, worshiping many gods. And God has even more and clearly revealed himself as Triune God in the New Testament. Seeing Christ we see the Father. The Holy Spirit we experience as the one continuing Christ's work of salvation. And in the light of the New Testament we understand many passages of the Old Testament better as indirectly referring to Christ or the Holy Spirit.

3. Reading Scripture that way we follow the economic way instead of the metaphysical way which helps us to come closer to the divine mystery. Whatever God does outside of the Blessed Trinity is common to all three persons. Yet we attribute certain predicates — with a certain flexibility — to one of the three persons, having a relation to their divine origin.

4. a. God, and thus in particular God the Father, is the Lord, God in the heavens above (Deut. 4:39), as Moses told the Israelites. He is transcendent; so great that the earth cannot hold him, because he is the creator of heaven and earth. And thus he is the sovereign Lord. Consequently there is no other God beside him (Deut. 4:39). The Jews would bind this credal form ("Listen O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone!") on their forehead, on their arms and on the doorpost of the house so that they could never forget it.

b. That same God, however is also immanent. The above word of Moses continues: "The Lord is God on the earth below (Deut. 4:39)." He is transcendent high above us. And yet at

the same time, he wants to be close to us so that we can follow his footsteps, so that we can get to know him by studying the world he created. The invisible, transcendent God revealed himself in the material, visible world. And if we do not understand and acknowledge him, it's our fault and sin (Wisdom 13:1; Rom. 1:18-20).

c. God, and thus God the Father revealed himself in the Old Testament with many names: (1) Often enough he is called just "*El*" = God, or *Elohim* and *Eloah*, which means basically the same: (a) Strong, (b) revered, and thus the object of fear and reverence (Gen. 31:42; 8:13), (c) leader, Lord, (d) stretch out, reach after; and thus *El*, *Elohim* is the God men strive to reach. (2) He is called *El Shaddai* = God Almighty (Gen. 28:3; 48:3) (3) He is *El'elyon* = God Most High (Gen. 14:22), (4) and *El-'olam* = God the Eternal (Gen. 21:33). All these names express one way and the other God's greatness, his being high above and remote from us, whom we can only try to reach. (5) Finally God wanted to be known by the name *Yahweh*, (a) This some explain as "unnameable, inexplicable (Gesenius, *Lexicon* p. 218). (b) Another explanation is "the I who am, i.e., whose essence is to exist by himself", the *ens a se*. These two explanations, as one can see, express God's remoteness more than anything else, as it is true for the name *Elohim*. But there are two more likely explanations: (c) *Yahweh* means: "the one who brings into being whatever comes into being", God is the creator, and even more likely (d) *Yahweh* is "the one present and ready to act, present to save" whoever wants to be saved.

d. But only in the *New Testament* did God reveal himself fully as *Father* (1) It is true, Israel as a people was son of God and thus the Israelites were God's children, but as members of the nation rather than as individuals. And in the older books (see Is. 63:16) the statement of God as Father is used as an *enunciation*, not as an *address*. (2) Later books of the Old Testament show a more personal relationship between the individual and God. So for the first time we find in Sir. 23:1.4f a personal address of God as Father. But even then it is not just "Father"; rather some other titles are added, i.e., "Lord, Lord of my life." (3) There is no single Jewish text in the Old Testament or in Rabbinical Literature where God is addressed as "*Abba*" (Father) without any addition. (4) Jesus, however always addressed God as *Abba*, i.e., with the most tender name any Jewish child used to call his father, which we would translate with "Papa, daddy, tatay". So we have it at least in Mk. 14:36.



(5) The unheard of good news is that Christ encourages and empowers us to call God with the same tender name "Abba=Papa, daddy, tatay" as he did. And this Paul explains to us in today's second reading (Rom. 8:15) "You did not receive a spirit of slavery leading back to into fear but a spirit of adoption through which we cry: 'Abba!' that is, 'Father!'"

5. God is not only transcendent and immanent, he is also outgoing, and communicating. This communication within the Trinity results in the Son. The Father speaks the Word, the Father generates the Son. But this communication outside of the Blessed Trinity is often attributed to the Son. Thus we see it in today's first reading, if we take in addition some clarifications of the New Testament.

a. God *created* man (Deut. 4:32) and with him he created the universe. This however God did through the Divine Word as we learn in the prologue of the fourth gospel: "Through him (the Divine Word) all things came into being, and apart from him nothing came to be. It is therefore clear: Everything was created through the second divine person, the Logos, the Word. And John goes even further: "Whatever came to be was life in him (Jn. 1:4)." The Divine Word is the model for everything, especially for us people, that has been created. We are modelled after him. He is our life. If we want to know what we shall be we have to study him.

b. Christ is also the *redeemer*, already in the Old Testament. Thus we read in the first reading: "Did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, with his strong hand and outstretched arm, and by great terrors, all of which the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes (Deut. 4:33-34)?" This text could of course refer to God as Father. But if we take that same prologue of John we see that the Divine Word was already working among the Jews before the Incarnation, unknown for them: "He (the Divine Word) was in the world, and through him the world was made, yet the world did not know who he was. To his own he came, yet his own did not accept him (Jn. 1:10-11). This strophe of the pre-Johannine hymn on the Logos refers according to many scholars to Christ before the Incarnation, which is mentioned only in 1:14.

That Christ was active among his own chosen people already before the Incarnation we also learn from St. Paul. He explains the happenings in the desert during the exodus, where God

takes care of needs of the Jews by sending them manna and quails and provides them with fresh water from the rock (Ex. 17:6). And Paul then explains this rock: "All drank from the spiritual rock that was following them, and the rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10.4)."

Thus *the* event in the life of the Jews, the exodus and the climaxing covenant on Mt. Sinai was established by the Word, by Christ. He is the redeemer from the slavery of Egypt as he later would be the redeemer from sin.

c. Christ as *the* Son of God is also our big brother. We are sons in the Son of God. He is son by nature, we are sons by adoption (Rom. 8:15). This however is not just a juridical fiction, but a divine reality. And thus we are also *co-heirs* (Rom. 8:17).

d. Ever since Christ appeared on earth, he sent his apostles out to preach and make all of us his *disciples* (Mt. 28:19), followers of his who get to know him, are transformed into him..

6. God the *Holy Spirit* is the bond of love and union between Father and Son, and thus the bond of love and union between God and us. a. Today's second reading singles out that we have been made sons of God in the Spirit. He gives witness that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). We are sons of God because we are led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

b. The Holy Spirit is the fellowship in the Blessed Trinity. This fellowship between God and us expresses itself in *prayer*. Thus the Holy Spirit prays in us and for us the prayer of the children of God, the "Abba=Father" (Rom. 8:15).

### SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST (June 13, 1982)

A desire for a more intense devotion to the Eucharist, mainly the adoration, although the aspect of sacrifice and meal was not forgotten, arose in the twelfth century. Juliana of Retinnes (1192-1258), a nun of the Augustinian Convent of Mount Cornillon near Liège (Belgium) and later prioress, revealed a series of visions granted to her, in which the Lord expressed among other things the desire for a solemn feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. This feast was introduced in

Liège in 1246 and celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. James Pantaleon, archdeacon of Liège, a confidant of Juliana, who later became Pope Urban (1261-64), extended the feast to the universal Church. — In the Philippines the feast is celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday instead of on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

As the old covenant was sealed by the blood of animals (first reading) so the new covenant is sealed by the blood of Christ (second reading). Thus Holy Eucharist is the sacrifice of the new covenant where we eat Christ's body and drink the cup of salvation.

### FIRST READING: EXODUS 24:3-8

The Book of Exodus reports in the first part (1:1-15:21) about the liberation of the Jews from Egypt, describes in the second part (15:22-18:27) the wandering of the Hebrews in the desert, and explains in the third part (19:1-24:18) the covenant at Mt. Sinai. Our first reading is taken from this third part.

Ex. 24 has gone through a long time of transmission and belongs to different sources. But it is not easy to determine with certainty the extent of the sources. Ex. 24:1-2.9-11 belongs to the Yahwistic Source (J), Ex. 24:3-8.12-15a.18b to the Elohist Source and Ex. 24:15b-18a to the Priestly Source according to some. Others would classify 24:3-8 as a separate source within the E strand (E<sup>1</sup>), and 24:1-2.9-11 as a separate source within the J strand (J<sup>1</sup>). The fact that there are different sources accounts for the many unevenness and the repetitions in the report. For instance: Seven times in the chapter are there references to Moses "ascending" of the mountain. Did Moses go up and down that often? But we should not fail to see the final stage of composition and see what the final redactor wanted to tell with the present form of the text. Then we see the following:

The Sinai covenant is in a way an adaptation of a suzerainty treaty which were well known in the ancient Near East. There is (1) *the covenant sermon* (Ex. 19:4-6) with (a) the historical prologue telling what the great king, Yahweh did: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians... You have seen how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:10-12)." (b) This is followed by Yahweh's call for a response on the part of Israel: "Therefore, if you

hearken to my voice and keep my covenant (Ex. 19:5a) . . ."  
 (c) It concludes with the promise of covenant blessings: "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 (19:5-6)." (2) Then follows *Israel's response to God's call* which we have three times: in 19:7-8; 24:3 and 24:7; "Everything the Lord has said, we will do." (3) Thereupon comes the *covenant sacrifice* (Ex. 24:4-8). (4) Finally the covenant is concluded by a *covenant meal* (Ex. 24:1.9-11).

As one can see, two parts of the covenant are mentioned in today's first reading: (1) Israel's response to God's call (Ex. 24:3) and the covenant sacrifice (Ex. 24:4-8). The sequence of events presented in 24:3-8 is: (1) proclamation of the words of the covenant: "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and ordinances (24:3)"; (2) acceptance by the people: "The people answered: 'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do (24:3).'" (3) Ratification by means of a written record: "And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord (24:4)." (4) Ratification of the covenant by sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice: "He took the blood and sprinkled it on the people (24:7)." Then Moses added: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his (24:8)."

This sentence occurs again in Hebr. 9:20 and 14:24 and makes clear: As the old covenant was sealed by the blood of the animals so the new covenant is sealed by the blood of Christ.

## SECOND READING: HEBREWS 9:11-15

One main intention of the Letter to the Hebrews is to show the superiority of the New-over the Old Covenant, of the new-over the old priesthood. Thus Hebrew 8 explains us how the old cult was insufficient: the sacrifices had to be repeated again and again. After all, the blood of animals was imperfect and cannot cause real forgiveness. Then the author goes on in Hebrew 9 telling us that the sacrifice of Christ is efficacious and final. It was offered once and for all and does not have to be repeated. And Christ's sacrifice has infinite value.

Today's second reading strangely enough does not have Hebr. 9:20 (which should be included) which brings the perfect

parallel to Ex.24:8 (Moses read all the commandments of the law) "and sprinkled the book and all the people, saying: 'This is the blood of the covenant which God has enjoined upon you.'" Thus the old and the new covenant are inaugurated with blood: the old with blood of animals, the new with Christ's blood.

Hebr. 9 has still a clearer parallel in Num. 19. There are great similarities in vocabulary: The high priest shall take ashes of a heifer (Num. 19:10; Hebr. 9:13); he shall sprinkle blood of goats and bulls (Num. 19:4; Hebr. 9:13); the heifer shall be free from blemish (Num. 19:2; Hebr. 9:19); the priest washes in water (Num. 19:7; Hebr. 9:19).

That all this happens every year on the Day of Atonement is described in Lev. 16. Every year once the high priest went into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood of a sin-offering goat on the propitiatory and before it to *atone* for the sins of people. Here we have the second meaning of blood: cleansing from sins. In Ex. 24 it was more for the establishing of the covenant. In opposition to the repeated entering of the high priest and the repeated sprinkling of blood (each year once) on the propitiatory in the tent and later in the temple, Christ is high priest and sacrifice at the same time and enters the heavenly Holy of Holies once and for all, atoning for our sins. His sacrifice does not have to be repeated. Every Mass is not a repeated sacrifice but the re-enactment of the one sacrifice.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 14:12-16.22-26

There are two parts in the gospel: (1) 14:12-16 the preparation of the passover and (2) 14:22-26 the institution of Holy Eucharist.

(1) Christ is in full control of the events. He knows everything and prepares the first Mass well. He prepares it in such a way that not even Judas could disturb it by an arrest of Jesus. Holy Mass must be well prepared. He knows that a man will come when the two disciples (from Lk. 22:8 we know it was Peter and John) enter Jerusalem, carrying a water pitcher on his head (usually only done by women). He will prepare the upper room for the passover. Judas would not know anything ahead of time and could not disturb.

(2) The institution of Holy Eucharist is not an exact report of the event at the last supper, but probably comes close to it since apparently Holy Eucharist was celebrated in that

way in the Markan community. Most likely Jesus followed the sequence of a Jewish passover meal and elevated the blessing of the bread and of the (third cup) of wine to the rank of a sacrament. Here are the main events of a passover meal:

1. First cup of wine placed on table.
2. Double benediction of the wine and the day.
3. Easter food placed on the table.
4. Opening course eaten (bitter herbs, fruit sauce).
5. Second cup of wine mixed blessed.
6. A boy asks about the meaning of the feast (cf. Ex. 12:26f).
7. Master of the house explains the meaning.
8. First part of Hallel (Ps. 113-114) recited.
9. Second cup drunk.
10. Master says thanks over the bread, breaks it into pieces and distributes it.
11. Easter lamb is eaten.
12. After the meal third cup is blessed and drunk (called "cup of blessing").

It seems that in 1 Corinthians the sequence is the same as above: the meal (of passover) came in between the blessing of the bread (which Christ raised to the dignity of a sacrament) and the blessing of the (third cup of) wine, which again Christ raised to the dignity of the sacrament. In the time of the Markan and Pauline communities the sequence was already changed: First came the meal and then the Eucharist (consecration of bread and consecration of wine). Nowadays we have first the Eucharist and then the meal (*agape*).

In Holy Eucharist we receive Christ's body and blood. The cup is stressed: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many (an Hebraeism which means "for all"). The parallel to Ex. 24:8 is clear.

## HOMILY

### HOLY EUCHARIST AS SACRIFICE AND BANQUET ESTABLISHING THE NEW COVENANT

1. In the Ancient Near East there were often kings who would make a covenant with subordinate kings. The great king would state what he all had done for the subordinate kings, and

the subordinate kings would promise undivided allegiance to the great king. The vassal kings must not oppress one another and stop all disputes among themselves submitting the cases to the great king for judgment. They would promise military support to the great king and trust in the great king. The treaty was written down and placed in the temple and was periodically read to the people. Gods were called upon as witnesses; curses and blessings were invoked for non-observance respective for observance of the treaty.. A sacrifice and a meal followed.

2. a. The Old Covenant on Mt. Sinai is in many ways similar to such a suzerainty treaty. God pointed out to Israel how much he had done for them: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You have seen how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you 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. 19:4-6)." With these words God offered a covenant of unlimited friendship.

b. Israel accepted God's promise and responded: Everything the Lord has said, we will do (Ex. 24:3).

c. But for a Jew, words were not enough. The treaty was sealed by a sacrifice. That could happen in different forms: The covenant partners could mingle their blood together by cutting each other on the arm. Or the two parties passed between the divided halves of an animal to be sacrificed. On Mt. Sinai Moses took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people (Ex. 24:7). And he said: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his (Ex. 24:8)."

d. And almost always the covenant-making would be concluded by a covenant meal. Here on Mt. Sinai Moses, Aaron and seventy elders go up to Mt. Sinai and they were eating and drinking and saw the Lord (Ex. 24:11).

3. The New Covenant of the New Testament contains all these elements in a higher degree.

a. God made us his people by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. God inaugurated the new covenant by Christ's blood.

(1) Christ's blood expiated for us. We are washed clean by his blood. As in the Old Testament the high priest once a

year on the Atonement Day entered the holy of holies, sprinkled blood of a sin-offering goat on the propitiatory and before it to atone for the sins of the people so Christ went after and through his death once and for all into the heavenly holy of holies, making us clean from sins by offering to the Father his bloody sacrifice on the cross. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebr. 9:22)". As a priest by nature offers sacrifice so Christ offers a sacrifice. But since his sacrifice is perfect he does not have to renew it. Eternally he holds to the Father his act of sacrifice timelessly present. And this act of his sacrifice forms the core of every Mass. It is not a new sacrifice.

(2) Christ's blood makes us "bloodrelated". Moses took the blood of the young bulls and placed it in large bowls. The one half he splashed on the altar, with the other half he sprinkled the people. Thus people became "bloodrelated" with God as it were. The one part sanctified by the altar sanctified also the other half and thus the people sprinkled by it. This is even more true with Christ's blood. The new covenant is established by Christ's blood. We become his people, "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" in the words of God in Ex. 19:6.

(3) A sacrifice was offered, blood was used in the covenant ceremony to show the seriousness of obligation. The obligations are bloody serious. This was especially what the covenant partners wanted to express when they cut a sacrifice in half and put the one half of the sacrificed animals on the one side and the other half on the other side, and then they marched between the halves expressing this way: "Should I not be faithful to the covenant, would I not keep the obligations then the same should happen to me what happened to the animals which have been cut in half. I want to be faithful to my covenant obligations."

Christ did not hesitate to accept the Father's will and offer himself as perfect sacrifice. Participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice must also mean for us that we are willing to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. In the words of Paul it means: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship (Rom. 12:1)." Our daily life and duties are a continuation of the morning sacrifice.

(4) The sacrifice of the covenant makes us *one with God* and *Christ* and one with *one another*. This is contained in the idea that we are "blood-related", but even more in the symbolism of the one loaf: "Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing



in the blood of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we many, though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

b. The covenant was completed by the *banquet*.

(1) After God had completed the covenant with Moses on Mt. Sinai he ordered Moses to come up to the mountain with the seventy elders. They did so. Exodus 24:11 adds: "They saw God: They were eating and drinking." It is man's desire to see God. But nobody can see God here on earth. Moses tried once and asked God: "Do let me see your glory (Ex. 33:18)!" God could only answer: "When my glory passes I will set you in the hallow of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face is not to be seen (Ex. 33:22-23)." In other words, man can see God's glory as reflected in creation, but his "face", that is, God as he is in himself, mortal man cannot see. But here after the conclusion of the covenant it is mentioned: "God did not smite these chosen Israelites (Ex. 24:11)," namely those who went up to the mountain to see God by eating the covenant meal.

To go the Eucharistic banquet means in a true sense also to behold Christ's face and go on living. Certainly, it is not a seeing face as it will be only in heaven. But it is a seeing in faith. If only our faith would be a little more lively! To go to the Eucharistic banquet means to be with Christ, in his presence as Moses and the seventy elders were with Yahweh on Mt. Sinai.

(2) A banquet means eating in order to *grow*. That idea is not explicitly expressed in the banquet on Mt. Sinai. But it is one main meaning of the Eucharistic banquet. Our divine life which we live since baptism has to grow by eating the Eucharistic food.

## TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(June 20, 1982)

Today we learn: God, and thus Christ, is the Lord of the world. The wind and the sea obey him (gospel). Already in the beginning of creation God set the sea its limits (first reading). And the Father created everything through the Son. — In the independent theme of the second reading we meditate on our being a new creation since baptism.

**FIRST READING: JOB 38:1.8-11**

The first reading is selected in view of the gospel, not in view of the main topic of the Book of Job which is the problem of how God permits that a just man has to suffer. The traditional explanation was: God punishes a bad man already here on earth for his misbehavior and rewards a good man for his virtuous acts. Thus if somebody suffers it's because he has sinned and is now punished by God.

Job challenges this traditional belief. After all, he has sinned, yes. But only as even the saints sin on earth. But he has not committed grave sins which would deserve such suffering as he is undergoing now, having lost his possessions, children and his health. And thus the great crisis in his life starts: Is God absentminded? Does he not care? Is he cruel? Is he too far remote from us? Is there a lack of a mediator?

God answers all these questions of Job by referring to himself as creator. Yahweh has made the great universe (Job 38-39), and in particular he has set the limits to the ocean so that it cannot do any harm to men. Can Job understand the marvelous design of the universe? Or could he perhaps just for a day take the place of God in running sun, moon and stars, just for one day? Obviously Job could not even think of something like this for one moment, less do it. How then can he understand God's plans why he lets a just man suffer? Job shall leave it up to God. And so Job apologizes for having taken his mouth too full (Job 42:3) and he submits to God's providence.

**SECOND READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-17**

We are a new creation, the apostle tells us in this section. Christ died for us on the cross. And in a mysterious way we all died with him and rose from the dead in baptism (Rom. 6:3-11).

Thus we do not consider Christ with human standards, that means for Paul he does no longer consider Christ as an imposter and a mere man, but as the Lord and Savior of all. And we do not consider one another with mere human eyes any more either because in baptism we have become something completely new, a new creation.

How this new creation came about, Paul explains in v. 18:  
(1) Christ reconciled us objectively with God by his death on

the cross, and (2) subjectively by the word of reconciliation, the gospel, which does not only speak about reconciliation but affects reconciliation if we accept the good news in faith and then in baptism. (This verse is not in the second reading any more.)

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 4:35-41

After Christ has delivered the sermon of parables (Mk. 4:1-34) he wants to go somewhere else (as he often did) and thus escape the pressure of the crowd. For that purpose he had already taught from the boat. Now the disciples take him as he is (i.e. without growing ashore first and then going into the boat) and go by boat to the east side of the Lake Genesareth. They leave in the evening, in a hurry, because the Lord orders them to do so.

Lake Genesareth lies six-hundred seventy-five feet below the level of the Mediterranean. And at night the temperature is greatly lowered on the plateaus, while it falls but lightly in the vicinity of the Lake. For this reason local storms arise frequently during the hours of darkness. Usually the skies are cloudless during these storms. Often the full moon shines so that the outline of every object is clearly defined. (Cf. Mt. 14:24: "Jesus saw that the wind was against them.")

The sea winds from the west do not exert their full force upon the west shore and the west part of the Lake, but rather upon its central area. Thus the expression: "the storm came down on the Lake (Lk. 8:23)."

Storms arise suddenly but not as a surprise. The severe storms coming from the Mediterranean are registered in advance by a sort of natural weather forecast: the roaring of the surf along the Syrian coast, particularly at Ras-en-Nakura = the great chest. This is a large cave in the rockbound coast which amplifies the noise created by the violent tossing force of the waters against the cliffs. The deep, dull roar is carried to the Lake by vibrations of the earth. The fishermen hear it and say: "The great chest is roaring." They know that within twenty-four hours a storm will come. They do not venture out upon the Lake when danger thus threatens. Thus fishermen are seldom drowned in Lake Genesareth.

Storms coming from Mount Hermon are usually accompanied by severe atmospheric tension, announced by flashes of lightning in the north. Fishermen can thus also predict those storms.

The two occasions on which the disciples were overtaken by a storm were not seemingly unexpected. Jesus ordered the disciples to venture forth, when, as experienced fishermen they would have otherwise remained on shore. They should fully confide in him.

The report of Mark makes the impression of an eyewitness, Peter. There are the small details like the cushion in the stern on which Christ sleeps; the other boats which accompany the main boats which later are not mentioned any more; the disciples who are slow in opening up to full trust in the Lord. All these are features which somebody does not make up who wants to write a nice story.

## HOMILY

### "AND THERE WAS A GREAT CALMNESS."

1. Our modern picture of nature is different from that of the ancients. Science is much advanced and we can predict the weather quite well. And each time somebody was taken by surprise by a storm and drowned or suffered some great damage, it was only — so we think — because somewhere along the line something went wrong, which next time we can eliminate.

Thus some of us will smile if Jesus acts as if nature is to an extent under the control of demons whom he exorcises with a word of power. We may assume that it was more the understanding of the disciples, the way they saw the Lord behave than what he really said. After all, according to a myth, shared at one time by the Jews, when God created the universe it involved a contest with the forces of chaos and evil, which were identified with, or located in the waters of the sea. God was victorious. And ever since the ability to control the sea and subdue tempests was regarded as one of the characteristics of divine power (Ps. 89:10-11; 93:3-4; 106:7-9; Is. 51:9-10).

But are we really all that superior to such a world picture of the Jews? Do not some modern people believe in horoscopes and use talismen! So, whatever may belong to the literary form and whatever may be the exact historical reality in this miracle story: Mark wants to picture Jesus as Lord over nature.

2. Jesus has delivered a long sermon of parables. It was the first time that he taught at length. He was sowing the seed, the word of God. There were many different kinds of hearers and Jesus could only wonder how many listeners would be like rocky ground, thorns and thistles or busy paths, or finally deep fertile soil that produces hundredfold fruit. He had spoken about the seed that grows quietly overnight so that a farmer does not have to do anything but wait. And he had spoken about the dynamic power of that word. It is small like a mustard seed, but it will grow into a big majestic tree, called the kingdom of God. And now Jesus was tired, dead-tired. With a good conscience he could sleep well, entrusting his listeners, especially his disciples to the Father. Soon he would speak about confidence in God the Father in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not worry. Nobody can add a moment to his life-span by worrying. Pagans worry. You have a Father in heaven. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things you need will be given you besides (Cf. Mt. 6:25-33)." This he practiced now himself and his sound body slept and did not notice that a storm was brewing, that the cold currents, passing from the west were sucked down in vortices of air, or by the narrow gorges that breaks upon the Lake of Genesareth. And suddenly the storm fell with full force on the ship and tossed it so that the waves were breaking over the boat and it began to ship water badly.

5. The disciples are expert fishermen and thus have crossed the Lake of Genesareth many times. But this storm is different. With the water coming over the ship and filling it more and more they got frightened. And the sight of the Lord solidly asleep on the cushion, where the steersman usually has his place and position, makes them even more horrified. If the man in charge does not care, how shall things go well! And thus they wake Jesus up rather roughly: "Teacher, doesn't it matter to you that we are going to drown?" The powers to which they have been exposed overpower their faith. They do not have the trust and the faith in the Father, Jesus has. And they do not have trust and faith in Jesus either.

4. Jesus gets up and addresses first the sea and the wind: "Quiet! Be still". And the wind falls off and everything grows calm. That long-drawn "calm" in English imitates a little the Greek description of the great calmness: "and there was a *galēnē megalē*." It is a word of power and authority as only Christ can speak, being God himself. As in the beginning heaven and earth were created by a powerful word of God (cf.

Gen. 1) and this in the last analysis was the word of the Word of God, the Logos (cf. Jn. 1:3) so now order is restored by another powerful word of the Word of God. What a picture of contrast: Here the frightened disciples and here the calm Jesus restoring calmness to the sea with a word of power.

5. Then Jesus addresses the disciples: "Why are you so terrified? Why are you lacking in faith?" Formulated like this as we find it in the RSV, NAB, in the old edition of the Greek New Testament by Nestle the Catholic edition of the Greek New Testament by Merk, it refers to the lacking faith in the Father. And it is certainly true the disciples did not have that faith in the Father, Christ has shown, sleeping in the boat. But the new edition of the Greek New Testament by Nestle-Aland-Martini (thus edited by Catholics and Protestant) indicates as best reading: "Do you not yet (*oupō*) have faith?" So we find it in the New English Bible: "Have you no faith even now?" Putting it this way, Christ blames the disciples for not having faith in him. After all, he has been with them for such a long time. By now they should know him. They should know that nothing can happen to a person who is with Jesus.

6. The evangelist did not place the miracle story into the gospel just to show Christ as master over the elements, as master of creation. The crossing of the sea in a boat with a storm coming up has become the picture for the life of the Church. Fact is, Christ is in the boat of the Church, in the midst of persecutions and hardships. Often enough it looks as if Christ would not care, as if he were sleeping. But he cares, he is interested. Often enough we realize his help only when the storm is over. This is especially true with all the persecutions of the Church, when the enemies of the Church are triumphant and it looks as if the faithful do not get anywhere. "Do not be afraid. I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33) Christ tells his disciples before himself goes to die. And thus we will overcome all hardships.

7. Our own personal life is also like a crossing of the sea in a boat. Often enough it seems to us that the Lord does not care, as Job was tempted to think. How can he permit that a good person suffers! We have to believe that the Lord is there and that nothing can happen to a person close to Jesus. Close he is, even if we do not feel it, closer to us than we are ourselves. His presence will give us peace in our anxieties and worries.

St. Therese of Avila once had great temptations against purity. And all her prayers seemed to be so unreal to her, so powerless and the Lord seemed to be far away. The next morning when all temptations had passed, she complained to the Lord: "Where were you in all my temptations!" "In your heart," was the reply.

**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
(June 27, 1982)

God, and thus Christ, is the author of life. God did not make death (first reading). Jesus cures an incurably sick woman and calls a dead young lady (girl) back to life (gospel). — In the independent second reading, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to share with the faithful in Jerusalem what they have received.

**FIRST READING: WISDOM 1:13-15; 2:23-24**

The Book of Wisdom, written by an unknown author in the first half of the second century B.C. (that it is attributed to Solomon is only a literary form) tells us that wisdom is the source of temporal and eternal happiness (1:1-5:24). We learn about its origin and the value for rulers (6:1-9:19) and follow up the work of wisdom in the history of Israel (10:1-19:20).

Today's first reading, taken from the first part of the Book of Wisdom tells us that God did not make death but that it came into the world by the envy of the devil (2:24). Here for the first time in the Bible the snake in Gen. 3:1-15 is identified with the devil. Man is destined to live because he is created after the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26; Wisd. 1:14; 2:23).

All this does not deny that physical death of man is a biological fact. But physical death has become a sign of man's alienation from God. And this death, what we also call spiritual death, God did not make and did not want, and Christ's has taken away by his death on the Cross. And since Christ's resurrection also physical death has been taken away, not physical death *per se*, since Christians still have to die, but physical death as alienation from God.

**SECOND READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:7.9.13-15**

In the second part of his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8-9) Paul speaks about the collection to be taken up in Corinth for the Christians in Jerusalem. At the Council of Jerusalem the apostle had promised to help the faithful in Jerusalem materially (Gal. 2:10). Paul kept his promise and organized collections in his communities in Macedonia and in Corinth (Rom. 15:25-27; 2 Cor. 8:1.5).

In the two chapters he gives different motives for the collection. Today's second reading singles out: (1) The Corinthians shall abound in charity as they abound in other virtues (v. 7). And this collection will give them an opportunity to do so. (2) Christ himself gives the best example to imitate (cf. Phil. 2:6-11): Although he was rich he divested himself and became man, became poor, dying for us on the cross to make us rich, giving us divine life. In a less dramatic way the Corinthians shall share their riches (v. 9). (3) That does not mean the Corinthians shall give away everything. Rather there shall be a certain equality between them and the faithful of Jerusalem. The Corinthians shall share what they can easily give without becoming poor themselves (vv. 14-15).

**READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 5:21-43**

This pericope is one of five interpositions of one narrative within another in Mark. The other four are: 3:19b-21 (22-30) 31-35; 6:6b-13 (14-29) 30; 11:12-14 (15-19) 20-25; 14:53 (54) 55-65 (66-73). This fact makes one inclined to think that the sequence of the two events in each case may not be necessarily historical the way they are reported but are due to the redaction of Mark. Yet on the other hand, the connection of the two miracle stories is so close and so natural that it seems to reflect the actual sequence of events. The details are so vivid that we can assume to have the report of an eye-witness, Peter, whose gospel Mark is.

Mark wants to picture Christ as the author of life. A woman has been suffering for twelve years of a hemorrhage. She has spent all her money on doctors. But things have only gotten worse, instead of improving. Luke, the doctor, defends the good name of doctors by saying: that the sickness just was incurable for any doctor. Thus it is clear for the woman: Human resources are out of question, only Jesus can help. So



she comes to him, bashfully and almost cunningly at the same time with a mixture of superstitious belief, that touching the garment of Christ can heal her, and of initial faith. And she goes away being healed body and soul. The late legend named this woman Veronica (Berenike). In the twelfth century she appears for the first time on the way of the cross and gives Jesus her perspiration cloth. Eusebius tells us that he still saw the monument which she erected out of gratitude for the healing in her home town Caesarea Philippi (*Church History* VII, 18).

And Jesus is the author of life calling back from the dead a girl of twelve years (for Jews she is already a lady of marriageable age), after he has stimulated the faith of her father.

The four miracle stories (the calming of the sea 4:35-41, the expulsion of the devils in Gerasa 5:1-20 and the healing of the woman with hemorrhage and the raising to life of the girl 5:21-43 picture Christ as all powerful Lord and mark the end of Christ's full activity in Galilee (3:7-5:43). The question is: will he win his people as a whole or will they turn their back on him? That's the suspense which will be answered clearly negatively in the second part of the gospel of Mark (8:27-13:37): His own are going to reject him and thus Christ spends the second half of his ministry talking about his sufferings.

In that context one could perhaps see the two miracles, coming after Christ's activity in pagan territory (Mk. 5:1-20) with the words of Paul: "If the full number of Gentiles has entered in, then all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:24-25)." The woman and the girl are addressed as "daughter" and stand for Israel as a whole who will one good day arise, after a certain full time, twelve years.

## HOMILY

### "YOUR FAITH HAS CURED YOU!"

1. God is a living God and he loves life. "You love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made. For what you hated, you would not have fashioned... You spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord, lover of life (lover

of the living) (Wisd. 11:24,26).” From that angle it is true that God did not make death (Wisd. 1:13). Of course, we know that human as we are, being creatures as we are, we will have to die. Death is natural phenomenon for everything and everybody created. But since we are created after the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27) there is that spark of immortality in us. The result is: although our body dies, “the soul of the just is in the hand of God . . . and there is hope full of immortality (Wisd. 3:14).”

2. Physical death is thus not the real evil. It is only a sleep for a person united with God. Physical death is not a *thanatos*, a destruction, an annihilation, but only an *exodos*, a marching out of a mere human kind of existence, a transitory existence to an everlasting existence, full of immortality (Wisd. 3:2). And so what the readings of today want to bring out, especially the gospel, is: Christ is the Lord of life, mainly eternal life to which healing from sickness and being raised from physical death in some extraordinary cases will lead. For most of us, however we will embrace the Lord of life, of eternal life by being open to him, in his word, as the two main persons in today's gospel were so that the Lord could tell them: “Do not be afraid. Only have faith (Mk. 5:36)! And after the healing he remarked: “Your faith has saved you (Mk. 5:34).”

3. a. After Jesus has crossed the sea in the boat and has calmed the storm (Mk. 4:35-41) and after he has spent some time in Gerasene territory casting out devils (Mk. 5:1-20), he returns to the west shore of the Lake Genesareth and is right away surrounded by a big crowd. A woman who has been suffering from hemorrhage for twelve years, spending all her money on doctors in vain sees in Jesus her only chance. She knows that she is levitically unclean according to Lev. 15:19-27 and thus must stay away from other people; otherwise she makes them levitically unclean also, so that they cannot participate in worship before they are cleansed again. With a mixture of shyness (because of the embarrassing sickness and the complicated regulations which in this case are all against her) and shrewdness she makes her way forward to Jesus. In all that pushing and squeezing who will notice the difference if one did it with or without intention! And with a mixture of popular belief that some people have extraordinary powers of healing that flow over by touch and initial faith the idea comes to her mind: “If I only touch from behind Jesus clothing, probably the tassel of the Rabbi Jesus, I will be healed.” And so it happens.

b. It could look as if the woman steals her healing and as if the healing power flows automatically from Jesus over to her. But Jesus corrects that wrong opinion by saying to her: "Daughter, it is your faith that has cured you (Mk. 5:34)." Nothing happens without faith.

c. But even more, Jesus wants that personal contact with the woman so that she fully embraces him internally and not just his gift of bodily healing, that she fully says "yes" to him, the Lord of life. Before it comes that far it causes the woman some fear, trembling and anxiety as it is always the case when we stand in front of the Lord. She feels somehow guilty, having trespassed the Law of Moses (Lev. 15:19-27) and having thus offended Jesus also making him levitically unclean (Lev. 15:19), having acted sneakingly. And thus she falls to the feet of Jesus. The Greek expression *prospipto* always expresses, where it is used, more than human reverence. Thus when the unclean spirits do this and confess Christ as "son of God" (Mk. 3:11); when the Canaanite woman falls to the feet of Jesus and asks for the healing of her daughter (Mk. 7:25); when Peter is overwhelmed by the rich catch of fish, falls to the feet of Jesus and says: Lord depart from me for I am a sinner" (Lk. 5:8). Jesus looks around to see the woman, for he knows that he was not touched just by chance, just because so many were squeezing in as the disciples try to tell Jesus. Christ talks to her and she answers, telling him the whole truth. The full contact is established, in full faith what was only an initial faith before.

d. The result is Christ's word: "Daughter, your faith has cured you; go in peace and be free of this illness (Mk. 5:35)." Her full faith, expressed so openly has fully saved and healed her, not only physically but spiritually as well, for she has accepted Jesus, the life.

4. a. And there is Jairus, an official of a synagogue, who seeks help from Jesus, not for himself, but for his daughter, who is twelve years old and at the point of death. He also falls at the feet of Jesus, thus publicly taking a stand in favor of Jesus which is something unusual for such a dignitary and a Pharisee who he probably was. He even asks the Lord to come to his house. Jesus is considered one of the family. Jairus believes that Jesus can heal by laying on of hands.

b. Christ goes along with him, granting his request. But the pushing of the crowd and the following healing of the woman with an hemorrhage delays the whole trip. Yet at the same

time Jairus experiences a wonderful example of somebody who has faith, and he hears how Christ tells the woman with a hemorrhage: "Daughter, your faith has cured you!" Jairus himself will need even more faith.

c. The message comes to him: "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher further?" To heal a sick person would be in the competence of a man with a strong personality, but not to call a dead person back to life; so certainly the messengers felt and perhaps also Jairus. After all, did not the Rabbis say: "Three keys are in God's hand, which are not entrusted to the hand of any other, however fully authorized by God, namely the key to the rain, the key to motherhood, and the key to giving new life to the dead (Strack-Billerbeck.. *Kommentar zum NT aus Talmud und Midrash* I, p. 523)." Christ tells Jairus: "Do not fear. Have faith!" People can only laugh at Jesus, when he says: "The child is not dead. She is only asleep." They have no faith in him. Otherwise there would be no reason to lament the dead, as Jesus was deeply disturbed when Mary and Martha lamented the death of Lazarus (Jn. 11:33.38) instead of believing that whoever believes in him will never die (spiritually) and if he dies (physically) will not be affected by it and will come to life (Jn. 11:26). Will Jairus be able to come to such a deep faith in the midst of all unbelief? Has he not taken scandal in Jesus who disregarded the Law of Moses by healing a levitically unclean woman and allowed himself to be touched by her? Will Jairus stick to the Law or come to the freedom of faith?

d. It is not clearly said in the gospel of Mark. But we may assume that the initial faith of Jairus was enough and that the raising of his daughter from the dead made that faith in the person of Christ perfect as the raising of Lazarus enkindled in Mary and Martha the belief in Christ to accept him as the life and the resurrection to spiritual life.

5. The miracle marks the end of Christ's full activity in Galilee and one wonders: will he succeed in winning people over as a whole or will they reject him? With Mk. 8:27 it becomes clear that Israel will reject the Lord. And this was the great sorrow for any Christian Jew, including the evangelists. Paul talks about this sorrow for three chapters in Rom. 9-11 saying that it is not God's fault, but Israel's own sin, when Israel turns her back on Christ, but that one good day Israel will accept Christ as Lord and Savior (Rom. 11:25) when all pagans entered the Church. Did Mark want to express

a similar idea with our pericope? Some think so. If so, we can understand the pericope this way: For a time Jesus has been in the pagan territory of Gerasa (Mk. 5:1-20). There only one person waits for him: a man possessed by a legion of demons, whom Jesus heals with a powerful word. Now Jesus comes home, into his own. Many people are waiting for him, even an official representative. And he invites Jesus to come to his home, to be one of them. Calling his daughter of twelve years back to life he wants to call Israel, the daughter of God, to arise, to be converted. (The Hebrew expression *qum* is often used with that meaning. (Cf. Is. 52:1-2). The number twelve often stands for the twelve tribes of Israel. And the woman is suffering from incurable hemorrhage for twelve years and is cured by Jesus. Ez. 36:17 pictures idolatry and faithlessness toward God as a defilement "Of a menstruous woman" which God will cure at the end, when all pagans have entered. Then God will be the acknowledged author of life by all.

#### FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(July 4, 1982)

Christ is rejected by his own. No prophet is without honor except in his native place (gospel). The Israelites rebelled already against Ezekiel (first reading). In the independent theme of the second reading Paul tells us that he and we are strong in weakness.

#### FIRST READING: EZEKIEL 2:2-5

As any prophet and in particular the great prophets Isaiah (Is. 6:1-13) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-19) Ezekiel is (1) called by God, (2) he is empowered for his profession as prophet, we could call it "ordained", and (3) he receives his mission.

Ezekiel is empowered for his profession by receiving the Holy Spirit and by symbolically eating a scroll (Ez. 2:2; 3:1-3). This is in comparison with the older prophets something new, although it belongs to the essence of every prophet. The older prophets avoided the concept "prophet" since it was too much associated with ecstatic prophesy and queer phenomena, in a similar way as today the charismatic movement turns some people off because of strange behavior of some of their members who do not distinguish the essence from accidental externals.

(Cf. 1 Sam. 19:22-24 where Saul went to the prophets, he too stripped himself of his garments and he, too, remained in the prophetic state, laying day and night naked.) In the time of Ezekiel this concept was purified from its older questionable associations and henceforth the endowment with the Spirit became the characteristic of Yahweh's prophets. A prophet is a man of the Spirit and a man of the word of God.

The mission Ezekiel receives makes up the main part of today's first reading. He is of course sent to preach the word of God which the Jews shall heed. But the outlook does not look good. Although Ezekiel preaches as son of man, that means man (it is not meant as Messianic title), it is in reality God's own word, since it is the word of a prophet. Nevertheless the Jews are rebels who have been rebelling against God in the past to this very day. They are hard of face and obstinate of heart. But even if they will refuse to accept God's word, they will know that a prophet is among them.

The outlook for the success of Ezekiel is bleak. Even bleaker are the chances given to Isaiah: "You are to make the heart of this people sluggish, to dull their ears and close their eyes; else their eyes will see, their ears hear, their heart understand, and they will turn and be healed (Is. 6:10)." Of course this can only mean that the Jews by their own fault do not accept Isaiah's word and thus God allows their heart to be even more hardened by the word of Isaiah.

## SECOND READING: 2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

Paul is accused of being unreliable, of being no real apostle. And thus he defends himself in the third part of 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 10-13). This attack of his adversaries compels him, although he does it very reluctantly, to speak about his extraordinary revelations and mystical experiences. Thus he goes on "boasting", foolishly, but for Christ's sake, only to defend his true apostleship.

And in opposition to fakers and arrogant people Paul also mentions things everybody else would keep secret because they are so embarrassing and shameful and could make a person loose face. Paul is suffering from "a thorn in the flesh", an angel of Satan, to beat him and keeping him from getting proud. Three times he has asked the Lord to take this thorn in the flesh away from him. But the Lord answered: "My grace is enough for you. For in weakness power reaches perfection."

It is very much discussed what this "thorn in the flesh" was. Most agree that it cannot be an inclination to carnal desire nor persecutions, but a sickness, which could be acute ophtalmia, epilepsy, but more likely still malaria. It was acute and violent, repellent (Paul thanks the Galatians for not having turned away from him), humiliating and seemed to be an obstacle to his apostolate. It probably went along with depressions.

But the apostle finally takes it positively. He realizes that he can go on working as an apostle with the sickness. It makes him rely the more on Christ's power and strength, not on his own efforts. Thus he realizes Christ's power makes him strong in his own weakness.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 6:1-6

As we have seen, there is a certain suspense in the gospel of Mark: Jesus is preaching and has success. But soon his adversaries appear, the hostility of the Pharisees increases (2:1-3:6) and the first section ends with the remark: "The Pharisees plotted with the Herodians how they might destroy him (Mk. 4:6)."

It is true Christ's full activity in Galilee (3:7-5:43) ends with two miracles, as we saw last Sunday, where Jesus is welcomed by two representatives of his people, the one of them even being an official of a synagogue. And they believe in him. But the continuation makes it clear: Jesus is going to be rejected soon.

And so Mark brings this pericope which Luke according to his theology brings already at the beginning of Christ's activity as an overture (Lk. 4:16-30) and which John in his prologue formulates by saying: "He came into his own, but his own received him not (Jn. 1:11)." Mark has the more likely historical situation.

After Jesus has preached and performed miracles somewhere else and has been accepted (at least partly), he comes to his own town Nazareth, in which he grew up, as a Rabbi with his apostles to preach the good news also in Nazareth, not just to make a personal visit. This opportunity presents itself on the next Sabbath, when the word of God was read (usually by several readers, then an Aramaic translations was given and upon invitation of the head of the synagogue an

explanation was given by somebody competent). Here Jesus does everything. And it even looks (in the parallel text of Luke) as if Jesus himself selected the text for reading.

The result is: People find his wisdom astounding. But they are scandalized. This expression as such has two meanings: (1) to entice and thus be caught. Literally the *skandalon* is the bait-stick in a trap. The animal for which the trap was set was lured by the bait to touch or step on the stick. The stick touched off a spring. And so the animal was enticed to its capture or destruction. (2) Later *skandalon* came to mean a stumbling block in words or actions, making somebody fall. In connection with Christ it has become a technical term to those who when confronted by him, find something in him which prevents them from going on to full Christian faith and discipleship. Here for the people of Nazareth it's the fact that Christ is a craftsman and that he is one of them, whose relatives they know so well. Thus he cannot be what he claims to be.

The result: Christ cannot perform any miracles in Nazareth, since faith is the prerequisite for any miracle.

## HOMILY

### "AND THEY TOOK OFFENSE AT HIM."

I. Christ came into his own, and his own received him not. He became man as we are; he became a Jew, to be more exact a Nazarean. What a privilege of the Jews and of the people in Nazareth! And yet the Jews and in particular the people in Nazareth rejected him. Should it not have been the other way around that they would have been proud of their great countryman! Did Jesus not adapt himself enough to them? Was he proud that it was too much for them?

1. Jesus certainly adapted himself and went as far as anybody could have gone. He really became one of the people in Nazareth. His father Joseph was a *tektōn*, a craftsman, working with wood, stone and metal. And Jesus took over the trade of his father and thus people in Nazareth got to know him from daily contact since he helped in constructing their houses and repairing and remodeling them.



2. And he had relatives as any normal people have. Four brothers, which are cousins according to our Catholic belief: James, Joses, Judas and Simon and some sisters = cousins, which are not mentioned by name. They were probably married and just ordinary as anybody else.

3. So Jesus was really one of their own, plainly ordinary. But what seemed to be an example of adaptation turned out to be a stroke against him after all. His teachings revealed a great wisdom and insight. That they had to admit. And although he had not performed any miracle in Nazareth yet, his townsmen had heard about his miracles and could not deny them offhand. But could anybody of them, just as ordinary as they were, an ordinary craftsman whose relatives they knew so well, be more than they were? Could he apply to himself the words of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord (Lk. 4:18-19) = (Is. 61:1-2)?" Since they could not say that about themselves, it could not be true about Jesus either. And so they refused to accept his claim.

4. Familiarity breeds contempt. The people of Nazareth thought they knew Jesus. But did they really know him? They took him for the carpenter's son. They did not know that he was born of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and thus was the Son of God.

5. And whenever Jesus would speak about his unique relationship to the Father they would take it as blasphemy. He would even claim to be greater than Abraham: "Before Abraham was I am (Jn. 8:58)." His words and works would prove that he did not do anything but what the Father told him to. "I am not alone. I have at my side the one who sent me, the Father (Jn. 8:16)." Yes, he could say: "The Father and I are one (Jn. 10:30)." This was blasphemy for the Jews but fact and reality for Jesus. Could he sacrifice the truth because he was just too ordinary for them to make such a claim? Would he not rather have been, as they were, a liar (cf. Jn. 8:55)?

6. Jesus is different and had to be different from the people of Nazareth. There could be no compromise. He is the Son of God, even if this claim meant blasphemy for them.

7. Jews would be scandalized also when Jesus claimed to redeem mankind by dying on the cross. But his being pulled up to the cross would in reality be an exaltation by which he at the same time would draw all people to himself: "Once I am lifted up from earth, will draw all men to myself (Jn. 12:32)." "When you lift up the Son of Man, you will come to realize that I am and that I do nothing by myself (Jn. 8:27)." And yet, most would not accept his claim. They would be scandalized. How can somebody claim to be the Son of God and die such a shameful death on the cross which is only for a slave!

II. Christ was rejected. People took scandal at him. His *followers* will also be rejected.

a. On the one hand we shall adapt ourselves to the world, to people. 1. After all, "through him (the Logos) all things came into being, and apart from him nothing came to be (Jn. 1:3)." And consequently the world shall be redeemed, shall be brought home to the Father. Christ clearly said: "I am the light of the world (Jn. 8:12)." "I did not come to condemn the world but to save it (Jn. 12:47)."

2. And so a disciple must adapt himself as Christ adapted himself. Christ asks the Father not to take the disciples out of the world but to leave them in the world (Jn. 17:15). Paul tried this adaptation very hard: "Although I am not bound to anyone, I made myself the slave of all so as to win over as many as possible. I became like a Jew to the Jews in order to win the Jews... To those not subject to the Law I became like one not subject to it that I might win those not subject to the Law (1 Cor. 9:19-21)."

3. That means for us in particular that we have to preach the gospel in a language people understand, that we take topics which are of interest.

4. It means that we try to understand the needs of people and follow them up, that we try to find new ways and solutions, based on the solid unchangeable truth.

b. And yet, on the other hand, in spite of our genuine efforts of adaptation certain facts of Christianity cannot be compromised and denied. 1. We have to be different from the world; otherwise there would be no need for Christ, if everything would be the same before and after Christ. The mere fact that we are followers of Christ causes us to be different. And

we have to have the courage to be different. The result will be that the world hates us. Christ has chosen us out of this world (Jn. 15:19). He is the vine, we are the branches of this vine. The same divine sap, the same divine life pulsates in vine and branches, in Christ and in us. The world notices that we are different and therefore hates us for being different. Many people would like to level off everything and hate everybody who dares to be different.

2. Others are scandalized because the Church is just too human and has too many faults and imperfections. The Church for them should be a community of saints, but is in reality only a community of sinners. That these try or are on the way to become saints they do not realize or not admit. Or they are scandalized because they know certain members, certain priests so well and generalize. Familiarity breeds contempt.

3. There is that great stumbling block of the cross. Christianity is basically the religion of Christ crucified (and risen). Modern man, however, more than men at all times, wants success. But God has not promised us that we can develop all our talents the way a manager of a business concern would do it. We are not training the superman in us. In some ways God crosses something out in our life by making us sick and disabled. Only indirectly do we then develop our potentialities because God's power reveals itself in human weakness. But the scandal of the cross remains for our human understanding.

4. Many of the scandals are only in our mind. We do not have the right outlook on things. For dull hearers the best preacher cannot do much. A patient who does not want to be healed cannot be healed not even by the best doctor. Peace cannot be established in the wrong atmosphere. And Christ is a stone, either the stumbling block against whom we hit our foot and fall, or the stepping stone which brings us across the brook or river, or the foundation stone on which our life building is erected. It all depends on the way we take that stone: as stumbling block or as stepping stone.

## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(July 11, 1982)

God's chosen ones are sent to preach. The prophet Amos was sent to preach to the Jews in the Northern Kingdom (first reading). Christ sent his twelve apostles on their first mission

trip (gospel). We are chosen before the creation of the world to announce the mystery that God wants to make Jews and Gentiles one under the head of Christ (second reading).

### FIRST READING: AMOS 7:12-15

Under King Jeroboam II (783-43 B.C.), king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, God called Amos from Tekoa, a town in the hill country of Judah in the south, some ten miles to the south of Jerusalem to preach in the Northern kingdom. But hand in hand with it went unjust social conditions caused by few rich people, oppressing the poor and becoming richer and richer by oppression.

The religion people practiced, especially at the different sanctuaries especially at Bethel, was quite syncretistic and external. Amos was called to preach against these social injustices and he has become the champion of social justice.

He was summoned by God without any previous preparation for his prophetic calling to preach to Israel (7:15). He was therefore a stranger at the place of his mission. The main scene of his public preaching was the royal sanctuary of Bethel. Here in Bethel the prophet met with opposition from the local priests, the "court chaplain", Amaziah, who preached loyalty to the king, was in favor of the status quo, and advocated patriotism. Thus Amos, who blamed the king and officials for social injustice, could only be considered a traitor. Amaziah told Amos to go back to Judah, but never to prophesy in Bethel.

Amos could only reply that he was not a professional prophet, but a vocational prophet, not one who made a living from prophesying, but one who was called by God, although by profession he was a simple shepherd and a dresser of sycamores. But just because of this call of God he had to preach in season and out of season, if the king and people, including court chaplain would like it or not.

### SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 1:3-14

A growing number of exegetes think that the Letter to the Ephesians was not written by Paul himself but by one of his disciples. They refer to the different style and the different content in Ephesians and in the other Pauline Letters. The

main topic in Ephesians is the mystery of the incorporation of Jews and Gentiles into the Body of Christ, where he is the head and we are the members (Eph. 1:3-3:21). But the question of authorship is not so clear, for even the term *mysterion* = mystery occurs 27 times in the New Testament, 20 times of which we find in the Pauline Letters (10 times or 7 times) in the undiscussed Pauline Letters: 2 in Romans, 5 in 1 Corinthians, 3 in the Letters to Timothy, 6 in Ephesians, 4 in Colossians.

And most of the time this mystery refers to God's plan which he had from all eternity to tear down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles and to make all nations one in Christ (Eph. 2:14).

This mystery was hidden, but decreed from all eternity. Now it has been revealed in Christ, in the Christ-event, the incarnation (and death and resurrection) (Eph. 11:0).

And Paul and every apostle is privileged to preach this mystery to all people (Eph. 3:8).

Today's second reading praises God for thus having bestowed every blessing on us, since he has chosen us before the world began in Christ. He is the first-born; we are the sons coming after Him, the adopted sons (Eph. 1:3-6).

Christ has redeemed us by his death on the cross. Thus we have been given (it is not our merit and intelligence) to understand the mystery of the incorporation of all things (in heaven and on earth) under Christ we were headship (Eph. 3:7-10).

In Christ we were chosen. This Greek term *eklerōthemen* is differently translated in different translations: (1) In him we were chosen, (2) in him we were allotted (i.e. an inheritance) (NEB) (3) in him we have been made his heritage, i.e. claimed as God's own (JB). The first and third translation would continue in the line of the apostle's thought above. The second translation would add that we as children of God, as brothers (and sisters) of Christ also get the inheritance of a son. The rest of the passage goes on explaining our divine sonship: We shall praise God's glory by our being. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit (in baptism). He is the installment of our eternal inheritance and happiness. (Eph. 1:11-14).

As one sees, the second reading speaks explicitly about our call from eternity to be one in Christ, to be sons of God and brothers and sisters of Christ so that Christ is the head. And

we have been given to understand the mystery of the incorporation of all people into Christ. The reading does not (yet) speak about the privilege of any chosen apostle to preach about this mystery and thus to help in bringing it about. This comes later in the Letter. If one would anticipate it, one could easily combine the second reading with today's main topic: Chosen to be sent to preach.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 6:7-13

Most scholars agree that this sending out of the apostles for the first time is not a projection of a post-Easter event into the time of Christ but an historical event, although we do not know any details. Mark has the most simple report which is changed in Mt. 10:1-16 and Lk. 9:1-6. And there is another report in Lk. 10:1-16: the sending of the seventy-two.

After Christ has elected his apostles (Mk. 3:13-19), after they have followed him for some time and they learned from him, (4:1-34) have been modelled after him, have witnessed his mighty deeds (4:35-5:43) they are now ready to practice the other part of their vocation: to go out and preach the good news (1:14).

Short as the report is, the first mission of the apostles shall be the model for all missionaries of all times, telling them what is important for a proclaimer of the gospel.

## HOMILY

### CHRIST SENDS HIS APOSTLES OUT TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS

1. Jesus prepares his apostles well before he sends them out to preach the good news. They are called by him, well selected, handpicked. Only after a night of prayer he calls his disciples and selects twelve of them to be his apostles (Lk. 6:12). They are his companions for some time (Mk. 3:14), his disciples, who learn from him, not only facts of life or facts of theology, but how to be a godly man, a man of God as the master is. They have witnessed how he preached, how he performed miracles, how he cared for people and showed

them his mercy. After they have fulfilled the first task of an apostle, to be with Christ, they are now ready to fulfill the second task, i.e. to be sent to preach the good news (apostle means: to be sent). Christ gives them full power and authority and this mission is not just meant as an experiment (this it is of course also). But the mission shows what the apostles later, after Easter, shall and will do, and what every apostle and missionary shall do.

## 2. The twelve apostles are sent out two by two.

a. That means, *teamwork* is important for any apostle. Many things can be done only on a team. Missionaries have to learn how to get along with one another. Two person can help one another. Four eyes see things better than two. If there is a difficult problem one gets some advice from one's partner. One can talk things over. One can share one's joys, and they become double joys, and one can share one's hardships and suffering and they become double joys, and one can share one's hardships and suffering and they become half the suffering.

b. The apostles are sent in pairs because they shall be *witnesses*. Witnesses only can establish facts (Deut. 19:15) so that nobody can doubt them. What one has seen alone can be always questioned by others. After all, we have deceived ourselves or might have made a mistake.

(1) They are witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ. What could be less clear with one would be clearer with the other witness. Even the Lord gave us a four eyewitness' report in the four gospels.

(2) They are witnesses when it comes to a judgment and a sentence of condemnation. "One witness alone shall not take the stand against a man in regard to any crime or any offense of which he may be guilty; a juridical fact shall be established only on the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15)."

3. The apostles shall take nothing along but a walking stick and sandals (Mk. 6:8,9). They must not take along food, traveling bag (for food; but the Greek term *pēra* could also mean begging bag; thus the apostles should not beg on the way either as some preachers did), no coin in the purses of their belts. This was the way people would take along small amounts of cash so that it could not be stolen. They must not take along a second tunic. The parallel version of Matthew (Mt. 9:10) and Luke (Lk. 9:2) forbid even to take along the walking stick and the shoes (Mt.). Probably Matthew and Luke made Christ's

word even stricter. Others think less likely that Mark softened it. But it seems, walking stick and sandals are a necessity for Palestine with the rough roads and the animals and snakes to chase away. a. In any case, what the evangelists want to say is: an apostle shall rely on the Lord, on his divine providence and take along only the bare essentials. *God's providence* will sustain him. The details of such trust in God's providence we have in Mt. 6:19-34. After all God cares for birds and lilies of the field, how much more will he care for his own, especially for a missionary. He has given us life, what is more important he will give us what is less difficult to provide: the food and the clothing to sustain the life he has given. An apostle again can say to himself: God has given me the call to be his messenger, he will certainly give me what is necessary to practice the vocation. Worrying is pagan, we have a Father in heaven who cares for us.

b. An apostle shall rely on the *hospitality* of people to whom he brings the good news. They are to take him in. They will take him in when they see that his message is trustworthy, when his message is authentic and he himself lives the gospel, especially if they see his frugality and poverty, if they see that he does not enrich himself by preaching.

The apostles shall not go from house to house but stay in one house. That can mean: They shall not try to improve on their board and lodging, to ask for more delicious food and better living quarters. But perhaps even more likely is the idea that by staying with the same host the apostles in a given village will not cause rivalry among the hosts, which would be the case if they would change from time to time.

It is not clear how long the apostles would stay in one house. After all it should not be too great a burden for people either. The *Didache* (chapter 11, 4-5 says: "Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain more than one day. But, if necessary, let him remain a second day. But, if he stays for three, he is a false prophet." But probably this is not the same situation as the apostles had. The apostles in the *The Apostolic Fathers = Didache* moved within already established Christian communities and thus did not have to stay long. The apostles, however were preaching for the first time and had to make the first contact which always takes longer.



Hospitality has never made anybody poorer. On the contrary, often enough it has become a source of sustenance even for the host. One of the finest examples is the widow of Sarepta who gave shelter to the prophet Elijah in a time of famine when she was about to bake her last bread and wanted to eat it with her only son and then die. But when she shared it, the oil and flour did not stop till the famine was over (1 Kgs. 17:16).

4. Not much is said about the content of the preaching but the one thing: "Repent (Mk. 6:12)!" It's the same what Jesus preached (Mk. 1:15). The parallel report in Mt. and Lk. could suggest that they also said: "The kingdom is at hand" as Christ did in Mk. 1:5. But perhaps Mark is more historical in this case, and the apostles did not preach about that topic since for Mark the apostles did not understand much about the kingdom yet but were trying to understand Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man. About the kingdom of God they would preach after Easter.

5. The proclamation is bound up with signs: casting out of demons and healing of the sick as Jesus did (Mk. 3:23-27). It is proof that Satan has to cease his dominion.

6. Everybody is placed before the decision: to accept Christ in the person of the apostles and be saved, or to reject him and then have condemned himself (cf. Jn. 5:24-28). Poor as an apostle and missionary may be, he takes Christ's place. His word is Christ's word, and thus his preaching of the good news is the unique chance for everybody to be saved or to be condemned in case of refusal.

### **SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME** **(July 18, 1982)**

The Lord will appoint shepherds for his people Israel (first reading). This prophesy Jesus fulfills by being the good shepherd and by training the apostles as shepherds (gospel). Christ gathers all nations, Jews and Gentiles, shedding his blood. He tears down the wall of separation between them (second reading).

### **FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 23:1-6**

Jeremiah prophesied over a relatively long period of about forty years in the Southern Kingdom of Judah from about 627 B.C. till shortly after 587 B.C., the destruction of Jeru-

salem, when he probably was deported to Egypt and died there soon after. In the first part of his book (Jer. 2:1-25:13b) we find prophesies against Judah and Jerusalem from the time of Josiah, Jehoiakim and finally of Zedekiah (597-87 B.C.) (Jer. 21-24).

Today's first reading is taken from the latest part. By and large the Jewish kings had been bad rulers, taking advantage of their high position. To use the picture of a shepherd, they had been enriching themselves at the expense of the sheep. Thus God will take care of his flock Israel. He will gather the remnant of his flock after the exile and bring them back to their meadow. Then they shall increase and multiply. God will appoint (good) shepherds for them who will shepherd them so that they have nothing to fear.

In particular God will raise up a righteous shoot from the house of David who will do what is just and right so that Judah and Israel will be saved. And this shoot (*nezer*), this man whose name is justice, is nobody else but the Messiah. It is an irony that Zedekiah, the last king has only the name (justice) in common with this coming king.

Ez. 34:1-16 says very much the same as Jer. 23:1-6. Christ fulfilled this promise by being the good shepherd (Jn. 10). He as the great shepherd established the eternal covenant by his blood (Hebr. 13:20). We were straying like sheep, but now we have returned to the Shepherd, the Guardian of our souls (1 Petr. 2:25). When he, the chief Shepherd appears we will receive for ourselves the unfading crown of glory (1 Petr. 5:4).

## SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 2:13-18

Today's second reading comes to the core of the message of the Letter to the Ephesians, which is incorporation of all nations in Christ who is the head: We were once far off from God, since we were in sin. Through Christ's redemption, through his blood we have been brought near to God. Christ has taken away our sins, he is our peace.

In particular, Christ by his death on the cross, has abolished the Law of Moses which was only for the Jews, has torn down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles and has created a new people of God to which Jews and Gentiles belong.

We are all one day in Christ, who is the head of the body. Through Christ in the Holy Spirit we have access to the Father so that we can pray: "Abba, Father (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6)." Through the Son in the Spirit to the Father, that is now our way.

Although the topic of shepherd does not occur directly in this second reading, one could consider it along with the other two readings: The Lord, who is a shepherd has united Israel and the nations into one single people, the body of Christ.

### **READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 6:30-34**

This gospel forms the link between the sending out of the disciples and the feeding of the multitude. The apostles (here they are called apostles for the only time in Mk., in the meaning of "being sent", not yet in the later technical meaning) come back from their first mission to preach, cast out devils and heal and report to the Lord. Nothing is said what Jesus did in the meantime.

To give them a chance to evaluate, to rest and get new spiritual energies Jesus calls them to an out-of-the-way place. But since people are pressing so hard, the only chance to find such a lonely place is to go by boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. (In Luke it looks as if the reason was to escape the influence of the tetrach Herod Antipas, who had beheaded the Baptist. Although this beheading is also reported in Mk. (Mk. 6:14-29) it is not the reason for Jesus to look for a lonely place.)

People frustrate Christ's plan to look for solitude: They run around the sea and arrive (partly) already on the other side, when Jesus goes ashore. Instead of being annoyed he changes his plan and starts teaching the multitude since they are like sheep without shepherd.

## **HOMILY**

### **JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVES HIS SHEPHERDS A REST**

1. a. Christ is the good shepherd of whom the prophets spoke in prophecies, especially, Jeremiah (23), Ezekiel (34) and Isaiah (63:11). The kings of Israel and Judah by and

large had enriched themselves at the expense of the flock, the people. Christ however laid down his life for us, and ever since cares for us and goes after the lost sheep.

b. There is no difference for him between nation and nation, between Jews and Gentiles. Christ has torn down the wall that separated both. And now they all belong to the one big family, where all are so closely related to one another as members of one body are. Christ is the head and we are the members.

2. Christ is the good shepherd by training shepherds in the person of his apostles.

a. They are called to be with him, to be his disciples, to learn from him, to be modelled after him.

b. What they have learned from the Lord they shall tell others. They are sent away to preach; they are apostles. Christ has sent them two by two to preach, to heal and to cast out demons. Now they return.

c. They have preached for the first time. Christ's message has been seen through the eyes of men. They have adapted this message to their own understanding and thus broadened it, making it come down more to earth. Ever since the first mission of the apostles there is plurality of the gospel possible, although it remains and must remain the one gospel. But the accents of different parts of the good message can be set differently according to hearers, preachers and needs of the time. This plurality later resulted into the one gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the plurality goes on. But if the gospel shall remain the same it has to be checked again and again. Christ calls his apostles for an evaluation to himself. They report what they have said and done. No details are given in Mark. But we may assume that the first mission was a success.

The good news which later apostles, which we preach today has to be always compared with the original preaching of Jesus and evaluated, if it shall not degenerate, if nothing shall be omitted or added. Christ's preaching is the yardstick of our preaching.

d. The apostles shall not only evaluate the message they are preaching, they shall also refresh themselves by taking a rest. "Come to an out-of-the-way place and rest!" Jesus tells them. If a person shall work well and accomplish much he must

have his definite amount of sleep and recreation. And if a person shall sleep well, he must also work well, otherwise he cannot sleep at night.

e. The apostles have been called to be with Christ, not only at the beginning before they were sent out to preach, but they must come back again and again. Their activity as preachers is as good as it is carried from their being with Jesus. If they want to see the truth right they have to reflect it together with Jesus.

There is a danger of being over active, a danger of constant activity, the heresy of work. We always must give ourselves times with God. We must give him time to speak to us. Woe to us if we do not know how to be still and to listen.

f. There can be danger of too much withdrawal. Reflection, devotion which does not issue in action is no real devotion.

g. Christ as good shepherds gives his shepherds rest. It pays to give them a break. The shepherd will be more efficient afterwards. Time for retreat is not waste of money or time, but time well spent; it is a must.

h. Whoever wants to accomplish great things in his spiritual life has to give himself such spiritual breaks, times of being alone with Christ.

3. a. Christ is the good shepherd because he teaches the people. They frustrate his plan to give his apostles a break. Since they are thronging in from all sides when the apostles return from their mission trip Jesus takes a boat and goes across the sea to a lonely place for a time of rest and reflection. But people notice what Christ has in mind and hurriedly walk to the east shore of the Lake Genesareth so that some are already there when he disembarks and others arrive soon.

b. They are intruding into Christ's and the apostles' privacy. They do not want to give them what they rightly are looking for: a time of spiritual renewal. Any normal average person would have been annoyed and frustrated. But Christ immediately changes his plans. Here are people who need a shepherd, somebody who feeds them with his word, and thus Jesus teaches them for hours. It is the main job of a pastor to preach and to teach the good news. And Jesus is *the* pastor.

c. Do pastors nowadays see this priority of preaching the word of God or do they consider many other things as more important: social activities and managing?

d. Christ does not insist on his schedule, telling people they should come another time, after the retreat. Are we flexible enough to adapt ourselves to the needs of people or do we insist on our schedule to the extreme that we send people away when they come late or after office hours, even then when they have come from a distance? Would it then be surprising if people feel that the church is too institutionalized and not enough personal, that the efficiency comes first and then the personal well-being of people?

4. a. And yet Christ does not sacrifice his first intention of giving the shepherds a rest either. After he has finished teaching them and feeding them, as we will see next Sunday, he soon goes on to a lonely place after all, near Caesarea Philippi (Mk. 8:27). He is flexible, adapts himself to the needs of people, but he knows, such spiritual refreshing pauses have to be, if the shepherds shall not suffer great spiritual harm.

b. We as pastors and as Christians shall be flexible in our pastoral work, adapting our schedule to the needs of people, drop even an occasional spiritual exercise or postpone it. But it cannot be dropped for good without spiritual harm for us and for the people entrusted to our care.

## SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(July 25, 1982)

From the seventeenth to the twenty-first Sunday during the year the continuous reading of Mark in cycle B is interrupted, and for these five Sundays the gospel brings a pericope of the sixth chapter of John dealing with the multiplication of the loaves and Christ's discourse on the bread of life. Thus we are meditating on Holy Eucharist.

Today we see that we are *filled* with the bread of God, given to us by Christ with the cooperation of the apostles (gospel). This miracle is superior to the feeding of a hundred people with twenty leaves by Elisha, where some bread was left over (first reading). The apostle in the independent theme of the second reading tells us: "Become what you are! Live a life of unity since there is one body, one Lord, one baptism, and God and Father of us all!"

**FIRST READING: 2 KINGS 4:42-44**

The Deuteronomist's History is composed of the Books of Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings, sometimes referred to as "the Former Prophets." Here we find God's viewpoint on Israel's history. The Book of Joshua shows us that God was faithful to his covenant promise of providing a homeland for his people. In the Book of Judges the author shows how the covenant promise made to Israel worked out in practice. In return for fidelity to the covenant God gave peace and prosperity; in return for infidelity, he gave oppression and punishment. In the Books of Samuel the author tells us that the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and its permanency is based on God's promise to David through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7). The author of the Books of Kings explains how the fall of the kingdom resulted from the infidelity of Kings to the covenant. With the exception of three or four kings, all the kings were unfaithful.

The first half of 2 Kings (2-13) is called "the cycle of Elisha", where the author mainly speaks about Elisha, in particular his miracles, but also about the kings from the beginning till that time. The second half (14-25) continues summarizing the life of the kings of the Northern and the Southern Kingdom from Jeroboam II, resp. Amaziah till the Babylonian Exile.

Outstanding for the cycle of Elisha are the miracles the prophet performs, one of which is the multiplication of loaves. These stories are called the "*fioretti*" of Elisha, as there are "*fioretti*" of St. Francis of Assisi. Where facts leave off and fancy begins will be difficult to say. Baal-shalishah, the place of today's story is the modern Ker Tilt, fifteen miles north of Lydda (cf. 1 Sam. 9:4). The sequence of events is very much the same as in the gospel: (1) A man brings food to the man of God. (2) The amount of food is specified, here twenty barley loaves. (3) It is objected that this amount is not enough to feed people (here a hundred). (4) Elisha ignores the objection and commands the food to be distributed, knowing that the Lord is on his side. (5) The crowd does not only have enough, but there is even some food left.

**SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 4:1-6**

As most Pauline Letters, so also the Letter to the Ephesians (if written by the apostle himself or by one of his disciple is discussed) has two parts: A dogmatical (Eph. 1:3) and a moral

part (Eph. 4-6). We saw the theme of the first part: God has incorporated all people (Jews and Gentiles) into the one body of Christ by Christ's death, tearing down the walls of separation. From this follows the ethical exhortation: Live a life worthy of your calling! And this should be easy enough: We must only put into practice what we are: There is one body, one Spirit, one baptism, one Lord, one God and Father of all.

Today's reading is the beginning of this second part.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: JOHN 6:1-15

The eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, cycle B, brought already the multiplication of the loaves according to Mt. 14:13-21. There we learned that the multiplication is reported twice: The feeding of the five thousand in Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-15. The feeding of the four thousand is narrated in Mt. 15:32-39 and Mk. 8:1-10.

Scholars agree the multiplication actually happened only once. Matthew and Mark left the two different traditions standing side by side: The first (Mk. 6:30-44 and parallel reports) pictures Christ as the good shepherd who feeds the people by his word and the miraculous bread. People follow him like sheep without shepherd (Mk. 6:34b). He makes them recline on the green grass (6:39) which reminds us of Ps. 23:1f: "The Lord is my shepherd... He makes me lie down in green pastures." They recline in groups of about hundred and fifty persons each (6:40). That reminds us of Ex. 18:13-27 (mainly v. 25): Upon the advice of his father-in-law Jethro Moses "chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens." Jesus is the true Moses.

The second tradition of the multiplication of the loaves (Mk. 8:1-9 and parallel report) pictures Christ as the dispenser of the miraculous bread only not as the good shepherd. Missing is the reference to the flock without shepherd, and the allusion to Ps. 23 and the green pastures. There is no division in groups.

Leaving the two traditions unharmonized Mark and Matthew could bring out the theological truth: Since Holy Communion (and multiplication of the loaves prefigures Holy Eucharist) is food, one has to eat it more than once. Only by eating food often do we grow.



One other possible theological explanation of the one happening reported twice is, since the first multiplication happened among the Jews and the second in pagan territory: Holy Eucharist is for all, Jews and Gentiles.

John probably had his own source, different from the Synoptics. Reasons for this assumption is the fact that John does not have certain details of the Synoptics which would have helped him to bring out his theological meaning even more clearly, details which the Synoptics have but not John. There is no reference to the desert in John as in Mk. 6:32 and Mt. 14:31, although John speaks about the manna in the desert in Jn. 6:31. Of the five points of the multiplication of the loaves which have clearly Eucharistic overtones, since we have the same five points in the consecration formula of the Mass in Canon I: 1. he took the bread, 2. looked up to heaven, 3. gave thanks (spoke the blessing), 4. broke the bread and 5. gave it to his disciples nr. 2 (looked up to heaven) and nr. 4 (broke the bread) is missing in John. And yet for John perhaps even more than for the Synoptics the multiplication of the loaves foreshadows Holy Eucharist as the long Eucharistic discourse (Jn. 6:25-71) shows.

## HOMILY

### CHRIST WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE APOSTLES FILLS US WITH THE BREAD OF GOD

1. The gospel of last Sunday pictured Christ as the good shepherd who is even willing to drop the much needed rest of his apostles and teach the crowd because they are like sheep without a shepherd. After they have persevered with Christ the whole day, they are hungry. But it is an out-of-the-way-place, and where should one so suddenly get food for so many! And since it is rather late in the day it could seem that it is altogether too late to buy some food before stores are closed. Why did the Lord not dismiss them earlier? Is it not all his fault if people do not get anything to eat this day?

That Jesus taught the crowd is not so clearly expressed in John as it is in Mk. 6:34: "He began to teach them at great length." In John 6:3 we only read: "Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples." There is no explicit

mentioning of teaching. But we are reminded of Mt. 5:1-2: "When he (Christ) saw the crowds he went up on the mountainside. After he had sat down his disciple gathered around him, and he began to teach them." And then Jesus delivers the Sermon on the Mount not only to his disciples but also to the crowd. Thus we can also assume in John that Jesus taught. He clearly does it after the multiplication of the loaves.

2. Christ is the good shepherd not only because he teaches people, feeds them with his word, but also because he is going to feed them and still their bodily hunger. This Jesus shows by multiplying the loaves. The early Christians have seen in this a prefiguring of Holy Eucharist. Christ is the good shepherd in every Mass, feeding us with his word and feeding us by the Eucharistic bread. Both belong together: the word of God in the first part of the Mass and the Eucharistic sacrifice and meal in the second part. Jesus was teaching them at great length. Does this not invite a priest to give a homily during Mass as something that belongs to it by essence?

3. Christ not the apostles, performs the miracle of multiplying the loaves. This is expressed in all four gospels, but even more stressed in the gospel of John. He is in full command of the situation. He is not taken by surprise, as it could look like. The afternoon and the early evening is not coming without his noticing it as if he would have been wrapped up teaching, as it could look like in Mark. Rather, he intends to give them something to eat. And when he asks Philip, who is from the neighboring Bethsaida: "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat (Jn. 6:5)?" this is only to test him. Jesus knows well what he intends to do (6:6). Jesus starts the ball rolling with this question. He is not asked by the disciples as in Mk. 6:35 to dismiss people that they could buy something. He orders people to recline (6:10). Jesus takes the five loaves, gives thanks, and gives the loaves to the disciples to distribute. The miracle happens because of Christ's prayer.

And every priest in the Mass takes Christ's place so that Christ acts. 1. He (Christ) takes the bread, 2. looks up to heaven, 3. gives thanks, 4. breaks the bread and 5. gives it to people.

4. Christ brought about the multiplication of the loaves and the feeding of the people with wonderful bread. But it is equally clear that he wanted the help and *cooperation of the apostles*:

a. Philip figures out that two-hundred denarii (the salary of two-hundred days) would not be enough to give everybody just a little to eat. He judges the situation hopeless. "There is nothing to be done." And by giving the figure of two-hundred denarii he makes the coming miracle of Jesus the clearer.

b. Andrew is more positive. He has the attitude of: "I will see what I can do," and he brings the boy to Jesus who has five barley loaves and two dried fish.

c. The apostles make the people recline on the green grass. And according to Mark they arrange people in groups of hundred and fifty.

d. The boy brings all he has: five barley loaves: flat cakes as big as a plate and as thick as a thumb. Bread was usually made of wheat. Barley bread was the bread of the poor people. Christ is satisfied with what we have, as long as we give it all. And he has two dried fish, sardine-like. Fresh fish would have been a luxury; hardly anybody could afford since there were no ways of keeping them fresh. Thus fish were pickle and dried.

If we bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar in the Mass, we bring ourselves symbolically, all what we have. It may not be much, but enough to be transformed by Christ's blessing, by the priest's words of consecration.

e. The miracle happens through Christ's blessing but indirectly under the hands of the apostles. Their hands never become empty: they give and give to the people what Christ gives them. Of these five points: 1. He (Christ) took the bread, 2. looked up to heaven, 3. gave thanks, 4. broke the bread and 5. gave it to the disciples, the first four points stand in Greek in the Aorist, that means it is an action in the past that happened just once. But the fifth item: "He gave it (the broken bread) to the disciples," stand in the Imperfect. That means it took place repeatedly.

f. What the Lord tells the apostles in Mk. 6:37 is therefore true: "You give them to eat!" Fully true it becomes in every Mass: God's priests give people to eat: Christ's own flesh and blood.

g. Only in John does Jesus tell his apostles: "Gather up the crusts that are left over so that nothing will go to waste (Jn. 6:12)!" Sure, we shall waste no food, not even a crumb

of bread. But this order makes full sense only with Holy Eucharist: In the smallest particle, Christ is present. We should ask ourselves if we have that reverence before Christ in the Eucharistic bread, if we preserve it well, if our external behavior reflects our interior faith.

h. There were twelve baskets full of leftovers, although at the starting point there were only five barley loaves. It goes to show that the Lord really *filled* them. He is always generous with his gifts as he was generous at the wedding at Cana with the wonderful wine.

The Lord meant the Holy Eucharist as a plentiful food which we should take quite often. Thus we should not be stingy with ourselves by going to holy communion seldom.

5. The reaction of the people is enlightening. They are thrilled because he has fed them. He has given them what they wanted, and now they see in him the prophet of which Moses spoke in Deut. 18:15-18: "A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen." The Pharisees distinguished between this prophet and the Messiah as we see in Jn. 1:21; 7:40f. But for this simple people it was one and the same person. Thus they wished to use him for their own purpose and make him king so that he would free them from the yoke of the Romans, to make out of their occupied country a free country again.

For Christ Easter was near (a remark we only find in Jn. 6:4). He knew that he could give us the Eucharistic bread only by dying for us on the cross. Thus we shall not pray God may we do our will but that he may give us the strength to do his will.

Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Public Works and Communications  
BUREAU OF POST  
Manila

SWORN STATEMENT  
(Required by Act 2580)

The undersigned, FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P., editor of the BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS published bi-monthly, in English, Spanish and Latin, at University of Santo Tomas, Manila, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby submits the following statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by Act 2580, as amended by Commonwealth Act No. 201:

NAME	ADDRESS
Editor: Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Managing Editor: Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Business Manager: Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Owner: University of Santo Tomas .....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Publisher: University of Santo Tomas .....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Printer: Novel Publishing Co., Inc. ....	U.S.T., España, Manila
Office of Publication: Univ. of Sto. Tomas .....	U.S.T., España, Manila

In case of publication other than daily, total number of copies printed and circulated in the last issue dated October-November, 1981.

1. Sent to paid subscribers .....	1,300
2. Sent to others than paid subscribers .....	200
T O T A L .....	1,500

(Sgd.) FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.  
*Editor*

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 7 day of June 1982 at Manila, the affiant exhibiting his Residence Certificate No. 4225185A issued at Manila, on January 12, 1982.

(Sgd.) NORBERTO DE RAMOS  
*Notary Public*

Doc. No. 579, Page No. 98  
Book 101, Series of 1982

Until December 31, 1982  
PTR No. CTO-4009 - Mla. - 1-20-82

# CATHOLIC BIBLE MINISTRY SCHOOL

## ANNOUNCES ITS PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL-YEAR 1982-1983

### 1. BASIC COURSE FOR CATHOLIC BIBLE MINISTERS

CONTENT: 1. Conferences on Biblical Spirituality, Biblical Theology, Biblical Apologetics

2. Practicum on the Biblical Apostolate (especially "BIBLIARASAL" Part 1).

DURATION: 40 weeks (July to April)

CLASSES: Monday, Wednesday, Friday • 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. or 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.

PLACE: UST CENTRAL SEMINARY BUILDING

REQUIREMENTS: (1) College degree holder

(2) Sponsored by an organization and/or recommended by the Parish Priest or Chaplain

(3) Satisfactory interview

### 2. ADVANCED COURSE

CONTENT: 1. Conferences on the exegesis and pastoral application of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John

2. Practicum on "BIBLIARASAL" Parts 2 and 3 (Salvation History Old Testament and New Testament).

DURATION: 40 weeks (July to April)

CLASSES: Once a week (Wednesday) • 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. or 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. (subject to change).

REQUIREMENTS: (1) CBMS Basic Course graduate or its equivalent

(2) Sponsored by an organization and/or recommended by the Parish Priest or Chaplain

(3) Satisfactory interview.

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### FOR BASIC COURSE APPLICANTS:

June 1 Applications forms are now available at Room 113, UST CENTRAL SEMINARY BUILDING

June 28 Interviews of applicants (by appointment)

July 10

July 10 Deadline for submission of applications

July 10 Last day for interview

July 12 List of accepted applicants will be published

July 19 OPENING DAY

#### FOR ADVANCED COURSE APPLICANTS:

June 1 CBMS Basic Course graduates may submit their names. Non-CBMS graduates may now fill in application forms available at Room 113, UST CENTRAL SEMINARY BUILDING

June 14 Interview of applicants (by appointment)

June 26

June 26 Deadline for applications

June 26 Last day for interviews

June 28 List of accepted applicants will be published

July 21 FIRST DAY OF CLASS

*For Inquiries Contact*

FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.  
UST CENTRAL SEMINARY BLDG.  
España St., Sampaloc, Manila  
Tel. 27-16-33 \* 26-94-36

*CBMS Prospectus are Available at:*

Room 113  
UST CENTRAL SEMINARY BLDG.  
Tel. 27-16-33