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BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

**CONGRATULATORY LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO BISHOP VICENTE REYES OF CABANATUAN CITY
ON HIS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AS A PRIEST**

LIFE IN A RAILWAY COMMUNITY
UST Social Research Center

THE AGING: OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE
Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, D.D.

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JULY AND AUGUST, MONTHS OF HOLY FOUNDERS

The months of July and August abound with more feasts of holy Founders than any same period of the ecclesiastical year. Such feasts are: On July 5, of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, 1502-1539, founder of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul; on July 11, of St. Benedict of Nursia, 480-547, founder of the Order that bears his name; on July 14, of St. Camillus de Lellis, 1550-1614, founder of the Order of the Fathers of the Good Death; on July 31, of St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556, founder of the Society of Jesus; on August 1, of St. Alphonsus Maria Ligouri, 1696-1787, founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer; on August 8, of St. Dominic of Guzman, 1170-1221, founder of the Order of Preachers; on August 18, of St. John Eudes, 1601-1680, originator of the liturgical cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, and founder of the Sisterhood of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge; on August 20, of St. Bernard, 1090-1153, founder of the famous Monastery of Clairvaux; on August 23, of St. Philip Benizi, 1233-1285, co-founder of the Order of the Servants of Mary; on August 25, of St. Joseph of Calasanz, 1556-1648, founder of the Clerics Regular of the Religious Schools; on August 28, of St. Augustine, founder of the Order that carries his name; etc.

Comparatively, the founders during the Middle Ages were fewer than during the later periods of history, for with the march of time more and more saintly men and women were aroused by the Holy Spirit to enrich the Church with new Orders, Congregations or Societies to meet the ever growing and diversifying needs of Christian society.

The earlier Orders and Congregations were: 1. of solemn vows; and 2. of simple temporary or perpetual vows. During this our 20th century, especially its second half, the era of the much vaunted "population explosion," we are witnessing the frequent birth, proliferation and expansion of a third form of consecrated religious life, viz., the Secular Institute. All foundations of these three different kinds form an army in battle array against all moral and social evils, or, seen from another coign of vantage, they resemble a vast garden of a wide variety of trees and plants, bearing an exuberance of exquisite, fragrant flowers and sweet and nutritious fruits of grace and holiness.

The majority of the great Religious Orders founded during the Middle Ages or earlier eventually found their way into the Philippines as early as in the second half of the 16th century, right after the discovery and colonization of the Philippine Islands. A little later (1606) the Recollects arrived, soon (1641) followed by the St. John of God's Brothers Hospitalers. Then in the 19th century the Vincentians Fathers followed suit together with the Sisters of Charity (1862), and then the Capuchins (1886), the Benedictines (1895), the Assumption Sisters (1892), etc. And recently the representatives of many modern Institutes have been arriving steadily to work in this vast vineyard of the Lord that is gravely handicapped by a dearth of priests.

Moreover, what is most consoling and spiritually exhilarating is the fact that indigenous religious foundations are sprouting in this blessed country of ours in ever increasing numbers. Who knows but that right in the offing looms the hour of spiritual reawakening and resurgence for this Catholic country in the timetable of Divine Providence.

As a man is born, then grows gradually into a child, an adolescent and youth, then reaches maturity and thereafter starts to slide down to old age and finally bids goodbye to this world; thus nations, peoples or empires come to existence, struggle towards progress, reach if iron-willed and industrious the apex of power and greatness, and then inevitably start to slide

down the slippery path of retrogression and the state of second-rateness where they started off. This cycle applies to all phases of human dimensions — social, political, military, educational, moral, religious, etc. As an instance, the Catholic religion reached its peak of peace and greatness in the Roman Empire after Constantine the Great with St. Helena, his mother, became its determined champion and patron; but began to languish slowly with the march of time; while it started to wax strong in other places of the world, and to open new frontiers with the discovery of the Americas and the Philippines. Since then the Catholic faith has gone a long way, and during these our contemporary times it is vibrating with dynamism in many countries, including our own, especially with the salutary influence of Vatican II. Not too long ago it has been gaining steadily new converts by the thousands in the vast African Continent and in other countries of the so-called Third World. It seems as if the hour has come when the darkness of the night is being dispelled by the bright rising sun over these areas of the world, including the Philippines.

One obvious sign of the Catholic renaissance in our and other countries is the fact that the Holy Spirit is inspiring the foundation of more and more new Congregations or Institutes everywhere which would respond suitably to the circumstantial needs of times and places. And our country should redouble its missionary involvement, which should be one of the main objectives of such new religious foundations.

P. F.

**CONGRATULATORY LETTER
OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO
BISHOP VICENTE REYES
Diocese of Cabanatuan
on His Fiftieth Anniversary
as a Priest**

To our Venerable Brother Vicente Reyes, Bishop of Cabanatuan

It is always with great joy that we occasionally communicate through letters to our Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate who in their own dioceses are Fathers who take care of their children with all solicitude, and teachers who teach authentic Christian doctrine and with its nourishing grace, feed souls; rectors who lead the flock of faithful through vigilant discipline to the immortal gates of light.

Our joy however becomes exceedingly great at the important occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the priesthood which we learned you are nearing. Not only do we give thanks to the Heavenly Father for this fulfilling gift, such that nothing is greater on earth. But also we pray that you be filled with all gifts which you piously desire and with all the consolations with which Christ, the divine steward of souls, fills those whom He loves.

Accept our best wishes. Be filled with the true joy of this great day. Expect great things from God, the pure fountain of grace and the beginning of all wonderful things.

If we turn our eyes to you, on this solemn occasion, in you we shall find the reason of our sincere joy. For having been ordained priest on the 19th of the month of March 1932 you have shown the fruits of wisdom and virtues of the soul which as a perpetual possession and your rich heritage have always been part of you: wise counsel, zeal, piety, charity, avid

interest for God's glory, and prudence in deciding for whatever would led to the good of others. Since then, through these many years, that fountain which is truly your life has not slackened. Nor the flame diminished. Rather, the fire becomes stronger, brighter, warmer, more consuming. So much so that, You, Venerable Brother, has become an example and an image for the Sacred Ordinaries of the Philippines and for your people.

If we look on those things which you have accomplished as a Bishop, words will be insufficient. From your labor both in the Diocese of Borongan and in Cabanatuan which you administer, born were seminaries, parishes, churches, pastoral and presbyteral councils. Vocations to the priesthood increased and diocesan Synods have been activated, for the great benefit of the faithful. Not to be bypassed is the unique manner with which you deal with your clergy and people. You are truly a fount of mutual love, respect and benevolence. Indeed there are many more. For all this, it is appropriate for us to be grateful and joyful, praying to God that He may reward you accordingly.

Our Apostolic Benediction be upon you — to inspire, solace and encourage you. Upon our dear faithful of Cabanatuan, and upon all who are with you in your celebration both Bishops and laity.

From the Vatican, on this 25th of February, 1982, the fourth year of Our Pontificate.

Signed:

John Paul II

ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA
1000 Gen. Solano Manila

S. 1982

C. # 6

C I R C U L A R

To: Presidents, Rectors of Catholic Universities, Colleges, Schools, and Seminaries in the Archdiocese of Manila and Institutes of Formation;

Re: On Laicized Priest-Professors

Dear Very Rev. Father Rector:

The Second Vatican Council in its Declaration on Christian Education, "Gravissimum Educationis", states unequivocally that among all the agencies of education the school has a special importance" (GE 5; cf. also GE 8). At the same time certain responsibilities are imposed on the local Ordinaries in matters related to schools, particularly Catholic schools (cf. CD 35.4. cf. also "Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops", 66 ff.) On the other hand, certain circumstances in the Archdiocese and repeated inquiries on the matter I will presently speak about, have led me to write you this letter.

An instruction "on the way of proceeding in the study and solution of requests for dispensation from priestly celibacy" was issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 14 October 1980 (cf. AAS 72 (1980) pp. 1132-1135) and sent to the local Ordinaries and Superiors General of Clerical Religious Institutes. Subsequently the same Congregation sent to the same addressees the formula to be used for the communication of the dispensation granted to the petitioners.

The document indicates the various ecclesiastical activities that are forbidden to the priest who receives dispensation from his vow of celibacy. When communicating to the petitioner the granting of the dispensation, the competent ecclesiastical authority must inform him, among others, of the following:

"4. c) He cannot hold any position or exercise any function in seminaries or similar institutions. In other institutions of higher learning which is whatever way are dependent on the ecclesiastical authority, they cannot hold any administrative position nor are they allowed to exercise the teaching profession.

d) In those institutions of higher learning that do not depend on the ecclesiastical authority, they are not allowed to teach any subject that is properly theological or closely connected with theology.

e) Where it is question of lower institutions of learning that depend on the ecclesiastical authority, these priests are not permitted to hold any administrative or teaching position, unless the Ordinary of the place in his prudent judgment, and assuming that all scandal had been removed, may decide differently as far as the teaching function is concerned. This prohibition binds also said priests when it is question of teaching religion even in institutions which do not depend on the ecclesiastical authority."

The expression "similar institutions" ("similibus institutis", cf. above 4), had already appeared in the Norms issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 13 January 1971 (cf. AAS 63 (1971 p. 308). This expression was authentically interpreted in a Declaration of the same Congregation issued on 26 June 1972: The words "similibus institutis" found in the Norms issued on 13 January 1971, the Congregation says, must be understood as: "a) Faculties, Institutes, Schools, etc. of ecclesiastical or religious sciences (v. gr., Faculties of Canon Law, Missiology, History of the Church, Philosophy, or Institutes of Pastoral, Religious Pedagogy, Catechetics, etc.) ... b) Any other centers of superior studies even if they are not strictly dependent on the Church's authority, when it is question of theological and religious disciplines being taught" (cf. AAS 64 [1972] p. 643).

It goes without saying that if these prohibitions are enjoined on those priests who are separated from the sacred ministry and have received the dispensation of their vow of celibacy from the legitimate ecclesiastical authority, they are a fortiori applicable to those cases where priests might have left the clerical state and had not yet secure dispensation from the proper ecclesiastical authorities (cf. also "Sapientia Christiana", Pars Prima, Titulus III, Art. 25, # 1, 1; "vitae testimonio").

I understand perfectly well that certain circumstances may render the immediate implementation of the above-mentioned Norms somehow difficult both from the part of the institutions

that might have already accepted these former priests for administrative or teaching positions, as well as for the individuals themselves. But I am also sure that you understand the seriousness of my duty, as Pastor of the Archdiocese, to see to it that the norms issued by the Roman dicasteria be properly implemented. I have also to report to the corresponding authorities in Rome the implementation of these norms.

As you well know, the Archdiocese of Manila finds itself in a special situation in this respect. On the one hand, a great number of institutions of learning are located within the territory of the Archdiocese, and many of them are Catholic schools. On the other hand, not a too small number of priests who no longer belong to the clerical state and come either from other dioceses or from religious orders and congregations, are teaching subjects that are indicated in the above-mentioned documents as specifically forbidden to them.

These two facts add a greater urgency to the already serious responsibility that befalls me in this matter. In order, therefore, to try finding a solution to this problem, I am hereby proposing a few steps that may lead to a fruitful dialogue on this delicate subject:

1. I will appreciate a brief answer from you indicating whether or not any former priest is holding any administrative or teaching position in your institution;

2. In case of an affirmative answer, please kindly furnish me with some pertinent data, vz.:

- 2.1. Name of the person

- 2.2. Diocese or religious congregation of origin

- 2.3. Position(s) he actually occupies and/or subject he teaches

- 2.4. Date when the particular individual joined the institution

- 2.5. Reason for accepting his services

- 2.6. Duration of the contract (if any) entered into between the individual and the institution.

3. Circumstances that in a particular case may demand special consideration.

I will appreciate if these data may be sent to me before 15 February 1982, and in any event before the renewal of any existing contract (or the inking of a new contract) be made either now or in view of the next school year that begins in June.

Please rest assured that this letter is sent to you as a manifestation of my most sincere personal concern for the Archdiocese, a concern and a responsibility that extend also to the priests themselves who have left the sacred ministry (cf. "Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops", 112).

Since this is a rather delicate matter that demands careful handling, should you think that a personal dialogue will be either needed or useful, please feel free to call on me. I will be happy to discuss with you the aspects and difficulties related to concrete cases.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation while assuring you of my esteems, I wish to remain,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,

✠ (Sgd.) JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila

Manila, January 25, 1982

LIFE IN A RAILWAY COMMUNITY

UST Social Research Center

(The research on urban poverty entitled "Perceived Basic Needs, Livelihood Sources and Life Concerns and Aspirations of an Urban Poor Community: A Case Study of a Railway Community" was conducted by the Social Research Center of the University of Santo Tomas in the summer of 1981. The following excerpts from the SRC study were written by Ms. Jeanette V. Loanzon, study coordinator and SRC Assistant Director)

The poor are those who lack what they need.¹ Implied here are two basic realities: that there does exist a minimum basket of goods and services needed to sustain human life and that there are people who are unable to consume such out of sheer incapacity to pay.

Quantitative terms are still the major yardstick by which the degree of "lack" is measured. However, it is acknowledged that poverty is a multi-dimensional concept. This study will then take as principal poverty indicator, economic well-being. Economic well-being simply refers to the ability to consume more and preferably better goods and services.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has given us quite a comprehensive set of needs. The ILO's solution to the problem of employment comes under the banner of Basic Needs Strategy. Concluding in its 1976 Tripartite Conference that the problem of employment is also the problem of poverty, the ILO has advocated a BASIC NEEDS STRATEGY. Two kinds of basic needs were identified:²

¹ Gustavo Gutierrez, THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION (Orbis Books: New York, 1973), p. 297.

² ILO, poster on BASIC NEEDS STRATEGY.

1. The first was minimum requirements for a normal family's consumption like food, clothing, and shelter.
2. The second category of basic needs are services like health and education which should be provided by and for communities.

Parallel to the ILO-espoused Basic Needs Strategy is the demand for a NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (NIEO) coming mostly from the poor countries. A global economy characterized by a high degree of interdependence validates the demand for a more equitable sharing of the world's wealth and resources according to its proponents. A poverty curtain does divide the world between the embarrassingly rich and the desparately poor.³ Likewise, NIEO advocates argue that equity and justice in the national order is a prerequisite to equity and justice in the international order. An underlying premise of this study is that poverty is caused by structural causes rooted in both national and international economic structures and systems. The phenomenon of urban poverty is closely linked to and intertwined with global inequity and injustice.

Aligning itself with these two movements of global significance the demand for the NIEO and the advocacy of a Basic Needs Strategy and challenged by the reality of poverty in its own midst, the Social Research Center has chosen to focus on the railway community right in its own neighborhood. The respondent community in this study live proximate to the railroad tracks bounded by España and Dimasalang in Manila. The decision to focus on the urban poor is bolstered by two facts:

1. The city is the place of the future.⁴ The growth of cities have been a traditional index of "progress."⁵ Development, then, connotes urbanization. By the year 2000, Manila is predicted to have a population of 10

³ Mahbub ul Haq, *THE POVERTY CURTAIN* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1976), p. vx.

⁴ Mary Hollnsteiner, "The Urbanization of Metro Manila Area." in *MODERNIZATION: ITS IMPACT ON THE PHILIPPINES*, IPC Paper No. 7 ed. by Walden F. Bello and Alfonso de Guzman II, (Ateneo de Manila University Press: Quezon City, 1969), p. 170.

⁵ Jean Tinbergen (coordinator), *Reshaping the International Order: A Report to the club of Rome*, (Hutchinson: London, 1977), pp. 64-66.

million.⁶ Assuming a total Philippine population of 80M by 2000, Manila will be home to 1/8 of the country's people.

2. The poor are in the cities. The floating population of the cities are a permanent phenomenon associated with the development process.⁷

The study centers on the basic needs, livelihood sources and life concerns and aspirations of the railway community. These priorities reflect the primacy of sustaining life while simultaneously building self-reliance among the people. These two elements are part of a five-point development strategy identified by the framers of the NIEO.

Code named *Project PUEBLA*, this research project is an expression of the Church's preferential option for the poor. The poor in this case are just the neighbors of the University of Santo Tomas community. Two hundred and thirty four household interviews were conducted in the summer of 1981. What follows are highlights of this study on urban poverty.

A Typical Railway Family

Contrary to popular expectations that slum dwellers are a migrant, transitory community, data reveals that the housewife respondents and presumably their families have resided in the España-Dimasalang area for 16 years. This gives rise to the hypothesis that indeed the floating poor of the cities are a permanent phenomenon of developing countries.

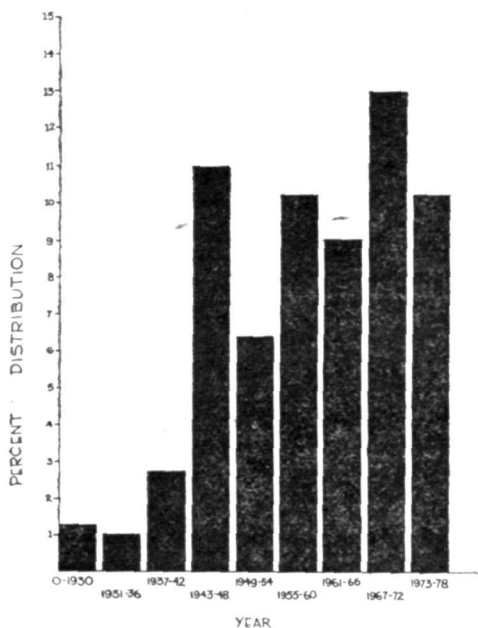
Thirteen per cent of the respondent families migrated to Manila in 1967-1972 while 11 per cent transferred to the city in 1943-1948 during the war and postwar period. Another 11 per cent approximately are late migrants coming into the city in 1973-1978 while 10 per cent migrated during the period of 1955-1960. Figure 1 shows this information.

⁶ Draper Fund Report, n. 10 (Washington D.C., December, 1981), p. 15.

⁷ Andrew G. Frank, "Urban Poverty in Latin America" in *MASSSES IN LATIN AMERICA*, ed. by Irving Louis Horowitz, Oxford University Press; New York, 1970), p. 216.

FIGURE 1

DISTRIBUTION BY FIRST YEAR OF TRANSFER TO MANILA
 ESPAÑA - DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
 MAY - JUNE, 1981



A typical railway family is composed of six members with an average of 4 children. There is almost a one-to-one correspondence between the sexes with females comprising 52 per cent of the sample families and males, 48 per cent. Fifty-eight per cent of the family members are single in terms of civil status.

Both parents would have received some high school education with the father likely to have a high school degree more than the mother. Two of the usual four children go to school. The father usually works while the mother does not. In a few cases, the first and second child work.

Poverty as a considerable constraint to educational opportunity is evidenced in the data. Only 2 children per family are able to go to school. Given that a family is composed on the average of 6 members, it is presumed that some are unable to go to school due to limited financial resources.

In terms of what occupies most of the time of the family members, 41 per cent stay at home, 31 per cent work while 28 per cent study. Three non-working members depend on one working family member, a dependency ratio higher than the Philippine average of 2:1.

If poverty is a condition where there is inadequacy of satisfaction of basic needs, then clearly the data on monthly family income and corresponding per capita expenditures of the España-Dimasalang railway community stands as a classic example of destitution. Individual family members survive on ₱105.27 a month with an average family income of ₱631.63 as shown in Table 1. Given the inflation rates in Metro Manila area the pressure of population on goods and services, the lack of space for growing foodstuffs even for self-consumed production, one can imagine the amount of deprivation suffered by these poor families.

TABLE 1
MEAN WAGES OF WORKING FAMILY MEMBERS
ESPAÑA - DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY - JUNE, 1981

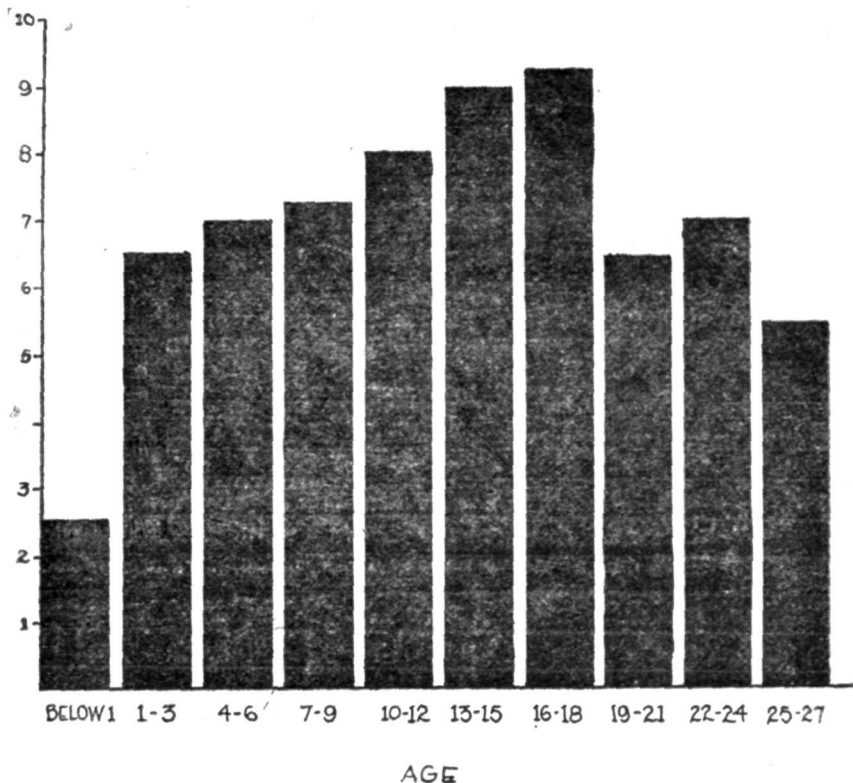
AREA/BARANGAY NO.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly
	Mean Salary	Mean Salary	Mean Salary
AREA A (Dimasalang Side)	₱ 20.09	₱134.48	₱566.54
Barangay 368	20.75	104.40	514.20
Barangay 483	28.83	58.00	517.98
Barangay 484	25.43	250.00	627.83
Barangay 485	25.43	NA	579.55
Barangay 500	NA	260.00	593.13
AREA B (España Side)	₱ 26.76	₱ 85.00	₱696.71
Barangay 472	27.71	100.00	593.50
Barangay 473	25.80	70.00	799.92
TOTAL OF AREA A & B	₱ 23.43	₱109.74	₱631.63

* NA — Not Applicable

The España-Dimasalang railway community is a relatively young community with the mean age of family members placed at 23 while the age of the housewife respondents is about 39. The community's age distribution is illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

DISTRIBUTION BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS
ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY - JUNE, 1981



While the average family size is six, household members, that is referring to non-nuclear family members, relatives, friends or boarders total seven. Given the size of slum dwellings, this reveals a tendency towards overcrowding so characteristic of slum settlements.

The typical railway family is Catholic given the distribution of the religious affiliation of families sampled. An overwhelming 95 per cent are Catholic, 3 per cent are Iglesia ni Kristo members, Protestants comprise 1.71 per cent.

It is also a Tagalog-speaking family. Negligible percentages speak the other dialects in this order: Ilocano, Pampango, Waray and Cebuano. It seems a rational thing to speak the urban language as a mode of adjustment to city life.

In terms of regional distribution, migrants from Regions 1, 3 and 8 comprise majority of the railway families. The paucity of resources in Region 8 which is the Leyte-Samar area can account for it being a feeder region while the proximity of both Region 1 (Baguio, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Pangasinan) and Region 3 (Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac) can help explain the stream of migrants from these areas. Twenty-four per cent of the residents come from within Metro Manila area itself. The greater vulnerability of the railway dwellers is reflected in the fact that most of them come from the cities and have already lost contact with relatives in the province who can possibly provide material support.

As for home ownership, 46 per cent of the families perceive the dwellings they live in as their "own". Forty-four per cent say they rent their homes while a small 10 per cent admit that their houses are for "free".

Table 2 is a summary table of ownership of home amenities by the España-Dimasalang railway community. Compared to a 1971 survey of the characteristics of squatters and slum dwellers in Manila where 95.2 per cent reported having electricity in the house, 64.5 per cent having piped-in water and 59.7 per cent having toilet facilities of one kind, then the España-Dimasalang railway community are indeed disadvantaged.⁸

⁸ Celia T. Castillo, BEYOND MANILA: PHILIPPINE RURAL PROBLEMS in Perspective (International Research Development Center: OTTAWA, 1979), p. 415.

TABLE 2

OWNERSHIP OF HOME AMENITIES
 ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
 MAY - JUNE, 1981

HOME AMENITIES	TOTAL OF AREA A & B		AREA A		AREA B	
	FD	%	FD	%	FD	%
Electricity						
Yes	183	78.21	106	70.20	77	92.77
None	51	21.79	45	29.80	6	7.23
Water						
Yes	83	35.47	28	18.54	55	66.27
None	151	64.53	123	81.46	28	33.73
Bathroom						
Yes	119	50.85	54	35.76	65	78.31
None	115	49.15	97	64.24	18	21.69
Toilet						
Yes	89	38.03	33	21.85	56	67.47
None	145	61.97	118	78.15	27	32.53

Seventy eight per cent have electricity in their homes while 22 per cent say they have no electrical connections. As for pipes, a smaller per cent, 35, say they have water pipes while a clear majority, 65 per cent, admit to having no waterpipes.

Almost equal percentages, 51 per cent and 49 per cent, answered affirmatively and negatively respectively when queried as to whether they have bathroom facilities in their homes. Nearly two-thirds of the respondent families do not have comfort room facilities. While only 33 per cent of Area B families

do not have comfort room facilities, almost 80 per cent of Area A sample households do not have comfort room facilities. This confirms the ocular observation that Area B households are materially better-off than their Area A counterparts.

Almost three-fourths of the families have wood for walling materials and live in a house 4.38 by 5.65 square meters in size. Given the family size of six, this gives an average space of less than a square meter per person. The ideal space per person according to National Housing Authority standards is 10 square meters.

Understandably, 90 per cent of the respondent families neither own any vehicle nor business. Again, this is characteristic of poor households, the non-ownership of productive capital assets which can yield incomes.

What this section has attempted to do is to draw a composite picture of a family living in the railway. As can be noted, it is typical for such families to live in tight spaces, receive low incomes and be deprived of household amenities. Their physical location, in the railway, at the fringes of the city is symbolic of their marginalization in other senses. Their choice of residence is decided primordially by considerations for jobs and livelihood no matter how marginal these might be. As it is, the España-Dimasalang area is bounded by a public market which can be a source of odd work for the residents. On the other hand, this proximity to a public market aggravates the already unhealthy living conditions the community have to endure.

Family Income and Consumption Patterns

Total family income per month average P631.63 with Area A families at a disadvantage with only P566.54 compared to 696.71 family monthly income of Area B families. A recent survey of Metro Manila families revealed a P765 monthly income of household heads.⁹ This suggests that income-wise, the railway families are worse off than their urban counterparts.

When asked what their ideal monthly family income should be, the responses clustered around P1,458. As it is, their actual monthly income is only 43 per cent of their ideal monthly wage.

⁹ The Philippine Sunday Express, May 30, 1982.

Table 3 indicates data on actual monthly income per barangay as well as perceived ideal income.

Table 3

ACTUAL MONTHLY WAGE/SALARY VERSUS PERCEIVED IDEAL
MONTHLY WAGE/SALARY, ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG
RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY-JUNE, 1981

Area/Barangay No.	Actual Monthly Wage/Salary	Ideal Monthly Wage/Salary	Ratio of Actual Monthly Wage to Ideal Monthly Salary
AREA A	P566.54	P1,321.80	43%
Barangay 368	514.20	1,452.86	35
Barangay 483	517.98	1,096.43	47
Barangay 484	637.83	1,472.98	43
Barangay 485	579.55	1,267.27	46
Barangay 500	593.13	1,319.44	45
AREA B	696.71	1,595.22	44
Barangay 472	593.50	1,513.64	39
Barangay 473	799.92	1,676.79	48
TOTAL OF AREA A & B	P631.63	P1,458.51	43%

Fifty-two per cent of the families receive monthly income of P600 below. Approximately three-fourths receive monthly incomes less than P800. Given urban standards of living, these families clearly cannot meet their basic needs considering the average family size of six.

The frequency by which people are paid can be used as a possible index of how skilled or unskilled the kind of work they do. It is hypothesized that low-skilled, low income, and even

casual work tends to be paid on a more frequent basis than work of a more skilled nature. Surprisingly, roughly more than two-thirds of the working family members of the España-Dimasalang railway community are paid on a monthly basis versus 26 per cent who are paid on a daily basis. A small percentage, 6 per cent, are weekly earners.

In an attempt to find out about supplementary sources of income, questions were asked on the amount and sources of subsidy as well as the frequency in which they are received.

Only 18 per cent of the respondent families receive subsidies either in cash or in kind. Eighty-two per cent do not receive any form of subsidy at all. In other words, almost all the railway families depend solely on earned income from self-employment or employment by others for the satisfaction of their consumption needs.

Among those who receive monthly subsidies, 13 per cent of the sample families, P395.54 is the estimated amount of monthly subsidies in both cash and kind. Data suggest that Area A families are in receipt of more subsidies than Area B families, indicating perhaps a more serious level of want.

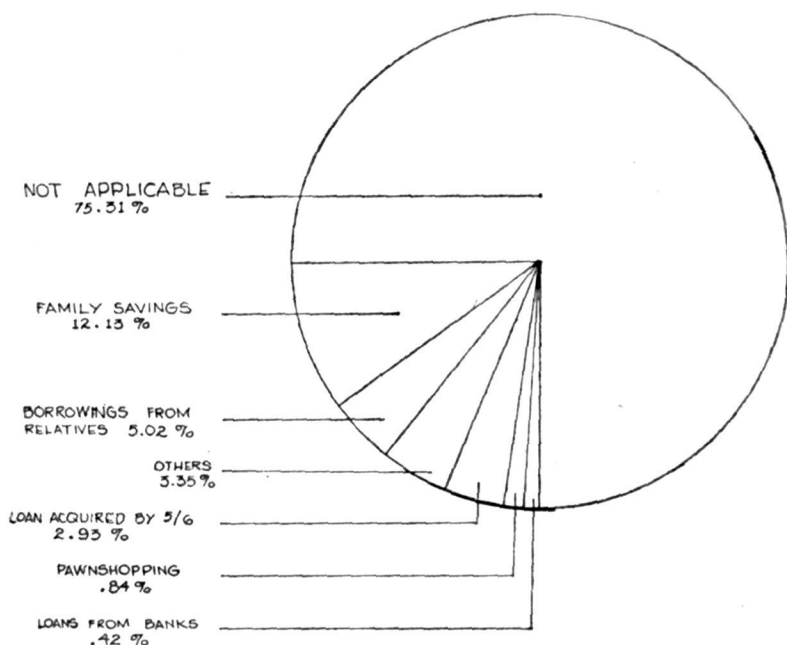
Of those who receive subsidies, the three equally popular forms are school supplies/school articles, food/canned goods/rice/meats/vegetables as well as clothing and uniform. Only 1.2 per cent receive medical or hospital care as subsidies. The latter brings to the fore the need for primary health care among slum dwellers. The nature of subsidies indicate how basic the forms of subsidy are, further suggesting that the railway families involved cannot even supply their own needs for food, clothing and education.

Among the small minority who have acquired some form of self-owned business or livelihood, 12 per cent attribute their financial capital to family savings, 5 per cent to borrowings from relatives and friends. A very negligible per cent .41 per cent state they acquired money capital from banks. Figure 3 shows the means of acquiring capital for self-owned business or livelihood by the España-Dimasalang railway community. This confirms a popular option that often the very people who should benefit from the credit facilities in the economy are the very ones barred from obtaining such benefits. The collateral men-

tality of most financial institutions which espouse the primacy of profits as a motive in their operations unable them to serve those most in need. If ability to pay continues to be a criterion for access to loans, then the poor would always be outside the mainstream of banking operations.

Figure 3

MEANS OF ACQUIRING CAPITAL FOR SELF-OWNED BUSINESS OR LIVELIHOOD, ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY-JUNE, 1981



An indication of the poverty of the España-Dimasalang railway family is the allocation of 65 per cent of the family budget to food. Engel's Law in economics postulates that low income families are likely to spend more on food and related basic items compared to high income families. Compared to the

Philippine and Metro Manila family budget allocation, it is apparent that the railway families in the España-Dimasalang area suffer from a more severe degree of poverty. Table 4 clearly illustrates this.

Table 4

ALLOCATION OF FAMILY BUDGET BY EXPENDITURE GROUP

Expenditure Group	Philippines*	National Capital Region (NRC) M. Manila	España-Dimasalang Railway Community
	1975	1975	1980
A. Food, Beverage and Beverages	57.0	49.4	65.43
B. Housing	8.5	13.1	2.87
C. Fuel, Light and Water	4.6	4.7	4.11
D. Household Furnishing and Equipment	1.9	1.8	7.03
E. Household Operation	2.1	1.8	2.47
F. Clothing and other Wear	7.5	7.7	0.88
G. Personal Care	1.8	2.1	0.74
H. Medical Care	1.9	1.7	2.85
I. Transport and Communication	3.4	4.8	1.94
J. Recreation	1.4	1.8	4.50
K. Education	4.0	4.4	4.60
L. Gifts and Contribution	0.4	0.4	0.54
M. Taxes	1.0	1.8	0.71
N. Special Occasions	2.0	1.3	0.81
O. Personal Effects	1.0	1.4	0.50
P. Miscellaneous Goods & Services	1.5	2.0	0.02
Total Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.00

* Philippine and Metro Manila data come from the NCSO Household Survey of 1975.

Next to food, 7 per cent of the family budget goes to household furnishings and equipment. Education and recreation expenses occupy nearly five per cent of the budget.

When their expenditures were asked in detail, it becomes apparent that households tend to exceed their monthly incomes. Theoretically, this is possible by resorting to either borrowings or dipping into previous savings. In the case of low income households, the former is the likelier case. It then becomes easy to understand why and how poor families easily fall prey to usurious practices. Given limited incomes as well as limited access to credit facilities and yet having basic needs to satisfy, they are left with no alternative but to borrow at high interest rates.

Generative Themes in a Railway Community

Generative themes, per se, are productive in the sense of leading the observer towards a more in-depth understanding of a people's way of life. Generative themes, when discovered, afford the observer a better knowledge of a people. The dominant life concerns and aspirations of the España-Dimasalang respondent families might as well constitute generative themes by which the railway community emerge as persons who share with the rest a common humanity. In spite of their poverty, they possess the unique human capacities to long, to care, to aspire and to dream.

These generative themes are seen from the viewpoint of the housewife respondent. In the Filipino family, the wife and mother are of priceless value and discharge strategic functions. Included in the latter is that she is mainly assigned by society to mold the character and shape the values of children. In this sense, the values she holds become a key to knowing and understanding the values of the family and ultimately the Filipino nation. That poor housewives are more preoccupied with the home and frequently do not work, as in the case of the España-Dimasalang railway community, suggests the potential power of these housewives to shape family values.

Expectedly, the top three concerns of the housewife respondents are family/love, good health/long life/happiness, and more home furnishings/material things as well as education future

of children as shown in Table 5. Between the two areas composed of seven barangays, there seems to be a consensus on what concerns them most in life. In spite of their poverty, what concerns the housewife most are the precious intangibles — love, family, long life, happiness. This seems reassuring for those who are concerned with deteriorating family values with the onslaught of modernization and the materialistic value it fosters.

Table 5

THREE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS IN LIFE
ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY-JUNE, 1981

CONCERNS IN LIFE

1. Family/love
 2. Good health/long life/happiness
 3. More home furnishings/material things/appliances/
clothing/housing/water
 4. Education/future of children
 5. Enough food
 6. Peace in life/to do good/gain knowledge
 7. Money
 8. God/religion
 9. Jobs
 10. Honor/principles in life
 11. Go abroad
 12. Good relationship with other people
-

The housewives interviewed seem to attach much more importance to what is essential in life rather than what is superficial and transitory. The poor do have a richness to offer in

the midst of an emerging secular city—concern for what counts than what can just be materially possessed. The concern for education/future of children is a beautiful expression of Filipino family solidarity — the willingness to go through sacrifices for the sake of the beloved offsprings. The desire to give the best to one's children predominates.

“Enough food” as a fifth concern poignantly reflects how basic the need of this community is and yet such needs continue to be unsatisfied.

Table 6 catalogues the dominant life concerns of the housewives in the España-Dimasalang railway community.

Table 6

ASPIRATIONS OF ESPAÑA-DIMASALANG
RAILWAY COMMUNITY
MAY - JUNE, 1981

ASPIRATIONS
1. Material things/appliances car/house & lot/water clothing
2. Education/future of children
3. Own business/become rich/be comfortable/nice future better life
4. Go back to province/finish a course/pay back loans
5. Good family life/relationships, improvement of family members
6. Health/long life
7. Jobs/livelihood
8. Peaceful life/life of faith
9. Money/food
10. Go abroad e.g. S. Arabia

Given their material deprivation, it seems logical that the housewife respondent will list as number one aspiration — "material things/appliances/car/house and lot/water/clothing". Again the relative level of deprivation is sadly evident in aspiring for "water and clothing".

The preoccupation with the children's future, so characteristically Filipino and even perhaps Asian, is reflected in number two aspiration.

Productive and income generating opportunities, the desire to be better off than they are presumably at present is indicated in aspiration number three.

Another notable aspiration is the desire to go abroad, undoubtedly motivated by the prospects of better economic opportunities. Indeed it becomes a sad indictment of the economy when its nationals aspire to go abroad just to be given such opportunities. The desire for survival hence prevails over nationalist sentiments.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The poor are the indigent, the weak, the bent over, the destitute.¹⁰ Protest at the indignities suffered and endured by the poor are to no avail unless there is genuine solidarity with them. Solidarity is especially difficult if there is detachment and distance from the lives of the poor. Solidarity with the poor can only be achieved by some personal sharing in their lot.

The reason for being of this study would have been fulfilled if its readers, presumably the educated and the middle class, take on an option on behalf of the poor. The poor are indeed a sign of God's presence in the world and the source of salvation for all.

A primary need in the community is clearly adequate and proper nutrition. Brain cells are said to be formed by the time a child reaches age four. Irreparable brain damage may occur due to the lack of good nutrition. The little incomes received by railway families aggravated by a lack of information can result into a serious level of malnutrition especially among "economically" unproductive children.

¹⁰ Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

A nutrition project with stress on the children and lactating or pregnant mothers can possibly be launched in the area. There are in fact already concerned groups in the area at the parish level who can sponsor this move. A nutrition education programme among the railway housewives can target two objectives: in the short run providing good nutrition to railway families while in the long run educating particularly the mothers towards more consciousness of the root causes of their poverty. A collective reflection on common problems can perhaps heighten a sense of community and responsibility among these women until such a time that they can serve as catalysts in the betterment of their own community.

Truly the needs of the poor in the railway are so basic. Hope can mean just more and better food and along with it, a renewed sense of self-worth.

THE ELDERLY IN THE PHILIPPINE POPULATION

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INTRODUCTION

Conditions of the elderly in developing countries are not visibly critical, at least not in the same way that problems in malnutrition or over-population are currently featured. However, the projected absolute and relative increase in the number of this age group makes valid pre-emptive efforts to analyze problems which society will inevitably have to reckon with in the not so far future.

Asia (excluding Western South Asia) is projected to have 279M of its population over 60 years old by the year 2000.¹ That will constitute 8.1 per cent of the total Asian population. The Philippine population is projected to have about 4 per cent of its total population 65 years and over by 2000.²

There is a global aging of the population, to be sure. Falling birth rates and rising life expectancy have brought this world-wide aging of the population. "Thus, in the year 2000, the average expectation of life at birth for the world will be 73.4 for the developed countries and 62.6 for the developing countries".³

Demographic trends differ among regions experiencing different development levels. It is projected that by the year 2000, there will be a larger elderly population in the developing regions (348M) than in the developed regions (234M). While the elderly population will increase by 52 per cent in the developed regions, there will be a 130 per cent increase in the developing regions for the elderly group.⁴

Because of this tremendous increase in the world's aging population in both developed and developing regions, there is

¹ "Report of the Technical Meeting on Aging for the Asian and Pacific Region", Bangkok, 27-30 January 1981 (mimeographed paper).

² Computed from the 1979 Statistical Yearbook of the Philippines.

³ "Demographic Aspects of the Aging Population in the Asia and Pacific Region", paper presented by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

⁴ Tarek Shuman, "Overview of the Aging of Population", Working Papers for the Opera Pia preparatory meeting, 20-23 Sept. 1979, Civitella del Tronto, Italy, pp. 6-8. In a separate survey, the approximate increase in the elderly population in the developing regions from 1970 to 2000 is estimated to be 2.6 or 354M (WHO Technical Reports Series, 1974, No. 548, p. 9).

also an increasing awareness of the plight of the aged in these regions. Scientific interest has also intensified especially in the field of research and service related sciences.

The impact of the anticipated problems of the elderly is expected to be felt more in developing regions. Awareness of this phenomenon is recent and perhaps not even widespread up to now. While developed countries (i.e. Sweden, Japan) have evolved fairly complicated social services network for their elderly population, in Asia aging has basically remained a family affair. It has been noted for instance that in Black Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America, the aged persons have been and continued to be highly esteemed, protected by communal solidarity and entrusted with respected functions as guardians of local traditions, cultist patricians, depositories of the collective memory, and the uncontested leaders of family communities. This represents an image and an understanding of the elderly quite apart from that of the developed countries.⁵ But recent studies show the situation of the elderly as rapidly changing as a result of urbanization, industrialization and the shift from a subsistence to a market economy.⁶ In general, the effects of these changes have been the weakening of the population's capacity to look after its old people in the traditional way and the development of new methods of caring for the old.⁷

With the urbanization and secularization of societies, mobility, changes in value systems, the occurrence of a breakdown in the traditional approaches to human needs especially towards the aged is likely inevitable.⁸ Living patterns that, in the past, helped to support old people in developed countries have undergone changes due to development and its consequent alterations in family structure. There is a tendency for young people to become more mobile and be separated from their older relatives. The same tendency is beginning to affect the developing countries, where massive migration of the young to urban centers, to find work, or to get education, is depriving the aged of the emotional and material support of their children. Alienation and isolation of the elderly segments of society create conditions

⁵ Gabriel Pastrana "Toward an Ethics of Aging" Opera Pia Working Paper (mimeographed).

⁶ Planning and Organization of Geriatric Service, WHO Technical Reports Series, No. 548, p. 21.

⁷ "Psychogeriatrics" WHO Technical Reports, No. 507, p. 6.

⁸ Barbara Anderson, "The State of the Science of Gerontology in the Developed World, Opera Pia Working Papers, p. 23.

in which old people have difficulty in adapting and his social contacts become restricted.⁹

Coupled with these are a variety of other implications and problems. Humanitarian and developmental issues have become critical when deciding about social and welfare services, health services, housing and ecology, income and retirement. Developing countries have to reckon simultaneously with problems in other age groups, the disabled, the poor, etc.

Increase in the aging population aggravates the economic burden of the labor force in developing countries. If the proportion of the working versus the non-working elderly population is realized as it is projected, old people will definitely add to the problem of dependence. In developed regions, while finances seem less of a problem, the same issues on family life, social status of the elderly, retirement, require equal attention. While the elderly may be more sufficiently provided with material needs, these do not necessarily guarantee the fulfillment of psychological or spiritual needs. Modern town planning and transportation systems do isolate old people. New roads and heavy traffic make it difficult for old people to move about freely, while air pollution worsens the health condition of the elderly. Due to the direct and indirect effects of these factors, the elderly are losing their respectable social status by virtue of age.¹⁰

Developing countries are entirely vulnerable to these influences. Urban center have assumed some of the problems of the elderly in developed regions. There is also, in urban areas, a notable breakdown of the support the elderly have enjoyed in the past. Problems that were alien to the traditional culture have emerged.

However, precisely due to each country's unique culture, the manifestation of the problems come in varied forms. In fact, the preservation in the community of socio-cultural factors beneficial to the elderly and keeping them intact in a rapidly changing environment has been proposed as one of the solutions to the problems of the elderly in developing regions.

"The process of aging in the developing countries still enjoys a number of values, positive meaning and humane understanding that not only is too precious to be lost, but which

⁹ "Psychogeriatrics" p. 7.

¹⁰ Planning and Organization of Geriatric Service", p. 11.

can also serve as a point of reference in many respects for what the developed countries are looking for their elderly populations".¹¹

The objective of this paper is to present the situation of the elderly population of the Philippines in a rather general perspective, using demographic profiles and reports of government programs affecting them.

In this report, it will become clear that the plight of the aged in the Philippines, whatever the manifestations, is really a reflection of the plight of the total population. The health and social condition of an aged person are directly related to the socio-economic status of the household¹² to which he belongs. Thus, their distribution into economic classes is proportionate to the distribution of the entire population where the poorest (10%) of the families earn an average of US \$190 annually and the upper (10%) earn an average of US \$3,581 annually.¹³

The report on government programs affecting the aged also clarifies the simple fact that in developing countries, an investment in the aged is unattractive because it does not reap socio-economic returns which are critical to 'progress'. Where social services are expensive and scarce, priority is given to younger age groups, which are potential sources of manpower for development.

Of its total budget allocation in 1978, the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) spent around .3 per cent for institutions of the aged.¹⁴ The rest were used for other potentially productive programs like self-employment assistance, practical skills development and job placement, supplemental feeding to malnourished children and calamity assistance.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

¹² A "household" is defined by the National Census and Statistics Office as a unit comprising immediate members of the nuclear family and other persons living with the households and related to the head of the family by blood, marriage or adoption, and who are not mere boarders, guests, or domestic help. 1979 *Phil. Statistical Yearbook*, p. 530.

¹³ 1979 *Phil. Statistical Yearbook*, Republic of the Philippines, NEDA, 1979, p. 534. Conversion rate used was \$1 = ₱7.5 and data is valid for 1975.

¹⁴ *Annual Report 1978*, Manila: Ministry of Social Services and Development, 1979, p. 8 and 30.

1. DEFINITION OF THE AGED

Philippine laws recognize 60¹⁵ as the retirement age for those who are employed in non-farm occupations. Bargaining agreements between private employers and employees, however, usually fix optional retirement at 65 and compulsory retirement at 70. Farm workers covered by the Social Security System also retire (theoretically) at 60 although most farmers continue to work until they are physically able because they receive no benefits.

There is actually no inherent medical, social, nor economic significance of this age (60) as marking a definite transition in life because of wide individual differences. Many people well over 60 are capable of active participation in all sphere of life that retirement drastically isolates them from gainful employment, social activities and health-maintaining activities. However, in the Philippines, where the population is very young (median age was 16.4 in 1975) and labor force supply always exceeds by hundreds of thousands the labor force demand, gainful activities vacated are enthusiastically awaited by the emerging labor force.

2. THE PHILIPPINE POPULATION

In the last census year (1975) the Philippines had 42 million population spread unevenly over 300,000 sq. km. of land area. The absolute increase from the 1970 census was 5 million persons or 14.7 per cent within five years.

Table 1

POPULATION CHANGES FROM CENSUS YEAR 1970-1975

Age Group	1970	1975
TOTAL	36,684,486	42,070,660
0-14 yrs. old	45.7%	43.9%
15-64 yrs. old	51.4%	53.2%
65 yrs. and over	2.9%	2.9%

SOURCE: 1975 Integrated Census of the Population and its Economic Activities, Vol. II, NEDA, NCSO, 1978.

¹⁵ *Vital Legal Documents in the New Society*, Manila: CBSI, Vol. 1, 1973, p. 113

The population in 1970 has grown slightly older in 1975. In the age category of 0-14, the proportion decreased from 45.7 per cent in 1970 to 43.9 per cent in 1975. A large majority is now in the 15-64 age category.

Projections for the year 2000 show a further aging of population (Table 2), using three kinds of assumptions. The aging of a population is often taken to be a positive sign for a developing country which suffers from over-population.

Table 2

PROJECTION OF THE RATIO OF POPULATION
65 YRS. AND OVER, UP TO 200 A.D.

YEAR	High Proj	Medium Proj	Low Proj.
1970 actual		2.9%	
1980	2.9%	3.0%	3.1%
1990	3.2%	3.4%	3.8%
2000	3.4%	3.9%	3.7%

SOURCE: *Computed from the 1979 Statistical Yearbook of the Philippines*, p. 37.

At medium assumption of growth rate, Philippine population is put at 83 million by Year 2000, out of which 4 per cent will be 65 years old and over. If fertility rates drop radically, 5 per cent will be found in this aged category.

An aging population reflects declining birth rates and an increasing life expectancy, both indicators of successful population control programs. This changing age structure also ushers in an even larger labor force and old age related problems.

3. THE POPULATION OVER 65

For already "old" population with the median age over 30, the implication in the future is a high dependency ratio, where a small laboring age-group has to support a large old-age group. For a young population like the Philippines, the implication of an aging population is a lower dependency ratio in the future. A large laboring age-group supports smaller groups of the younger and the older, barring extremely high unemployment rates.

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The population 65 years and older has not now imposed itself in terms of number and as an economic burden but may yet demand more attention in the near future as the projections indicate.

In 1975, there are around 1.2 million persons 65 and over, 68 per cent of which is found in the rural sector (Table 3).

Table 3

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OLDER, BY SEX, and URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE, 1975 (In Thousands)

AGE GROUP	Both Sexes	TOTAL		Both Sexes	URBAN		Both Sexes	RURAL	
		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female
65 - 69	495	253	242	161	79	82	334	174	160
70 - 74	373	194	179	114	56	58	259	138	121
75 - 79	143	72	72	49	24	25	95	49	46
80 - 84	86	39	47	27	12	15	59	27	32
85 - 89	53	24	28	17	7	10	35	17	18
90 - 94	27	12	15	7	3	5	20	9	11
95 & over	25	11	14	6	2	4	19	9	10
99% over	14	6	8	3	1	2	11	5	6

SOURCE: 1975 *Integrated Census of the Population and Its Economic Activities*, Vol. II, Rep. of the Philippines: NEDA, NCSO, 1978, pp. 22-23.

Table 4

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OVER, BY URBAN-RURAL DISTRIBUTION, 1975

Age Group	% Urban	% Rural	Total
65 - 69	13.4	27.8	41.2
70 - 74	9.4	21.6	31.0
75 - 79	4.0	7.9	11.9
80 - 84	2.4	4.9	7.2
85 - 89	1.4	2.9	4.3
90 - 94	.6	1.6	2.2
95 & over	.6	1.6	2.2
TOTAL	31.7	68.3	100.0 %

SOURCE: Computed from Table 3.

Table 4 is a summarized version of the rural-urban dichotomy. There is a larger percentage of the aged found in the rural sector. The ratio is the same for the entire population, where 68 per cent is in the rural and 32 per cent is in the urban sector.

Table 5

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OLDER, BY SEX
AND MARITAL STATUS, 1975 (In Thousands)

Age Group	Never Married	Married	Widowed	Separated
65 - 69	29	348	113	4
70 - 74	22	228	118	4
75 & over	25	155	152	3
T O T A L	6.3%	60.9%	31.9%	.9%

SOURCE: 1975 Integrated Census of the Population and its Economic Activities, Rep. of the Philippines, NEDA, NCSO, p. 51.

In Table 5, 75,942 men and women are classified as "never married", 380,022 are "widowed", and 10,641 are "separated", and the rest are couples who have not outlived each other. In the "widowed" category, progressively more women outlive their husbands in more than half of the cases.¹⁶ The proportion of widowed women will probably increase to about 60-70 per cent by the year 2000.

4. HOUSING

In the Philippine setting, almost all the elderly people belong to a household unit, partly because there are very few institutionalized dwellings for the aged but mostly because of tradition. The Filipino value of "utang-na-loob" or gratitude is most appropriately applicable to the gratitude of children to their parents. In fact, even 2nd or 3rd degree relations are honored where harboring the old relatives is concerned.¹⁷

¹⁶ 1975 Integrated Census of the Population and its Economic Activities, Republic of the Philippines, NEDA, NCSO, Vol. II, 1978, p. 51.

¹⁷ This is the focus of a research topic to be conducted by the UST Social Research Center in 1980.

Whether housing for the aged persons is adequate depends on their socio-economic status. Where the majority of them are concerned, housing facilities cannot be different from those of the general population.

In 1970, there were 6 million dwelling units for 37 million people. Of this 6 million units, 153,291¹⁸ were occupied by more than one household. In Metro Manila, there were 83 thousand "squatter" families reported and 50 per cent (of 56,984 houses) were classified as "unacceptable dwellings" by the Metro Manila Commission.¹⁹

Whatever the physical condition of housing facilities elderly people stay with relations, often with one of their married children but also with younger families of remote relations. It is very uncommon to find elderly persons maintaining a household alone because of the high costs of housing. That elderly people live with younger households may not be so much a choice as a necessity, further considering their economic statuses.

5. OCCUPATIONS OF THE AGED

Elderly people are thought to be less capable of productive work, especially in industrialized societies where new technologies leave no room for aging symptoms of "slowing down". In the Philippines, the population engaged in agriculture-related occupations continue to work beyond 65.

Table 6 shows that 38 per cent of persons over 64 is still engaged in gainful occupations. Of this total, 75 per cent are in farm-related occupations. It is also shown that more females are in non-gainful activities than males, who account for 89 per cent of the farm-related workers. Even if the incidence of working females is low, those who do are mostly found in the farm-related occupations also.

The elderly people not engaged in gainful activities (62%) survive on savings, if they have any, and some of them on pensions, if they were employed up to 60. Note that the living expenses of the elderly is always integrated with the households they belong. Prior to an in-depth study in this aspect, it is difficult to say if the aged in a household equally shares the benefits as other members. It can be speculated that the nature of their extra (meaning not food or shelter) expenses will be in relation to medical care while the younger household members will be in relation to recreation and clothes.

¹⁸ Computed from the 1979 Philippine Statistical Yearbook, p. 68.

¹⁹ *Metro Manila Data Primer*, Management Information and Data Bank Team, 1977, pp. 39-40.

Table 6

POPULATION 65 YEARS AND OLDER, BY GAINFUL
AND NON-GAINFUL OCCUPATIONS: 1975

Activities	Male	Female	Total
<i>Gainful Occupations</i>			
1. Professional	5,489	3,250	9,739
2. Administrative	4,479	1,040	5,519
3. Clerical	2,833	399	3,232
4. Sales	20,171	17,549	37,720
5. Farmers and related workers	303,994	37,815	341,809
6. Miner and related workers	460	21	481
7. Transport workers	3,433	134	3,567
8. Craftsmen and related laborers	23,172	12,287	35,459
9. Service and sports	7,608	8,058	15,666
10. Others	2,523	1,298	3,821
	375,162 (82%)	81,851 (18%)	457,013 (100%)
<i>Non-Gainful Occupations</i>			
1. Volunteers	42	34	76
2. Housekeepers	12,721	282,684	295,405
3. Pensioners or retired	100,435	60,274	160,709
4. Others	112,282	170,315	282,595
	225,480 (31%)	513,307 (69%)	738,787 (100%)

SOURCE: Computed from Tables 11 and 12 1975 Integrated Census of the Population and its Economic Activities, Vol. II, pp. 111-127.

6. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Of the total aged population, around 8 per cent receives pensions, from the SSS if they were employed in the private sector or the GSIS²⁰ if they were government employees at the

²⁰ SSS — Social Security System.

GSIS — Government Service Insurance System.

time of retirement. The rest of the aged population (92%) do not receive pensions for various reasons. Some of them are still engaged in gainful occupations; some were self-employed,²¹ some have not paid dues as members during their employment. Still others are not aware of the benefits or are constrained by distance or know-how of procedures.

As of December 31, 1978, the Social Security System has 55 thousand pensioners, each receiving \$24 a month or \$293 a year.²² As of the same period, the GSIS reported giving retirement benefits to 41 thousand government retirees, with an average of \$41 a month or \$491 a year.²³ Considering that the average annual income of a Filipino family in 1975 was around \$597²⁴ (for 6 persons), the GSIS and SSS pensions are a significant addition to the family income. Food expenses eat up 57 per cent of the total family income.

7. INSTITUTIONALIZED CENTERS FOR THE AGED

Social services for the aging population are not organized or extensive because families have provided for their needs if they are unproductive. It is also worth repeating that in this country there are more pressing social problems which demand priority attention from the government.

Perhaps for the next decade or two, the Filipino family structure of kinship will continue this custodial function for the aged. Depending on how fast urbanization transforms the now predominantly traditional culture, institutionalization of the aged will be in demand, first claiming the urban old folks, then those in new urban centers.

As a rule, only misplaced adults reside in existing residences for the aged in the Philippines. They are usually migrants into the cities and have roots in remote places. Some are very poor and have no known relations. Some have been abandoned by relatives. Due to this reputation, homes for the aged represent a nightmare for people. It is thought of as a place where old

²¹ Beginning this year, 1980, self-employed persons are qualified to be SSS members.

²² *Actuarial Valuation of Proposed SSS Benefits*, Actuarial Staff, Quezon City: SSS July 1979.

²³ Unpublished data obtained from the Retirement Benefits Department, GSIS, Manila, 1980.

²⁴ *From Table 1, Special Release No. 191*, Manila: National Census and Statistics Office, 1977, p. 1.

people are left to await death. Notions about "homes" are based on the few existing ones which cater to a more or less homogeneous group of people.

Residential homes for the elderly in the Philippines are not only few but have very limited functions. They are not permanent residential nor nursing-care homes but rather rehabilitative in nature. The residents are oftentimes transient. They are aided in regaining self-sufficiency aging and are given back to families who would accept them.

Government programs cater exclusively to the very poor (lowest 30%) of the population. Aside from them, private entities have opened centers outside Metro Manila (capital).

The MSSD²⁵ reports only one government institution for the aged (Golden Acres). It is the largest in the country, and as of March 1980 this home had a capacity of 170 which is always filled to maximum. Its high turnover rate is not mainly due to deaths but also to those who are later found to have relatives and are turned over to them. As a rule, the MSSD helps people found in the lowest 30 per cent of the economic scale.

Aside from the Golden Acres, there is an estimated 15 other smaller institutions run by religious and/or private associations. Significant among these is one run by the Ladies of Charity, a women's charitable organization, also located in Metro Manila.

All put together, there could be between 600-800 elderly people housed in institutions, including some of them in public hospitals or orphanages. This number is minimal considering that there are over a million of them.

8. GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR THE ELDERLY

The "Social Security Law" provides, among other things, for the retirement benefits earlier discussed above. Presidential Decree No. 347, in an amendment to Rep. Act No. 1161 (Social Security Law) further provides a funeral grant of ₱750 (\$100) upon the death of a retiree.

Apart from the above, even the care of the elderly poor is not yet adequately met.

²⁵ *Annual Report 1978, MSSD, 1979, p. 30.*

Reduction cards, as those existing for senior citizens in wealthier countries, have not gained popularity because of costs. Very recently, the government has initiated a program providing discounts for people 65 and over to public recreation places such as parks, movie houses, museums and other exhibits.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It has already been said that the situation of the aged in the Philippines depends on their economic status. For a few, this status rests on family fortunes or accumulated savings during the period before retirement. For others, this status rests on the amount of benefits and pensions they receive on retirement. For many, there are no family fortunes or retirement benefits to rely on but children and relatives.

This is not to say that an economically poor condition is necessarily a miserable one, especially when one considers the condition of the general population. Maybe it is better so, that they share in the lifestyle of families, where they are not isolated but continue to interact with others. If this arrangement persists in the future, the government will not have to organize a massive program on a national scale for the next generation of the aged.

Ironically, as the general condition of poverty improves the problem of aging worsens. What people "shared in poverty" they could not "share in wealth". It has been the experience of Western countries and the Philippines shows no signs of being an exception. In a certain sense, economic progress breeds these old-age problems.

Up to when the elderly will remain an integral part of the Filipino family is related to how fast the benefits of progress is spread to the population. By the time urbanization has a wider reach, the aged would have had a better share of wealth also. By such time, institutionalized care and dwellings for the aged would have come of age. The urban centers will lead the rest. Even now, the "homes" are located in the urban centers.

That period of economic self-sufficiency is near or far-off depending on one's expectations. It is nevertheless realistic to presume that a general principle regarding government policy for the aged is immediately useful.

THE AGING: OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

(Welcome Address of His Eminence JAIME CARDINAL SIN, D.D., on the occasion of the Asian Regional Conference on Active Aging held at the Conference Hall of Pius XII Catholic Center on January 24, 1982)

With all candor I welcome you all, participants to the Asian Regional Conference on Active Aging, to Manila.

I am glad to tell you that the Archdiocese of Manila is co-sponsoring this Conference — the first to be organized by a non-governmental entity.

Why do we do this?

It is because we do subscribe to the United Nations' proclamation of 1982 as the Year of the World Assembly on Aging. Furthermore, it is because we do celebrate the Decade of the Family.

We esteem our aging who number about 2.5 million and comprise about 4.8 per cent of our total population. These figures, however, may be misleading. Personally, I believe that the actual number of the aging must be bigger. I say this because women do not usually tell their real ages. So, too, there are people who make themselves look younger by cosmetics, plastic surgery and other rejuvenative devices.

Tradition has inculcated in us the love, care and respect for our aging family members. We kiss the back of the hands of our grandparents — even while they are cleaning fish. We see in their silver hair, wrinkled faces and stooped shoulders the challenges, joys and sufferings they have borne. We see in them the dignity and wisdom fermented through youth and ripened through experience. We know that we will also be like them — following Seneca's dictum "nascendo morimur." So, too, with Raymond Aron, the French sociologist-philosopher, we know that "a hedonistic civilization so shortsighted as to devote itself to the material satisfactions of the day condemns itself to death when it is no longer interested in the future, and loses thereby its sustaining sense of history."

What is true with the Philippine traditions of filial piety, of reverence to the aging, of other family values is also usually true with other Asian countries.

Nowadays, however, our Asian family values are threatened by the gaping, stark realities of poverty, urbanization and the growing number of old people.

I have heard a story about a grandson who took his grandmother to a physician. The doctor prescribed for her ten injections of Vitamin E. The fellow asked the medic how much it would cost. When the doctor told him it would cost him sixty eight pesos, the man bawled out: "I cannot afford it. It is cheaper to have another grandmother."

Really, poverty is surreptitiously creeping in Asia as a disease. And I am not merely talking about material poverty. I am talking about spiritual poverty.

You are also aware of how people flock to the cities and megapolises — in their quest for the dizzying amenities of urban life. But, isn't it that in the process they get to be impersonal and depersonalized? Isn't it that in the process they are, as T.S. Elliott put it, "reduced to a number of holes in an IBM card?"

Nowadays we are told of the exploding population — not only of babies but also of the aging. Suddenly, some quarters are feeling uncomfortable with both. They tell us to abort the former and to subject the latter to euthanasia.

How inhuman these quarters can be!

We, Asians, may seek urbanization — in our quest for a better quality of life. But better quality of life does not mean that we lose the opportunity for our personal fulfillment. Better quality of life does not entail that we lose the opportunity to communicate with one another. Better quality of life does not connote any hindrance to our relations with God.

The aging that we have may be growing in number. But, they are not to be marginalized. There are still good Samaritans willing to share with them what they have, what they are, what they can do. There are still Christians who do not

deify themselves, who do not arrogate to themselves the power that is not theirs.

We, Asians, may be a poor people. We may be materially poor — as compared to the more affluent in Europe and North America. But, poor as we are, we yet have something very precious — we have faith. We do veil our rags with the gems of faith.

Today our faith tells us that we have to respect life in all its stages. As Pope John Paul II said in Cebu City during his unforgettable visit to our country: "From the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages, all human life is sacred for it is created in the image and likeness of God."

Today our faith tells us that the life of the aging "shows the continuity of generations and marvellously demonstrates the interdependence of God's people."

Today our faith tells us that we bear one another's burdens, that we rescue the future from the angry condemnation of the present, that we see eternity through time, that we love God in men.

God bless you.

Remember that I love you all very dearly.

HOMILETICS

BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1982

by

Fr. Herman Mueller, S.V.D.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (August 1, 1982)

God rained down bread from heaven for the Jews: the manna (first reading). This was only a figure for Christ, come down from heaven who is the real bread, appeasing our hunger (gospel). — In the independent theme of the second reading we are told by the apostle: "Having put off the old man in baptism we must now live a new life, putting aside the former way of life."

FIRST READING: EXODUS 16:2-4.12-15

The Book of Exodus tells us in the first part (Ex. 1:1-15:21) the happening of the liberation of the Jews from Egypt and describes in the second part (Ex. 15:22-18:27) the stay of Israel in the desert. The Israelites did not appreciate the newly won freedom from the slavery of Egypt very long, after having crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 14:17-15:21). Marching through the desert they soon missed good drinking water (Ex. 15:22-27) and solid food as they had in Egypt.

Thus, they complain against Moses and Aaron wishing to have died rather than to have to march through the desert. God in his usual mercy and generosity overhears the unjustified complaint and sends quails in the evening and manna in the morning.

Quails could be the migrant birds coming across the Mediterranean Sea which are quite exhausted from the long trip, especially after crossing the Sinai peninsula and drop almost

like dead. Manna could be the sweet resinous substance which is exuded from a desert tree as well as by two or three desert shrubs. The tree exudes the substance when it is punctured by the insect *Gossyparia mannipara*.

But above text which occurs again in Num. 11 does not want to say it was a natural phenomenon or a natural help anybody else could have received. An Israelite would not ask the question which we often ask: "Was it a real miracle, surpassing all laws of nature, or was it just a natural happening which however happened just at the time when the Jews needed it so that it is a miracle according to the circumstances in which it happened?" For an Israelite everything God does in our favor to show his closeness to us and his goodness is a sign and thus a "miracle". Thus, the above narrative asserts a special intervention through quails and manna, whatever the natural form was, by which God fed his people. And so this "bread from heaven" is gratefully mentioned in the psalms (Ps. 78:24; 105:40) and in other Old Testament books (Deut. 8:3; Wisd. 16:20.26; Neh. 9:20). In Christian tradition, as early as Jn. 6:26-58, it has become a figure of the Eucharist, the spiritual food of the Church which is the new Israel, on her early journey to the Promised Land.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 4:17.20-24

This pericope is the continuation of the moral part (Eph. 4-6) of the Letter to the Ephesians which started last Sunday: We must put into practice what we are.

In opposition to the pagans who commit all kind of sins (omitted in today's reading vv. 18-19) we must continue morally what we have started sacramentally in baptism. Here we have to keep in mind that baptism in early times was administered by immersion. The person to be baptized would take off his clothes, go into the baptismal font (pool) and after baptism by immersion put on new wonderful white clothes: a symbol of what went on in the soul of the baptised person: All sins were removed and the divine life (sanctifying grace) was poured into the heart of the baptised.

But the apostle goes on telling these baptised Christians: It is true, we are a new creation since baptism. But baptism alone is not enough. Too easily part of that old man remains

in us in our behavior. And so we must try day by day to become that new man in our moral life, putting aside our sinful ways of old.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: JOHN 6:24-35

The discourse of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum on the bread of life (Jn. 6:22-71) is complex, but shows literary unity the way it stands now. John, inspired by Wisdom Literature (we will see Prov. 9:1-6 as first reading on the twentieth Sunday) depicts Christ as the Divine Wisdom who was sent by God to teach people directly. Wisdom invites men to a banquet to eat of her bread and drink of her wine (Prov. 9:5f). Christ is the real bread (and the real drink), not the manna which was only a figure, nor the water from the rock (Ex. 17:1-7 = 1 Cor. 10:4), which was only a sign.

Jesus is the bread of life for three reasons and in three ways: 1. He is the bread of life because of his *revelation-event*, his Incarnation and all *teaching* that followed, and thus also by being present today in Sacred Scripture. We eat this bread of life by having faith in Christ (Jn. 6:22-51c. 60-72). This is the so-called *sapiential theme* of the discourse in Capernaum. 2. Jesus is the bread of life because of his *salvation-event*, his death on the cross, his resurrection and ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit, which all together marks Christ's being lifted up, his glorification (Jn. 6:51c. 63). This is the climax of Christ's revelation, the climax of the sapiential theme and at the same time the presupposition for the eucharistic theme. 3. Christ is the bread of life by being the *Eucharistic food* which is the representation and application of the salvation event (Jn. 6: 51c-59). This is the *Eucharistic theme*. Faith not supplanted by the sacramental participation. Rather, sacramental participation presupposes faith and is an activity of faith.

Today's pericope brings the introduction and the beginning of the sapiential theme: Jesus is the bread of life because of his revelation, because of his word. Only by faith in him can we "eat from this bread." After the multiplication of the loaves Jesus had sent the apostles to go to the other side of the Lake by boat. He himself prayed all night (for the success of his eucharistic sermon the next day), walked on the water (Jn. 6:16-21) toward the apostles to impress on them that he

could not only perform the two miracles of multiplying the loaves and walking on the water but also of changing bread and wine into his body and blood.

People who notice next morning that the disciples and Jesus are gone (it is not clear if the multiplication took place on the east side of the Lake of Gennesareth or near Tiberias, as it could look in John) they go to Capernaum and find Jesus there. Since they saw the disciples leaving by boat but not Jesus, they ask: "Rabbi, when did you come here (Jn. 6:25)?" Jesus could have answered: "By walking on the water. And thus, you can believe in me." But he accuses them right away for not having understood the multiplication of the loaves as a sign for a higher truth. (The report is a little uneven in the sense that there are some people in Capernaum who have seen the multiplication of the loaves and some who apparently have not, since they still ask for a sign.)

In any case, if they have witnessed the multiplication or not, what Jesus did was in the eyes of the Jews not a great enough sign to believe in him (as Messiah). As Rabbinic books show, one expected such a similar miracle as the manna of Moses from the coming Messiah. So we find it in 2 Baruch 29:8 ("The treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years."); the Midrash Rabbah on Eccles 1:9 ("As the first redeemer caused manna to descend, as it is stated, 'Because I shall cause to rain bread from heaven for you (Ex. 16:4),' so will the latter redeemer cause manna to descend."). Jesus in the opinion of the Jews, fed them with earthly bread, Moses with bread that came at least from the sky and thus in a way was bread from heaven (cf. Ps. 78: 24). Furthermore, Moses had fed many more people than Jesus. The Messiah is the second Moses. Therefore, if Jesus makes himself out to be the Messiah, he has to perform a greater miracle than Moses, giving such a bread from heaven as the manna.

Jesus objects that not Moses gave bread from heaven but the Father. When the Jews ask to get that bread, Jesus explains that he is this bread, come down from heaven. Everybody who accepts him in faith will neither hunger nor thirst.

HOMILY

CHRIST AS BREAD OF LIFE IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

1. Jesus fed the five thousand people in the desert by blessing and then breaking the bread so that everybody was filled and there remained even twelve baskets full of fragments as we saw last Sunday. But as always, Jesus never performed a miracle just for the natural benefit of people. All his miracles, especially in the fourth gospel, are meant to be signs for a higher truth. Here he sums up that truth saying: "I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst (Jn. 6:35)." This is a typical Hebrew synonymous parallelism: What is said in the first half of the verse is said with different synonyms in the second half. Thus: whoever goes to Christ, that is who believes in him, will never be hungry and never be thirsty, because he is the (real) bread of life.

2. Partly the Jews have been impressed by Christ's multiplication of the loaves because he solved their dilemma wonderfully and thus some want to make him king. But they have not understood that he did not just want to appease their bodily hunger. He rather wants to appease their spiritual hunger and quench their spiritual thirst. Any material bread cannot permanently satisfy one's hunger, even the manna Moses gave and also the wonderful bread Christ gave in the desert. To the Samaritan woman, coming to the Jacob's well to draw water Jesus said: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty; no, the water I give shall become a fountain within him, leaping up to provide eternal life (Jn. 4:13-14)." So he could have said to the Jews in a paraphrase: Whoever eats natural bread, including the manna Moses gave or the bread I gave you on the other side of the Lake Gennesareth, will be hungry again. But whoever eats the bread I give him will never be hungry again. And this line of thought he concludes with above words: "I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst."

3. The Samaritan woman asks Jesus to give her always this wonderful water so that she does not have to come any more to the spring to draw water (Jn. 4:15). So here the Jews understand only that the bread Christ gives comes from heaven and so they ask: "Sir, give us this bread always (Jn.

6:34)!" Both, the woman and the Jews remain on the mere natural level and do not understand that Jesus is this living water, this life-giving bread.

4. When Jesus blames them for remaining too much on this natural level and to work rather for food that remains unto life eternal, they right away think that they can do something to acquire it: "What must we do to perform the works of God (Jn. 6:28)?" They probably think of works of the law so that God would owe them this bread giving eternal life.

5. But God gives this bread giving eternal life in the person of Christ. As the manna he has come down from heaven. And we eat of this bread by having faith in Christ. We must do nothing, but rather let God do his work, by lifting us up to him in faith. The Jews refuse to believe in the Lord. Jesus is the bread of life in his work and in Holy Eucharist.

6. Today we just want to meditate a little on Christ as bread of life in his word, in Sacred Scripture. We do not hear him any more personally face to face, as the Jews did. But he is not less real to us in Scripture than he was to the Jews when he was walking on earth. And when we read the Scripture, hear Scripture read to us or meditate on it; we do not only hear something about Christ, but hear Christ himself.

a. He is the bread of life for us in Scripture. We have to accept him in faith as the Jews were asked to. If we accept him in faith, we have eternal life already now: "The man who hears my word and has faith in him who sent me possesses eternal life. He does not come condemnation, but has passed from death to life," Christ says (Jn. 5:24).

b. Jesus even promises his hearers who accept him in his word not only divine life now, but also eternal life at the end of time, after the rising of our dead bodies at the parousia: "An hour is coming in which all those in their tombs shall hear his voice and come forth. Those who have done right shall rise to live; the evildoers shall rise to be damned (Jn. 5:28-29)." To accept Christ in his gospel is one great guarantee that we will be saved at the end of time, that we will die a happy death.

c. Christ is real food in his word, food for our eternal life, for our divine life which we live since baptism. The analogy food applies also for Scripture: We have to eat *often*. Nobody would eat just once a week, or once a day, or even less just

once a month. It is good to read Scripture once in a while for a long stretch, to get familiarised with the main ideas of a book. But the real spiritual growing comes from our *daily* reading of Scripture.

d. We have to eat in *small portions*, otherwise we would get an upset stomach. We have to read Scripture in small portions. Scripture is like ice cream or like candies which nobody would eat by boxes or big portions.

e. Connected with this reading in small portions will then be the attitude of *openness*. After a short pericope we stop, close perhaps even the Bible and pause to listen to what the Lord tells us in this particular passage.

f. We must not be like the Jews, thinking we know already everything. That attitude can be a real danger for us, especially if we have read Scripture quite often. But since Scripture is inspired, its meaning is very deep and can never be exhausted. Being open to what the Lord might tell us, we will always find some new insight into a given passage; if not today, if not tomorrow, then one day according to God's plan.

g. Our *goal* shall not to be become Scripture *experts*, but to come *close to the Lord* according to our talents and our insight, according to God's call.

h. That of course does not mean we shall not *study Scripture*. Rather we have to study according to our means and time. To just rely on the Holy Spirit and our emotional insights will not work, this attitude has caused many heresies. We will try to study some commentaries, explaining difficult passages to us and articles and books dealing with Biblical theology.

i. But there is no substitute for *reading Scripture itself*. And by and large, if we have to accuse ourselves for not being nourished enough by the bread of life in Scripture it's not so much because we have not read enough books about Scripture, but because we have not read enough the Bible itself.

j. There are different kinds of food: some which agrees with us very much, of which we could not get enough; and other food which makes us almost vomit. At times we are right following our likes and dislikes for food. A sick person for instance feels instinctively what he can eat in that sickness. But that is not always true; and by and large we should try to eat from all different kinds of food, to have the right balance. — Some books of Scripture or some parts of them we almost

like with the first reading; other books or parts are almost repulsive to us; we try to avoid them. But since God has inspired all books and all contain certain truths of our faith, we should read them all. We have often experienced that a certain kind of food which we did not like suddenly becomes likeable while eating. "The appetite comes while eating." That also holds true with Scripture. We just have to do some thorough chewing we just have to be a little more open to God's word and inspiration.

k. Scripture is a book of life which a lifetime cannot exhaust. And we will find out the truth of Christ's word: "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst (Jn. 6:35)."

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **(August 8, 1982)**

Christ is the bread come from heaven. He will become fully the bread of life by dying for us on the cross (gospel). This bread is our provisions for our life's journey just as Elijah in the strength of the miraculous bread went to Mt. Horeb (first reading). — The Apostle tells us: Walk in love just as Christ loved us!

FIRST READING: 1 KINGS 19:4-8

This first reading is clearly selected in view of the gospel. Elijah was the champion for true monotheism against fertility cult and thus worship of Baal. In this connection, the prophet had made a contest with the Baal priests, won the contest (Yahweh alone is the true God, Baal does not exist and thus did not hear the Baal priests and nothing happened to their sacrifice; whereas fire from heaven consumed Elijah's sacrifice — 1 Kgs. 18) and killed the Baal priests. But Elijah had to flee before the wrath of queen Jezebel. God did not desert his prophet but sent an angel to feed him with a wonderful food: a hearth cake and a jug of water (1 Kgs. 19:6). Strengthened by that food Elijah went for forty days to the mountain of God (Mt. Horeb) which according to tradition is identical with Mt. Sinai.

God was establishing the covenant on Mt. Sinai with Moses. Elijah as second Moses was trying to uphold that covenant.

The hearth cake of Elijah has become a type of the Holy Eucharist, which is our provisions for our journey of life, and at the end of our life our *viaticum*. Strengthened by it we reach our final destiny.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 4:30-5:2

The second reading continues with the moral part of the Letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 4-6) as we saw, starting with the seventeenth Sunday. Today the apostle tells us: (1) Do not sadden the Holy Spirit with whom you were sealed (in baptism). In the context one saddens the Holy Spirit by evil talk (4:29). (2) To be more specific, we shall put off (a) bitterness, (b) passion [rage], (c) [long-lived] anger, (d) harsh words [loud talking, shouting], (e) slander [cursing, insulting language], (f) malice of every kind. (3) Expressed positively, we shall be (a) kind, (b) tenderhearted, [compassionate], and (c) mutually forgiving just as God forgave us in Christ. Such a person thinks as much of his neighbor's affairs as of his own. (4) We shall be imitators of God as beloved children. A Father is always glad to see his features in his children. We are created after God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26) and in baptism we became his children. (5) All this one can sum up saying: We must walk in love as Christ loved us by giving himself up for us as an offering to God on the cross, which was a gift of pleasing fragrance to the Father. To sacrifices of animals or human products was often added incense or any other kind of fragrance. Christ's sacrifice is pleasing to God by its essence. And so must our sacrifices be.

This second reading lends itself to a homily on love and forgiveness: Christ offered himself up for us on the cross as a sacrifice to the Father for our forgiveness. Thus, we must be willing to forgive one another. We must not have resentments of long standing which do not want to be reconciled (bitterness). We must not be given to rage and anger, expressing itself in calling each other names, shouting, cursing and slander and in any case of malice. Rather, we must be kind and loving as Christ loved and loves us.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: JOHN 6:41-51

We saw last Sunday that in the discourse of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum on the bread of life (Jn. 6:22-71) Christ is the bread of life in three ways: (1) by his *revelation-*

event, that is by his Incarnation and all teaching that followed, his being present in Scripture today included (Jn. 6:22-51c. 60-72) (2) his *salvation event*, his death on the cross (and his resurrection (6:51c.63) and (3) by his being the *Eucharistic food* (6:51c-59). Thus, the gospel of today continues with the first part (as was the gospel of last Sunday taken from the first part) and finishes with the short second part: Christ is the bread of life in his word and his death on the cross.

Christ proclaims himself to the Jews as the bread of life (6:35) come down from heaven (6:33.38). They are scandalized how he can say that he came down from heaven. After all, they know his origin (so they think). He comes only from human parents: Joseph (the carpenter bricklayer) and Mary.

Jesus denies that they know his origin, since he is the natural son of God the Father, born of the virgin Mary. But there is no point arguing with them. They have no faith, and faith is a gift from God. In other words, they must be drawn by the Father, if they want to understand that Christ is the bread of life. "To be drawn" (in Greek: *helko*) could give the impression of predestination, but in reality it includes our own free will. Is. 54:13 had already foretold that in the endtime all would be taught by God directly and thus, be lead to faith. All will be taught. Thus, lack of faith comes only from our resistance to being taught by God, to being drawn by the Father to Christ.

Yet it is true on the other hand that one can come to the Father only through Christ and one see the Father only in Jesus. There is no direct vision on earth. The Son is the necessary mediator.

The Jews were so proud of their ancestors and of the manna in the Exodus. Yet it did not stop their fathers from dying; it did not keep them faithful to God. Jesus repeats what he said in vv. 32f.35: He, not the manna, is the true bread that gives life.

To be more exact, the bread which Christ is going to give is his flesh (body), (given) for the world (Jn. 6:51c). Christ is the life-giving bread by dying for us on the cross. And this act will be continued in Holy Eucharist. Here Christ will be the bread of life (this is the third section of the discourse, which we will find in the gospel of the twentieth Sunday of the year). The expression "my flesh for the world" in 6:15c reminds us

of 1 Cor. 11:24.: "This is my body for you", which Lk. 22:19 unfolds as: "This is my body given for you." Both texts are inspired by Is. 53:12: "(My servant) surrendered himself (literally "his soul") to death... And he shall take away the sins of many."

The Old Testament was read in the Jewish synagogue in a cycle of three years. The passages were called *sedarim*. Since it was around Easter when Jesus gave the discourse of the bread of life in Capernaum in *Year I* Genesis 1-8 was read, with Gen. 2 and 3 being read on the Sabbaths closest to the feast. *Year II* Exodus 11-16 was read, with Ex. 16 being read about four weeks after the feast. *Year III* Numbers 6-14 was read, with Num. 11 being read on the second Sabbath after the feast. These *sedarim* offer some interesting parallels to what Jesus said, as we will see.

HOMILY

CHRIST AS BREAD OF LIFE (IN HOLY EUCHARIST) THAT MAKES US KNOW, THAT DRAWS US AND IS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH CHRIST'S DEATH

The main idea of the gospel of last Sunday was "Christ as bread of life in his word and thus in Holy Scripture." The gospel of next Sunday makes us meditate on "Christ as bread of life in Holy Eucharist." Today's gospel brings some additional ideas on Christ as bread of life mainly in his word, but this is true also about his presence in Holy Eucharist: This bread of life makes us know, it draws us and it is made available for us through Christ's death.

1. *Christ is the bread of life that makes us know and live.*

a. Ever since the beginning of mankind people want to know. They want to know all secrets of life. The Yahwist in Genesis 2 puts this in the form of a picture story: "Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and he placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made various trees grow that were delightful to look at the good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and bad (Gen. 2:8-9)."

In a way it looks like two different trees: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. But in the present structure of the story in Genesis the tree of knowledge of good and bad is the most important tree and the only one talked about. The tree of life is only mentioned once more at the end of the story (Gen. 3:22). And if we combine this text with verses from Wisdom Books, e.g. Proverbs 3:18, then we can say: Wisdom, knowledge gives immortality. We read in Prov. 3:18: " (Wisdom) is a tree of life to those who grasp her." What the first man wanted and ever since every man wants is to decide for himself what is good and what is evil and act accordingly. He wants to be morally independent and thus, not want to acknowledge his status as a created being.

b. It is clear that God cannot allow this. He would give up being God, if we all could decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. Thus, he tells the first man: "You shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and bad. The moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die (Gen 2:17)."

Christ in Holy Eucharist is the bread of life that makes us live: "This is the bread that comes down from heaven for a man to eat and never die (Jn 6:50)." It is not that a man who goes to Holy Communion decides for himself what is right and wrong, but rather: going to Holy Communion regularly gives him the moral strength to make the right decision, to preserve his divine life, received in baptism, to have more power of resistance against temptations to sin.

c. Since the first man sinned, eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God banished him from the garden of Eden (Gen 3:23). And he could never return there, since God stationed the cherubim there and the fiery revolving sword (Gen 3:24).

It is completely different with the bread of life in the Holy Eucharist. Christ tells us: "I myself am the living bread come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he shall live forever (Jn 6:51)." Going to Mass and Communion give us the guarantee for eternal life. — Christ never drives us out. "No one who comes (to me) will I ever reject (Jn 6:37)." Christ does not condemn anybody but gives eternal life, in his word and in Holy Eucharist.

e. The Jews claimed to know Jesus. He was in their opinion just the son of Joseph, a simple fellow-citizen, a carpenter and a bricklayer. And his mother was an average woman of Nazareth. How could he be any different. They thought they knew, although they did not really know anything about Christ's divine origin, nor of the virgin-birth. They lacked openness and reverence.

Such "familiarity that breeds contempt" is also possible with our attitude to Jesus in Holy Eucharist, if we just see the external signs, but not more, if we stop wondering and lose the awe before this sacrament. But if we are open, we really get to know who Jesus is, although he is hidden behind the simple signs of bread and wine.

2. *Christ is the bread of life which draws us.*

a. Jesus blamed the Jews for lack of faith. And this is so because they are not drawn by the Father to Jesus.

This Greek verb for the draw, *helko* is used in the sense of drawing a material object: Peter had a sword, drew it (*heilkyssen*) and struck the slave of the high priest, severing his right ear (Jn 18:10)." After Easter the apostles are fishing once more on the Lake of Tiberias. On the suggestion of the risen Lord they cast their net into the sea and catch so many fish (one hundred fifty-three big ones) that they cannot haul the net in (*helkysai*). But finally, they succeeded in hauling it (*heilkyssen*) ashore with the help of the other apostles in the other boat (Jn 21:6.11). The material object has no choice, but it offers a certain resistance.

b. In the Old Testament this expression *helko*, to draw is used of a powerful impulse and describes the drawing of love which becomes irresistible: Thus, we read in Cant 1:4: "Draw me (*heilkyssan*)! We will follow you eagerly! Bring me, O king, to your chambers!" This is what the shepherd girl tells her future bridegroom, who is for her like a king, although he is just a simple shepherd as she is. She is drawn by the love for him and follows him eagerly.

In the apocryphal Books of 4 Maccabees 14:13 and 15:11 the love of the mother of the seven Maccabean brothers is described by the expression *helko* = to draw. Thus, the author tells

us: In spite of the yearning of a mother's heart, the drawing (*helkousa*) of her feeling for her children, the mother did not deny her faith. Her faith in God was even stronger than her mother's love for her children. And she even urged each son individually to remain faithful to Yahweh. Can anybody be drawn stronger to another person than a mother to her children?

Jer. 31:3 applies that same term *helko* = to draw even to God in one of the finest texts of the Old Testament to describe God's love for us: God says: "With age-old love, I have loved you. And I have drawn you (*heilkyssa*) in compassion."

c. With this background we understand the two texts in the gospel of John where the term *helko* = to draw is used in a theological sense. The one we find in Jn 11:32. Jesus tells the crowd: "Once I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw (*helkyso*) all men to myself." This text is remarkable in two ways: First, crucifixion is called a being lifted up which is not only meant in the natural sense but signifies also exaltation, and secondly, the crucified Christ will draw people irresistibly to himself. In spite of the scandal of the cross, people will fall in love with Christ.

The other text is our text in question (Jn 6:44). People must be drawn by the Father, if they shall believe in Christ. This could look like predestination. But this being drawn presupposes our free will, since God does not force anybody. On the other hand, nobody can say that he is excluded. We saw already that the result of our being drawn is our knowing, our faith in Christ and thus in God. And Is 54:13 tells us, which is quoted in Jn 6:45: "All your sons shall be taught by the Lord" at the endtime, which is now here. If someone is not taught, if somebody is not drawn it's his own fault. He just does not want to be drawn, he just does not want to be taught.

d. Christ draws us in Holy Eucharist to himself and to the Father, and the Father draws us to Jesus so that we can believe in him. Here he materializes his promise: "Once I am lifted up from earth, I will draw all men to myself."

3. Christ is the bread of life, made available to us through his death.

a. It is one of the great mysteries that Christ had to die for us in order to be with us till the end of time as the bread

of life in the Holy Eucharist. It was much that he promised to us to be with us as the Emmanuel till the end of time. He was promised as the "God with us (Mt 1:23)." And when he went away, ascending from Mt. Olives, he gave the assurance: Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world (Mt 28:20)." It's the last verse in the same gospel of Matthew. But it is more that he died for us in order to timelessly present to the Father this act of love for us in every Mass, with which he died for us, on the cross, to be our eucharistic sacrifice and at the same time to be our eucharistic meal. "Nobody has a greater love than the one who lays down his life for his friends (Jn 15:13)" he said before he went to die. And as he told his disciples not to be sad that he would go away and die, otherwise the Holy Spirit would not come to them, but by his death he would send him to them (Jn 16:7), so he could have said: "Be not sad that I go and die, otherwise I cannot be in your midst as Eucharistic bread till the end of time." The Holy Eucharist reminds us till the end how much Christ loved and loves us.

b. There is no banquet without any fried or roasted meat: fried chicken, roasted beef, or lechon. And that means an animal had to sacrifice its life. Christ had to die for us that he could be in our midst as sacrificial banquet.

c. If we want to be authentic and sincere, Christ's generosity with which he died for us, obliges us to be generous in making sacrifices too.

**TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

(August 15, 1982)

The belief that Our Blessed Lady was taken up into heaven body and soul is rather old, as the apocrypha testify: the apocryphal book "The Assumption of Mary" from the fourth century, the two Apocalypses of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Greek (ninth century) and Ethiopian (seventh century). The liturgical feast of the Assumption of Mary was first celebrated at Jerusalem in the middle of the fifth century, and in the seventh century it spread through the whole Latin world as an official feast.

On November 1, 1950 Pope Pius XII solemnly defined Mary's assumption body and soul into the glory of heaven after he had inquired in a letter of May 1, 1946 addressed to all the Catholic bishops of the world, asking them about their clergy and faithful desire to such a definition. The bishops almost unanimously answered in the positive, referring to the centuries old belief of the faithful and the longstanding liturgical worship (which the Holy Spirit could not permit if the Assumption of Mary would not be a fact).

Thus, Pius XII in his Apostolic Constitution *Manificētissimū* defined: "We proclaim and define it to be a dogma revealed by God that the Immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven."

This dogma "is founded in Sacred Scripture" as Pius XII says in that same Constitution. It is, of course, revealed only implicitly. The possibility of the Assumption is not excluded by 1 Cor 15:23. The normal thing is that the faithful will be resurrected at Christ's Parousia and Mary is and had to be redeemed as all men, even when she was taken up into heaven right away. Some saints of the Old Testament rose already for good as most theologians think at Christ's death (Mt 27:52-53): "Many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised."

Theologians deduce the dogma from Lk's 1:28: "You are full of grace" and Gen 3:16-19: Mary helped Jesus conquer the devil and sin by her complete obedience. Death, however is consequence of sin, at least the way death is now (Scripture does not deny that death is a natural phenomenon). Thus, Mary could not be under the dominion of death which would have been the case had she decayed. For some of the dogma of 1950 is formulated in such a way ("when the course of her earthly life was finished, (Mary) was taken up body and soul") that it could seem that Our Blessed Lady went to heaven without dying the way we die. — The angel says to Mary: "Hail full of grace!", not: "Hail Mary, full of grace." "Full of grace" takes the place of the name of Mary. A name for a Jew, however expresses the essence of a person. Thus, to be full of grace is the essence of Mary. To her essence also belongs her Assumption. Thus, her Assumption is implicitly contained in the greeting "full of grace." But only the Church could find this out.

God has done great things for Mary and exalted her (to heaven) (gospel). By his resurrection Christ has won for all who belong to him freedom from death, first for himself, (first reading) second for Mary in her Assumption. She is the great sign (first reading) and represents the people of God who after many tribulations have been taken up to the throne of God.

FIRST READING: REVELATION 11:19a; 12:1-6a. 19ab

The author of the apocalypse (probably a disciple of John the evangelist) wanted to console and encourage the Christians in times of persecution (especially of Domitian), telling them that they are in God's hands and that they will finally win.

These tribulations which occur again and again are described with fantastic pictures, as it is typical for apocalyptic literature, in seven seals (4:1-8:1), seven trumpets (8:2-11:19), seven sign (11:19-15:4), seven bowls (15:5-16:21) and seven sights (17:1-20:15).

Our first reading marks the first of the seven signs. It starts with an opening scene in heaven (11:19): God's temple in heaven opens and in the temple the ark of the covenant can be seen. This ark had been brought away shortly before the fall of Jerusalem (587) and hidden in a cave by the prophet Jeremiah together with the tent and the altar of incense and would remain hidden till the time of the Messiah according to 2 Maccabees 2:5-8. In the postexilic temple there was no ark. The ark was in the Holy of Holies, accessible only once a year to the highpriest. Now it is visible to all. Nobody hinders us to come to God. In a typical sense the ark also represents our Blessed Lady, carrying the Lord.

Three tableaux make up the first sign: (1) a woman and a child (12:1-6), (2) Michael and the dragon (22:7-12), (3) The dragon versus the woman (12:13-18). The woman is clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet and on her head there is a crown of twelve stars: she is all beautiful. Under pain she gives birth to a child. The dragon is ready to devour the child, but it is snatched up to God's throne. The woman flees to the desert, to a special place, prepared for her

by God. This causes a voice from heaven to intone: "Salvation and power have come and the reign of God and his Anointed One is here."

All agree that this child is the Messiah. The woman is (1) the old Israel from which the Messiah came (cf. Is 66:7), (2) the Church, the new Israel, the mother of the faithful. This explanation is supported by 12:17: The woman has other children, who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Christ, (3) The Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the opinion of many Medieval and some modern theologians.

We can combine all three explanations. Mary is the daughter of Zion and thus, the representative of the old Israel, which is the community in which the Messiah was born. She is at the same time the representative of the new Israel, of those who believe and are justified because of their faith and suffer for the testimony of Christ.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-26

In 1 Cor 15 Paul speaks about Christ's and our own resurrection. (1) By enumerating the different witnesses to whom one can turn he proves the reality of Christ's resurrection (15:1-11). (2) From Christ's resurrection follows our own resurrection (15:12-34). (a) because we are so intimately connected with him as members of a body are to its head (15:12-28) and because nobody would take upon himself such sacrifices as apostles do without Christ's resurrection (15:29-34). (3) Finally, Paul describes the risen body we are going to receive and speaks about the fate of those Christians who are alive at the Parousia (15:35-58).

Our second reading is taken from the first half of the second part of chapter 15: We will rise with necessity since Christ has risen. We are so intimately united with him as members to the head. In Adam all sinned and died, in Christ all come back to life. He is the first to rise. All the others will come in proper order. Mary is the second in her Assumption, although, of course, St. Paul does not think of her here, but Paul speaks of the resurrection of the faithful at the Parousia.

After the resurrection will come the end of the present world and order of things, which will be replaced by a "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1). And Christ will hand over to the Father the kingdom, i.e. the Church Militant, as a conqueror hands over to his sovereign the fruits of his victory he has won. Christ will reign equally with the Father when he (the Son) has vanquished all enemies of God, demons and evil men, who opposed and persecuted the Church, death being the last enemy.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: LUKE 1:39-56

The gospel is made up of two parts: (1) the visitation narrative (1:39-45) and (2) the Magnificat (1:45-55). The last verse (56) is the concluding verse.

(1) Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth

(a) to help an (old) mother expecting her (first) child;

(b) thus she can verify the sign given to her (Lk 1:36).

(c) Mary through her Son under her heart causes joy to Elizabeth and John the Baptist and sanctifies him.

(d) Praying on the way and helping her relative Mary is the model of contemplation and activity.

(2) The Magnificat according to some few manuscripts is the song of Elizabeth. That it was placed at the present place only later is suggested by v. 56 (Mary remained three months with her, i.e., Elizabeth; but Elizabeth is not mentioned in the previous verses). The final edition attributed it to Mary. She stands as representative of Israel and of any true believer in Christ: We can subdivide the canticle thus:

(a) God's mercy on Mary 1:46-50,

(b) God's powerful activity in the history of the world 1:51-53,

(c) God's fidelity to Israel 1:54-55.

HOMILY

THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR MARY

1. The Assumption of our Blessed Lady marks the climax of her life. If ever, then she could sing here: "The Almighty has done *great things* for me. He has *exalted* the lowly (Lk 2:49-52)."

1. Mary was well aware that she as small, unknown girl of the little village of Nazareth could never think and even less expect that she would be chosen to be the mother of Christ, the daughter of Zion. That she should be this is what the angel tells her with the solemn greeting: "Rejoice, (you) so highly favored; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women (Lk 1:28)." The result is: Mary is deeply troubled by the words of the angel (1:29). How can it be that she shall be the daughter of Jerusalem of whom Zephaniah 3:14-15; Joel 2:21 and Zechariah 9:9 speak, that she shall be the mother of the Messiah, the mother of God. And yet, this is what God has chosen her to be. Her greatness consists in being chosen to be the mother of God.

2. To be the mother of Christ means also that she shall be our mother. Standing under the cross Mary is helping her son to redeem mankind from sin. She helps him to change us from children of wrath (Eph 2:3) into children of God (cf. Rom 8). Under the cross we became her children, when Christ said to Mary: "Women behold your son (Jn 19:27)." In John, Christ entrusts us all to Mary's care. The Lord has done great things for Mary making her our mother.

3. To be the mother of God and our mother means for Mary that she frees us from sin, that she frees us from the dominion of the devil. She can do this, however, only if she for no moment of her life is under the dominion of the devil, which would be the case had she been conceived, as we all are, in the state of original sin. And thus, theologians conclude from Gen 3:15: "Enmity will I put between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He (the seed) will crush your head at the moment when you try to crush his heel" that Mary was free from all stain of sin, even original sin, otherwise there would have been no complete enmity between

her and the devil, but she would have been for some moments or time under the dominion of the devil and thus would have been her friend.

Similarly the greeting of the angel "Hail, *full* of grace", or "rejoice (you) so *highly* favored" must include also the privilege of her immaculate conception.

4. And finally, the fact that Mary conquered sin and evil with her divine son, that she overpowered the devil at the moment the devil thought he would crush Jesus on the cross must also include her assumption into heaven, body and soul, for death is the consequence of sin, and so is corruption, at least the way it is now.

5. Today on the Feast of the Assumption, Mary is that great sign in heaven: the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars (Rev. 11:18). She is all beauty and splendor. She has finished her earthly course perfectly.

6. Jesus by his death on the cross and his resurrection conquered sin and death. He rose first (1 Cor 15) and made Mary rise second, today on her great day. Mary has been redeemed as we are, since she is human as we are. To us the fruits of Christ's redemption are given in baptism and the final resurrection only at Christ's Parousia. Mary was redeemed before her conception and thus, she was conceived without original sin and she was taken up into heaven right after she finished her earthly life.

7. Yes, the Lord has done great things for Mary. He has exalted that little unknown girl of Nazareth and she is now with her divine Son forever as he had promised to all of us: "Father, all those you gave me I would like to have in my company where I am, to see this glory of mine (Jn 17:24)."

8. And her bodily glorification tells us that there exists a future life with God wherein body and soul have their share. Our hope for a future life is sure. And we know that our body will share in our eternal glorification. After all, it has been sanctified so many times in the reception of the sacraments. We must not despise our body.

II. God has done great things for Mary and has exalted her. He has made her mother of God, mother of us all. He made her a

being conceived without original sin and took her up into heaven, body and soul. The Lord has done all this, not Mary. All these great things and privileges could make some of us rather despair thinking that we will never be that great. And yet, *Mary's answer to God's call* is also in our reach, not her privileges. And called we are, each one in his or her way.

1. Mary *believed* what the Lord told her. Elizabeth singles out that virtue of Mary when she comes to visit Elizabeth: Blest is she who believed that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled (Lk 1:45)." Mary did not consent right away. She was not enthused immediately. Rather, she was deeply perturbed by the greeting of the angel and the implication that she should be the daughter of Zion, the mother of the Messiah. But she thought it over in her heart, she pondered it (*dielogizeto*). This is the typical reaction of Mary. When the shepherds come and tell the message of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of his choosing (Lk 2:14)" people are astonished (Lk 2:18). But Mary treasures all these things (*syneterei*) and reflects on them in her heart (*symballousa*). And again, when Jesus remains in the temple without telling his parents and they finally find him after three days and ask him: "Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow (Lk 2:48)?" Jesus answers: "Why did you search for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father's house (Lk 2:49)?" Luke candidly has to admit: "They did not grasp what he said to them (Lk 2:50)." But the evangelist adds: "His mother meanwhile kept all these things in her memory (*dieterai*) (Lk 2:51)."

Such a faith is also in our reach. Often enough we will not understand what exactly God wants us to do. The future is hazy. Then we can also think it over in our heart and then act on the insight we get.

2. Mary *thanked* the Lord. The *Magnificat* is one of the finest thanksgiving hymns we have. We do not have to examine who said exactly what. Nor do we have to determine how much was said by Mary as her own and how much is taken from parallel texts of the Old Testament. Hannah after the birth of her son Samuel said a similar song, thanking God for the long desired but almost too nice to be true birth of her first and only son Samuel: "My heart exults in the Lord, my horn is exalted in my God.... The bows of the mighty are

broken, while the tottering gird on strength . . . He humbles, he also exalts. He raises the needy from the dust; from the ash heap he lifts up the poor (1 Sam 2:1.4.7)." Mary was great personally because she thanked; she gave back to God what she received from him and did not act as if she had done it.

Whatever we have, we have received from God. And to him we should give it back with thanks. We have no reason to boast. Thankfulness is the finest gift we can make God, humanly speaking and at the same time the best guarantee to receive new favors. People who act as if they do not owe anybody anything will not accomplish much and become unbearable.

3. Mary *shared*. Hardly had she been told that she would be the mother of God and been told that her cousin Elizabeth was with child, Mary hurried up to share her happiness, the happiness of the good news which is basically the fact that God is with us. Christ was with her under her heart. And through this same Christ, Mary shared and caused joy to Elizabeth and her unborn son, John the Baptist, so that he leapt in the womb of his mother for joy (Lk 1:41.44).

Whatever joy the Lord gives us, small or big we must share also. It doubles our joy and it makes others happy in turn.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (August 22, 1982)

This is the last of the five Sundays (interrupted last Sunday by the Feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady) which take the gospel from John 6, speaking about Christ as the bread of life. The disciples (and probably even more the people) are scandalized that Christ claims to be the bread of life come down from heaven and that he states that nobody has life unless he eats Christ's flesh. But everybody has to take a stand and the apostles do so through Peter, saying: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (gospel)." In a similar way, once the Israelites at Shechem took their stand in favor of Yahweh and the covenant (first reading). — The independent theme of the second reading develops the ideal of Christian marriage: The wife shall be subject to the husband as the church is to Christ. But more, the husband shall love his wife as Christ loves his church.

FIRST READING: JOSHUA 24:1-2.15-17.18

If we abstract from Jos 24:29-33 which speaks about the burial of Joshua, Josef and Eleazar, Jos 24 narrates the last assembly of Israel under Joshua in Shechem. This renewal of the covenant is an old liturgical piece and it recalls the early historical beginning of Israel as a nation. Joshua reminds his fellow Jews how God was with their Fathers from the time of Abraham on. Terah, the father of Abraham even served other gods and so also Abraham in the beginning. We recall that the patriarchs worshipped El at the different Canaanite shrines of Bethel, Shechem, Beersheba and Mamre under the names of El Elyon, El Shaddai, El Olam which later became predicates of Yahweh. But clearly did the Jews accept God as Yahweh only under Moses, as the God who is close to save, experiencing him as the God who brought them out of the slavery of Egypt.

But most likely only some tribes went to Egypt and came out of it: the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Joseph and Benjamin. They made the covenant at Mt. Sinai. The other tribes only joined them when they entered the promise land. And thus, under Joshua above tribes renewed the covenant with Yahweh; the other tribes made it for the first time.

In any case, all took a clear stand in favor of Yahweh and the covenant with him. Joshua had accomplished his mission and could die.

SECOND READING : EPHESIANS 5:11-32

In the Letters to the Colossians (Col. 3:18-4:1) and the Ephesians (Eph 5:22-6:9) are some *Haustafeln* (household codes), directed to men and wives, children, masters and slaves, telling them of their duties. These codes are pre-Christian in substance, going back to the Stoics and from them they were taken over by Hellenistic Judaism. But the apostle put a Christian stamp on these household codes as we can clearly see in today's pericope talking about the relationship between husband and wife.

That the wife shall be subject to her husband is what one expects in the Orient at that time and to an extent even

today. But the apostle adds the Christian motives: "as to the Lord (5:22)." And then he unfolds the reason: Wives should submit to their husbands (5:24) as the church submits to Christ (5:24).

But obedience is not the most characteristic relationship and attitude of a woman to her husband. Love is what should prevail between husband and wife: "Husbands, love your wives (5:25)." They shall love their wives as they love their own body (5:28). And then again the deepest reason for this love is given: Husbands shall love their wives as Christ loved the church (5:29), making her holy and immaculate, without stain and wrinkle or anything of that sort (5:26-27). Yes, Christ makes us his members in the church (5:30). Church and Christ are really one. Thus, husband and wife shall be one. And here the apostle quotes Gen 2:24: "For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cling to his wife, and the two shall be made into one." This unity between husband and wife shall take the unity between Christ and his Church as model and source of strength. A husband should love his wife as Christ love his Church.

Greater things one could hardly say about Christian marriage. And so Gen 1:27 (God created mankind as man and wife; alone we are one-sided, only as husband and wife are we the complete man = person), Gen 2:18-24 (It is not good for man to be alone; thus God creates a wife for him; after God has created the wife, the man is completely happy and says: "This is flesh of my flesh"; and he leaves father and mother and clings to his wife for life) and Eph 5:22-33 belong to any talk on Christian marriage.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: JOHN 6:60-69

Here we have the conclusion of the discourse of Christ as bread of life. We saw that Christ is the bread of life (1) because of his revelation-event, his Incarnation and his teaching (Jn 6:22-51c. 60-72), (2) because of his salvation-event: his death on the cross and his resurrection (6:51c.63), and (3) because his being the Eucharistic food (6:51-59).

The gospel of today, as one sees returns to the sapiential theme and speaks mainly about Christ as bread of life by his

word. Many disciples are scandalized because Christ claims to be the bread of life come down from heaven. Christ can only refer to his death and resurrection. His resurrection will prove that he is divine and thus he can be the life-giving bread in his word.

But since the eucharistic part goes just ahead, it would seem that the disciples are also scandalized that Christ demands: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you (6:53)." Is that not cannibalism? To which Jesus answers: "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless (6:63)." It is not the raw flesh of Christ which we have in Holy Eucharist but his transfigured body, transfigured by his resurrection which happens in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes all limitations of his humanity away and makes him a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). And life-giving Spirit Christ is then also in his word.

One has to take a stand and either reject Christ or accept him. Peter does that step in the name of the other apostles: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (6:68)." But one apostle does not accept Christ: Judas Iscariot. He will betray him. And many disciples also go away.

HOMILY

CHRIST THE LIFE-GIVING BREAD BY DYING AND RISING IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

For several Sundays now we have heard that Christ is the life-giving bread, come down from heaven, the bread of life which is not something neutral but the bread of life without which there is no life, without which we cannot live. Christ is this bread of life in his word and in Holy Eucharist. What Christ says about his being the Eucharistic bread is valid also about his being the bread of life in his word: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day (Jn 6:53-54)." And yet the Jews and many disciples and at least

one apostle are scandalized about Christ's claim. How can he say that he is the bread come down from heaven, he the simple carpenter's son from Nazareth! How can he demand to eat his flesh and drink his blood? It is because they do not understand that Christ becomes the life-giving bread in both presences (word and Eucharist) by dying and rising in the power of the Holy Spirit, by being transformed by the Holy Spirit. And on this we want to meditate a little today.

1. We all are scared of making sacrifices, sacrifices God sends and sacrifices which we make on our own. The mere name mortification causes a shivering, especially if one rolls the *r* and the word *mors* = death is shining through. Who wants to die! And yet, the meaning of sacrifices is not annihilation but transformation into something better and higher, a transformation that can be done only through the Holy Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit helped Christ to offer himself up on the cross, although he also was scared to die so that he was praying in the garden of Gethsemani: "Abba (Father), take this cup away from me. But let it be as you would have it, not as I (Mk 14:36)." And he was even sweating blood (Lk 22:44). But the Holy Spirit helped him to accept the Father's will. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews formulates it thus: "Christ offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit (a variant says: Holy Spirit) (Hebr 9:14)."

3. Death was not the end, but only the initial stage of resurrection, which happened in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ "was made Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:4)." His resurrection took away all limitations of his humanity so that he was fully empowered with the power of the Holy Spirit, that he received a transfigured body which was no longer subject to human restrictions of space and time. In short, he became fully spiritual. And thus in turn "he became a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45)."

4. So there was no need for any Jew to be scandalized when Christ said: "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you." Jesus answered: "What, then if you were to see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless (Jn 6:62-63)." Nobody has to eat his raw

flesh. Rather, it will be his transfigured body, which has been raised by the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:4) which will be present in Holy Eucharist.

5. This however also means: Christ cannot become the life-giving bread unless he dies and rises for us. As he formulates it in the discourse in Capernaum: "The bread I will give is my flesh (given) for the life of the world (Jn 6:51)." Christ has to be offered on the cross and of course rise again that he can become the Eucharistic bread. And this happens in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Eucharistic Prayers II and III we pray that the Holy Spirit may come down on bread and wine so that they may become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. The cross is and remains a scandal. It is a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness for the Greeks. But for all those who belong to Christ it is God's power and God's wisdom (1 Cor 1:18-24). But that Christ crucified (and of course risen) is power and wisdom only the Holy Spirit can tell us (1 Cor 2:10). Had the evil forces known that Christ crucified is this power, they would have never crucified him (1 Cor 2:8). And thus we could add: Only the Holy could tell us that Christ had to die and rise in order to become the life-giving bread in his word and in Holy Eucharist.

7. The disciples had to take their stand and either accept Christ as bread of life or reject him. Most rejected him and went away. But Peter had the wonderful answer: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe that you are God's holy one (Jn 6:68)." It was a big word. And soon later Peter would say the opposite: "I do not know (Christ) (Lk 22:58)." And this shortly after his first Holy Communion. But he had not broken off completely. It was more weakness than malice. Soon he broke down and wept bitterly (Lk 22:62, Mk 14:72). He had not forgotten nor taken back his stand. Was it Christ's prayer (Lk 22:32: "I have prayed for you that your faith may never fail. You in turn must strengthen your brothers.") or was it the grace of the first Holy Communion after all that merited him the grace of repentance?

8. Judas Iscariot did not accept Jesus Christ. He did not take a clear stand in favor of the Lord. And thus he was

looking for an opportunity to betray the Lord, not out of weakness but out of malice. Did he receive Holy Communion and thus with a bad conscience, since at that time he had clearly made up his mind to hand over the Lord at the most opportune time? Or did he not receive Holy Communion, but leave already the Upper Room earlier, being the first who left Mass early? It would seem that the latter is true. He just could not see eye to eye with the Lord any longer since in his heart he had taken a clear stand against him long ago.

9. Only a Christ crucified and risen could become the life-giving bread. Judas was disappointed with Jesus, when the apostle saw that Jesus did not become that leading figure according to Jewish expectations. Peter did not want to hear anything about Christ's predictions of his suffering. Only a morbid mind could think about dying on the cross, so Peter thought. And so he wanted to dispel the idea from Christ's mind to be told by him: "Get out of my sight, you satan! You are not judging by God's standards but by man's (Mt 16:23)." Only later would he be willing to "stretch out (his) hands and be tied fast and carried off against his will by somebody else" (cf. Jn 21:18).

10. We have to take our stand and accept Christ who by dying and rising in the power of the Holy Spirit became the life-giving bread, especially Holy Eucharist. Holy Eucharist is a covenant meal where we pledge our allegiance to Christ slain and risen. And with this we express our willingness to do as he did. Suffering is not annihilation but wants to bring about transformation to a higher form of existence.

11. After many years in the slavery of Egypt and a long journey in the desert the Jews took their clear stand in favor of Yahweh that he should be their only God on Mt. Sinai. They experienced God as Yahweh as the God close to save. And they renewed this covenant, and some who had not gone to Egypt made the covenant for the first time under Joshua, as we hear it in the first reading: "Far it from us to forsake the Lord for the service of other gods. He brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, out of a state of slavery... Therefore we will serve the Lord, for he is our God (Joshua 24:16-18)."

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**(August 29, 1982)**

Today we are told to observe the spirit of the Law, not just the letter (first reading and gospel). The Pharisees at times even placed men's tradition in the place of God's commandment (gospel). But we must not add (human) things to God's law (first reading). By chance the second reading fits in: We must be doers of God's will, not just nice talkers.

FIRST READING : DEUTERONOMY 4:1-2,6-8

The 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 observance is not a matter of mere legalism, but of love. Thus, in the form of three discourses (Deut. 1:1-4:43; 4:44-28:69; 29:1-30:20) to which is added as fourth part (31:1-34:12) the report about the last days of Moses, Moses proposes the laws of God to his fellow Jews.

This theme occurs several times throughout the book. Thus also in today's first reading, which is taken from the first part. In the first part Moses had more or less explained the history of the Jew since they left Mt. Sinai Horeb and today's reading follows as prologue to the promulgation of the law to all Israel, which follows in the second part. Moses appeals to the insight of the people and wants to motivate them. He does not want to just give a command. "Listen" (*shema*)! is what he tells them. He is going to tell them the statutes and ordinances of God. They shall keep them faithfully and shall add nothing. Then they will live and take possession of the promised land.

The Law is their privilege before all other nations who are not so fortunate as to have such a law. And they will admire the Jews for being a wise people. No other nation has a god so close to it as the Jews have.

SECOND READING: JAMES 1:17-18,21b-22,27

Starting today for five Sundays the second reading is taken from the Letter of James. The author is usually identified with James, the "brother of the Lord" (Mt. 13:55 par), the "bishop" of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18,26; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal.

1:19; 2:9.12). He was put to death by the Jews about the year 62 A.D. (Josephus, *Hegesippus*). Some identify him with James Minor, son of Alphaeus (Mt. 10:3 par). But this was already doubted by early writers. Paul's wording in Gal. 1:19 is ambiguous. The familiarity of the author with the Old Testament, the authority he has speak in favor of James the relative of Christ, the leader of the early Jewish-Christian community. But his good Greek, the fact that he quotes from the Septuagint and not the Hebrew Text, the absence of specifically Christian doctrine make some believe that the author is a later Jewish-Christian writer with a good Hellenistic education, writing in the spirit of James. We have to leave the question of author open. Accordingly the date of the letter is before 62 A.D. (in case James, "the brother" of Jesus is the author) or at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century.

The letter is addressed to the "twelve tribes of the Dispersion" (1:1), i.e. the Jewish Christians scattered all over the Greco-Roman world. It is intended for Jewish converts and presumes that the readers are familiar with the Old Testament of which he makes many allusions, but no direct quotations. His two chief sources are the Old Testament Wisdom Books and the teaching of the gospels.

There is no clear outline. Rather, exhortations, instructions and warnings are loosely juxtaposed, dealing with moral and religious life: (1) tribulations and temptations (1:2-18), (2) hearing and doing (1:19-27), (3) against slighting the poor and favouring the rich (2:1-13), (4) faith and works (2:14-26), (5) the tongue (3:1-12), (6) false and true wisdom (3:13-18), (7) avarice and concupiscence (4:1-12), (8) against foolhardy plans of business people (4:13-17). (9) woe to the godless rich (5:1-6), (10) injunction to persevere patiently (5:7-12), (11) power of prayer for sick (5:13-18); this is the classical text on the sacramental anointing of the sick in the Council of Trent — Denzinger 614; (12) blessing of converting a brother (5:19-20).

The two main themes are (1) the praise of the poor and threatening of the rich, (2) Christians must do good and not be content with a faith that produces nothing.

Our second reading today is taken from this second topic. (1) Every good gift comes from God, who is the Father of light and is unchangeable. He has made us his children by his word, the gospel. We are the first fruit, to be followed by many others. (2) We shall receive this word of God with meekness

because it saves us. But we must do what it says. We must not be mere hearers, otherwise we deceive ourselves. (3) Real religion means (not just to worship God but) to do good to our neighbors, especially visit orphans and widows and do not mix with bad people of this world.

The second point only apparently contradicts Paul when he says we are justified by faith (only) in Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of works of the Mosaic laws which do not justify. But true faith produces works, otherwise it is no faith

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 7:1-8.14-15.21-23

After an interruption of five Sundays, where the gospel was taken from the sixth chapter of John, we return to the gospel of Mark. The pericope as it stands went through a long process of tradition. We learn something about the binding force of the law and what the Pharisees did with it. With the best of intention they wanted to observe God's law, being not satisfied with the ten commandments but added and interpreted each law for each occasion to be sure that God's will would be fulfilled.

Thus, even some prescriptions, meant for priests concerning levitical purity, when they served in the temple, were applied by the Pharisees for all people, although it does not mean that all actually observed them. When people came home from the marketplace or had other contact with pagans they were supposed to wash their hands (and as the many regulations in the Talmud show, it was quite complicated and detailed that it strikes us picayunish), or even take a bath, not to wash off material dust but because the contact had made them morally unclean according to belief.

Some apostles do not observe these regulations and thus the Pharisees want to know from Jesus what he has to say. He answers with a quotation from Is. 29:13: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me..." In other words, this external observance of ritual cleanness is not what God desires. He wants our heart, our love.

Then Jesus gives a fundamental answer: with the "parables" of food that enters the stomach and leaves it the natural way without defiling a person he abolishes the whole Jewish system of ritual purity, and especially the distinction among foods. Here he abolishes not only the practice of the oral law but also

an important aspect of the written law (cf. Lev. 11-16; Deut. 14). The notion of "clean" and "unclean" is not to be sought outside of man, but in his "heart", the source of moral action. Man is "pure" and consecrated to God not by a multitude of ritual ablutions but by faithfulness to the divine law. And this divine law the Pharisees are even willing to set aside in favor of human regulations which the example of Corban shows (7:9-13), omitted in today's gospel: Somebody can declare something that would be necessary to support one's parents "corban" = offering to God (temple) and thus be exempted from supporting his parents. For Jesus this does not go. He gives priority to the needs of men as we see in Mk. 3:4. Even the Sabbath is for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Man is defiled by sins that come out of his "heart", out of his person. Mark mentions twelve (Matthew only six). The first six stand in the plural, the last six in the singular. Classified, they offend against virtues toward our neighbor (1-9) and toward God (10-12):

Virtues tow.

our neighbor:	truth	humility	charity
Sins against	1. fornication	2. theft	3. murder
our neighbor:	4. adultery	5. greed	6. malice
	7. deceit	8. indecency	9. envy

Virtues tow:

God:	faith	hope	charity
Sins against			
God:	12. folly	11. pride	10. slander (blasphemy)

HOMILY

OBSERVE THE SPIRIT OF LAW, NOT JUST THE LETTER!

Whenever we speak about laws, rules and regulations there are two extremes. Some people do not want to have any law and regulation. They want to be free. And they hate institutions, mainly because of the regulations. The other extreme is: there are too many rules, rules which do not make sense any

more, laws which oppress a person and do not leave him any personal decision and freedom. As always, the truth lies in the middle.

1. 1. A comparison makes it clear that we need laws. If we want to enter the interior of a country we need a path or better even a way, and if we want to go fast and thus by car, we even need a good road and even better a highway. For the composer of psalm 119, the law of God is just this, a *derech*, a way that leads to God: "Happy are those who walk in his (God's) ways (Ps. 119:3) (*biderahajw*). We are reminded how much good highways have developed our country and are still doing it, how fast we can get to places and how houses are sprouting up everywhere along the new roads. Distances shrink, we can visit one another easily and keep in touch. God's law is such a way which shows us the way to Him. We know now what to do and what to avoid.

2. And had bridges been as common at that time as they are in our time, the psalmist would have certainly called the law of God a bridge that stretches from the shore of life to the shore of eternity, connecting heaven and earth so that we can safely reach our eternal destiny. How handicapped we are if a bridge over a river collapses. As it is, the name for bridge, *gesher* occurs only in modern, not in Biblical Hebrew.

3. The psalmist calls the law an instruction (*thorah*). If we want to play guitar, we need a manual, telling us something about the chords and the way to play, otherwise we loose a lot of time and it is a question of hit and miss. And how much faster do we learn a language with a good grammar and book of exercises. God's law wants to be all this for our dealing with God.

4. And the author of psalm 119 calls the law a testimony (*edoth*), something that has seen God himself and testifies to him, to his greatness, beauty and love; something which is not just taken from books, but from experience. And so in every law, something of God himself should shine through, if it shall make us enthusiastic about God and his ways. If it does not, it should be abolished.

These are just four of the many synonyms the author of psalm 119 uses to describe God's law. He must have been almost a mystic that he could have been so enthralled with God's law, composing an alphabetic acrostic with twenty-two stanzas (since there are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet).

Each stanza has eight lines and each line starts with that particular letter of the alphabet, the first stanza with aleph, the second with beth, etc. Each line speaks about the law and uses a different synonym. For the author the law was no burden. He could never forget it since it is a statue [literally something engraved so that nobody can forget it (*huqek*)]. It is a commandment (*miswah*), an order that leaves us no doubt what we shall do; all haziness is gone. It is a judgment (*mishpat*), making the right decisions which are often so hard to make easy. It is a word (*debar*) which is not just empty, but powerful, accomplishing what it says.

Something of this enthusiasm we have to have in order to see and accept God's law the right way and put it into practice.

II. And we must grant that the Scribes and the Pharisees had something of this enthusiasm when they started to unfold the ten commandments, applying them to the different occasions in life to be sure that in each given case and situation they would do God's will. They did not want to be just good, but perfect. And they also wanted the people to be holy priestly people and thus hasten the coming of the Messianic age.

1. And thus slowly they developed the traditions of the elders. The precepts for purification which we find in Leviticus 11-16 which originally were meant for the priests exercising ritualistic service at the sanctuary, were extended to the entire people and to everyday life so as to prepare for God a priestly and holy people. Slowly the detailed precepts of the "tradition of the elders", done orally in the beginning put in writing after the time of Christ in the Mishnah and Talmud, were placed at one level with the law of Moses and meant a heavy burden for the people.

2. Jesus singles out one case for many how slowly the tradition of the elders took the place of God's commandments and put them aside: It happened that a Jew made a gift to the temple through the "Corban" vow, saying: "this is to be a holy offering" (Corban), and so he withdrew the things involved from the profane use and thus also from the use of the parents. What according to God's law was supposed to be for the support of the parents, a Jew by a Corban vow placed at the disposal of God in the temple. Often enough, however, the gift came to the temple only after the death of a person making the Corban vow. And thus smartly he could use what was meant for the support of the parents for himself.

3. For Jesus the spirit of the law is what matters, not the letter. And there are priorities. God is more than man. A vow made to him is something sacred, and one should not break it and think it over carefully before one makes a vow. And yet, the fourth commandment is one of the ten commandments; a vow does not belong into the same category. We have to love and support our parents. For Jesus such a Corban vow places human tradition in the place of God's commandment which must not be.

Love always binds and there is no single exercise of piety that could take its place or replace it. On the other side, the Lord said: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Mt. 10:37)." And he also stated: "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead," when he called a disciple who answered: "Lord, let me go and bury my father first (Mt. 8:22.21)." These are apparently hard words, but they show that nobody must take God's place, not even the parents. But in the case of a Corban vow, a person would use a vow only as an excuse for not loving his parents.

4. Love is always binding and permits no excuse, not even on a Sunday. The Sunday is for man, not the man for the Sunday. Once on a Sabbath, a man with a withered hand was standing in front of Jesus in a synagogue. According to the tradition of the Elders, healing on a Sabbath was not allowed. But Jesus argued the other way around: One is always obliged to help where one can help. Not to help would be tantamount to killing in this case. Not to help curing life would be for him the same as destroying it (Mk. 3:4). And thus he healed the sick man, even on a Sabbath (Mk. 3:1-6).

5. The purification laws of the Jews were meant to keep them close to God, to avoid detrimmenting contact with pagans. It should give them a great reverence before God and sacred things of the liturgy. We can easily fall into the extreme of coming to Mass and Church sloppy as if we would go to a picnic. But to put rules and regulations above everything is the other extreme. Jesus abolished all purification laws of food. No single food is unclean. Sins make a man unclean. And they do not originate in food but in our heart, in our will.

We are always bound to avoid any sin, those which offend God and those which hurt our neighbor.

6. The Lord has spoken to us clearly as he spoke to the Jews through Moses, and revealed his will. If we do it, we

will live. We must not add our self-made rules and put aside God's law, nor must we substract any God-given law and explain it the way we would like to have it.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(September 5, 1982)

In the Messianic time, the deaf can hear and the mute can speak (first reading). Christ healed just such a deaf-mute, giving a sign for all of us (gospel). — St. James tells us that the poor shall inherit the kingdom. We must not show any partiality for the rich.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 35:4-7a

The first reading is taken from the so-called "Small Apocalypse" (Is 34-35), from the time before the campaign of Sennacherib (701 B.C.), and is thus not from Isaiah, but from an unknown author. In some way it resembles Deutero-Isaiah, but it is not from him either. This apocalypse gives an explicit assurance that Yahweh's final judgment will also fall upon Edom (Is 34:1-17), which was particularly hated, and will be followed by the return of the redeemed to Zion (Is 35:1-10). To be true, the slaughter which Yahweh sets up for the Edomites, who in the Old Testament itself are really regarded as a brother nation of the Israelites (cf. Deut 23:8), is somewhat repulsive. A modern sociologist would categorize it among the poetry of the oppressed. Oppression often produces fine expressions of longing, but also of vengeful passion. Yet we have to keep in mind that the poet places his hope in God and not his people's sword.

The prophecy of return to Zion is most attractive. After God has punished ("he comes with vindication") the enemies; Jews especially from the diaspora, will return to Jerusalem. In this second Exodus there will be no lack of water (35:1,6-7). There is no reason for fear since God himself, goes along. In this time of salvation, actual healing of human ailments will take place: blind people will receive their sight again, deaf people will be able to hear and lame will be able to walk once

more. Of course, God always cures the whole man, not just the body. And thus, this is a description of the Messianic goods of salvation.

Christ fulfilled this prophecy as we see in Lk 7:22. Jesus gives an answer to the Baptist upon the latter's inquiry: "Are you the one to come?" by saying: "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the good news preached to them."

And obviously did Mark in today's gospel see in Christ's cure of the deaf-mute a fulfilment of Is 35:5-6. As a matter of fact, the expression *mogilalos* = dumb (literally: speaking with difficulty) is used only in the Septuagint of Is 35:6 and in the New Testament only in Mk 7:32.

SECOND READING: JAMES 2:1-5

We saw last Sunday that the Letter of James contains many different topics, loosely strung together, without a strictly logical arrangement. Many of these topics are outstanding and not treated so succinctly as in this letter. Today the author tells us to show no partiality, especially in our dealings with the poor and the rich.

We must not show any favoritism (2:1). When Samuel was sent to Jesse to look for a new king instead of the rejected king Saul, Jesse presented to Samuel his seven sons, starting with the oldest, one being taller than the other and more handsome. But Samuel had to tell Jesse. "Man sees (and judges according to the) appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart (1 Sam 16:7)." God had elected the young David who was not as tall yet as his brothers. "That same expression *prosopolempsia* to take, to judge somebody by his face and appearance is also used here in James 2:1. God is fair and just, judges according to what we are. "The Lord is just and with him there is no respect of persons (Sir 35:12)."

James draws a picture of two entering the church for liturgical services. The one is well dressed, his fingers are covered with gold rings. Clement of Alexandria recommended that a Christian should wear only one ring, with a religious

emblem that it might be used as a seal. The other man entering is poor, dressed in poor clothes and without jewels. The rich man is ushered to a special place, with all respect, while the poor man is bidden to stand, or to sit on the floor beside the footstool of the well-to-do. That must not be.

For James, the Church must be the one place where all distinctions are wiped out. There must be no distinction of rank and place and prestige, when people meet in the presence of God. In the presence of God all men are one: poor and rich.

The poor and common people must be even more loved by God because he has made so many of them, as Abraham Lincoln put it. Christ clearly stated: "He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor (Is 61:1; Lk 4:18)." "Blessed are the poor (Mt 5:3)."

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 7:31-37

Although some verses of this pericope are also to be found in Mt 15:29-31, the pericope as it stands is proper to Mark. The geographical indications (Jesus leaves Tyre, goes to Sidon (in the north), crosses the Decapolis and goes to the east side of the Lake of Gennesareth) may cause some difficulties but probably Mark wants to make the theological statement that Jesus remains in Galilee, the Galilee of the Gentiles (Is 8:23), where also Gentiles may reside and feel at home, since the Galileans by their contact with non-Jews have become more broad-minded.

And so one first intention of Mark here is to show that Jesus knew himself as sent directly only (or at least mainly) to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 15:24) and also sent his disciples only to their fellow Jews (Mt 10:45). But he also knew that salvation is for nations (Is 49:6; Mt 28:19). This he wanted to indicate by the exceptional trips he made into pagan territory. Such a one we find in today's pericope.

The second intention of the evangelist is to show that Jesus is the Savior who does everything well (7:37). With full compassion he heals a deaf-mute so that he can hear and speak plainly again (the expression *mogilalos* = speaking with

difficulty, would suggest that the man was not born dumb, especially also since he could speak right away after the healing).

Thirdly, the miracle is an ear-and-mouth-opener for the apostles, too. Several times it is mentioned in this section that they did not understand what Jesus said and did. Their minds were completely closed (Mk 6:52). And Jesus has to ask them: "Are you, too, incapable of understanding (7:18)?"

And with them we all have to ask our Lord to open our ears for the supernatural realities so that we can speak wonders of God.

HOMILY

HE MADE THE DEAF HEAR AND THE DUMB SPEAK

1. Helen Keller was a normal baby until she was nineteen months old, when she suddenly became ill with fever that left her almost as suddenly as it had come. Soon her mother noticed that, when she bathed the child, Helen's eyes did not close. The doctor said that Helen was blind. Next Mrs. Keller noticed that the child did not seem to hear the loud ringing of a bell. Helen was deaf, too. Because she could not hear at a time when normal children learn to imitate the language of others, she was also mute. Everyone said that she would always be deaf, mute and blind. But in 1886, when Helen was six years old, something happened that changed her life completely. A young teacher arrived at the Keller's home. Her name was Anne Sullivan. Helen rushed at Miss Sullivan when she came to the Keller's door. She put her hands on the teacher's face and dress, and she tried to open the teacher's bag. She started a wild fight when Mrs. Keller tried to take the bag out of her hands. Miss Sullivan gave her a doll, and Helen sat down on the steps to play with it. When Helen had played with the doll for several minutes, Miss Sullivan took the child's hand and spelled the letters d-o-l-l into Helen's palm. Helen was interested in these strength motions, and she tried to imitate the movements motions of her teacher's fingers. This was the first time that anyone had tried to teach Helen Keller. Two weeks after Miss Sullivan arrived,

she went behind the house to get some water. As she poured the water into the cup and over the child's right hand, she spelled w-a-t-e-r into the palm of Helen's other hand. The word, coming immediately after the feeling of cold water, seemed to startle Helen. She dropped the cup and stood amazed and motionless. A new light came into her face. At that moment in some way she understood the mystery of language. She touched everything she passed, trying eagerly to find its name. She touched the trees, the flowers, the house; she knew now that everything had a name. Miss Sullivan taught her to read words (doll, bed, cup, flower) using raised letters and placing each word beside its object. A month later Helen wrote the first letter to her cousin. In some few years she learned to read Braille. When she was ten years old, Helen read of a Norwegian girl who was also deaf, mute and blind and had learned to talk. At once Helen spelled into her teacher's hand: "I must speak!" Miss Sullivan took her to Miss Sarah Fuller, a famous teacher for the deaf. Miss Fuller began at once and showed Helen what to do. Helen moved her hand over Miss Fuller's lips. She put her fingers into Miss Fuller's mouth to learn the position of the tongue, lips and teeth. Then she made the sound that the teacher had made. Helen imitated all the sounds the teacher made. Miss Fuller pronounced some simple words, moving her finger across Helen's hand to show her the length of the syllables. And so she slowly learned to speak by feeling as she had learned writing by feeling, guided by two dedicated teachers. Helen Keller's victories over her handicaps soon made her famous. She attended College with Miss Sullivan beside her, spelling the professor's lectures into her hand. She was graduated from College in 1904, when she was twenty-four years old. She went on helping other handicapped people and gave them courage. (Taken from Reader's Digest Reading, Part One 1953, pp. 69-74)

2. There was a deaf-mute in the time of Christ, when the Lord went through the Decapolis, the pagan territory of ten cities, in Galilee. People brought him to Jesus and asked him to cure the sick.

a. Jesus has compassion with the deaf-mute. Christ sighs when he sees the sick. He takes him aside, in order not to embarrass him. The deaf-mute has been lonely for years since

he cannot communicate. Christ's communication begins with feeling, the sensation of the sick which is still intact. The deaf-mute feels that he is taken serious, that he is a person, not just a case. Jesus puts his finger into the man's ears, on his finger and touches the man's tongue. What could look like superstition, attributing miraculous healing power to spittle, in a reality a fine adaptation to people. The faith of the deaf-mute is stimulated. And so when the Lord says in Aramic: "Ephatha = be opened!" the sick man opens wide his heart in faith and thus he is healed spiritually and bodily. Christ always cures the whole person.

b. And he cures after he has looked up to heaven, to the Father, praying to him, requesting his strength and consent. Father and Son are always in perfect communication. And thus he can hand on and restore communication to the sick man.

c. For years the man could not hear and thus could not get in touch with God and people. He could not learn and could not hand on what to be learned, since he did not learn. Now things are different. Now he can speak about the wonders of the Lord, now he can explain to others what he himself experiences; now he can praise the Lord.

3. The miracle was representatively done for many other people. What is mankind without Christ! Jesus knew that the Father had sent him to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 15:24) and he first sent his disciples only to Israel (Mt 10:5). Mark shows a little of this mankind without the Lord:

a. The possessed man in Gerasa is a somber picture of a man away from Christ. He hides from people, roams around between bombs, being closer to dead bones than to living people. And the devil, a whole legion of them, has impeded his full freedom of action: he is cutting himself with stones (Mk 5:5) and runs naked (Mk 5:15). Christ gives him back his freedom, casting out the legion of demons, has him decently dressed and sends him away as an apostle to preach the marvelous deeds of the Lord (Mk 5:20).

b. Mankind without Christ cannot hear and cannot speak as the deaf-mute of today's gospel makes clear. Only if Christ opens our ears, can we hear what God tells us in his creation and can we talk about his marvelous deeds can we praise him.

And if we take the sickness as such: What would mankind be without Christianity! Only Christ took the sick seriously, took them as persons not as mere cases. Outside of Christianity most people do not care for the sick, consider them as outcast and useless. The best thing, so it seems to them, would be to get rid of them. Christianity tries to heal them body and soul and make them whole. Heinrich Boell, a modern poet, writes: "I believe that a world without Christ would even make the Atheists Adventists."

c. Mark equally strongly shows the longing mankind without Christ has for the Lord. The finest example is the Canaanite woman (Mk 7:24-30). She asks Jesus to expel an unclean spirit from her daughter. But the Lord just ignores her, and gives the reason only later: The Father has sent him only to the lost sheep of Israel (8:27, clearer in Mt 15:24). But she is not discouraged and keeps on asking till Christ is disarmed and gives her what she wants, because her faith is so great (Mt 15:28; Mk 7:29).

4. The healing of the deaf-mute is also our story. There is hardly any organ in our dealing with God stressed so much as our ear. We shall hear, not so much see (that comes only in the beatific vision) or speak. God has given us two ears, but only one mouth.

a. Since God is creator and giver of all things, any dialogue between him and us can start only with hearing on our side. And first we have to listen as if we had nothing else to do but to listen. Only then we are good listeners.

b. True listening will result in praising the Lord, in prayer. If we do not manage a good prayer, it's probably because we do not listen enough. But the praising and acknowledgment of the wonders of the Lord, of all the good things he does for us, there has to be.

c. And what is true for our relations with God is also true for our relations with people. First we must listen, although most of us are inclined to speak right away. Only revered listening to others results in fine communication and dialogue.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(September 12, 1982)

To be Christ (Messiah) means not to be a political hero but to die on the cross (and rise). To be a Christian means to take up one's cross and follow Christ (gospel). Like the Servant of Yahweh, Christ gives his body to those who strike him (first reading). — In the classical passage James tells us: Faith which does not result in good works (charity) is dead.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 50:4-9

The first four verses of the first reading we saw already on Palm Sunday. Added are vv. 8-9: "He is near who upholds my right... who will prove me wrong?" In this third Servant of Yahweh Song (Is 50:4-9(11) Israel is weary because of the prophet's constant proclamation of the word (prediction of deliverance in spite of continuation of exile?). They reject his message and maltreat him. But the prophet is undeterred. God has given him the message to deliver at the cost of personal suffering.

He is confident that God will prove him right and thus he willingly submits to insults (like plucking the beard) and beatings. He does not protect his face against buffets and spitting.

Similarly Christ is convinced that God vindicates him, raising him up on the third day, when he has to suffer because of his proclamation of the kingdom which people do not want to hear either.

SECOND READING: JAMES 2:14-18

This passage has been often (wrongly) quoted (so especially by Luther) as contradicting Paul who says that a man is justified by faith without works. The context in Rom. 8:28 shows that Paul contrasts faith in Christ with works demanded by the Law of Moses which cannot justify a man: "We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from observance of the law." Or as the apostle puts it in Gal. 2:16: "A man is justified by faith in Christ not by observance of the law." We can

say: Paul speaks about a Christian at the beginning of his Christian life coming from Judaism. To him he makes clear: We are saved by faith in Christ, not by the Mosaic law.

James speaks to Christians who have been Christians for some time and are inclined to take it easy. He reminds them that true faith will result in good works, if it be real faith. This is the same that Christ said: "Any sound tree bears good fruits. . . . You can tell a tree by its fruit (Mt. 7:17,20)." Paul could not speak differently: "God will repay every man for what he has done (Rom. 2:6)." Everyone of us has to give an account of himself before God (Rom. 14:12)."

Salvation is (for Paul and James) God's gift which we receive in faith. We cannot merit it in the strict sense. But we must have a living faith that produces good works; otherwise it's dead. James mentions especially the works of charity. If we can help (and who could not share one thing or the other) fine words are not enough. They must be followed by actions.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 8:27-35

With today's pericope we reach the turning point in the gospel of Mark. So far Jesus has preached to the multitude, has performed many miracles and proclaimed the gospel of the Son of God. There was a certain suspense: Would he succeed in winning the people over? Today we see that he did not. At best they take him as a precursor of the Messiah. From now on Jesus spends his time instructing his disciples about his true Messiahship: He is not a political hero, a super-David who would free the Jews from the yoke of the Romans. Rather he will have to die (on the cross). Christianity is a religion of the cross. And to be a Christian means to be willing to follow Christ crucified.

The scene has a historical nucleus, although the final reduction is Mark's. The Tetrarch Philip had built Caesar Philippi, forty kilometers north of Bethsaida, in honor of Caesar Augustus. In contradistinction to Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea, it received as second name the name of its builder. Not far away was the majestic Mount Hermon; in the neighborhood we find one source of the Jordan. Here was a cave in honor of Pan, the Greek god of nature (the name is preserved in the

modern name Baniyas, the ancient name was Paneas). And it seems that on top of the cave was a temple built by Philipi in honor of (the divine) Caesar Augustus.

In this neighborhood Christ asks Peter what people think about him: They take him for a prophet, perhaps the prophet Elijah, thus as the forerunner of the Messiah, but not as Messiah. (Cf. Mk. 6:14-16 where Herod has similar ideas.)

Without making any comment Jesus goes on asking Peter what they, the apostles think, Peter answers in their name: "You are the Messiah (in Greek: *ho christos*)."

Jesus does not directly reject this confession but orders the apostles not to tell anybody about him, i.e., that he is the Messiah. Obviously they have the wrong notion many people at that time had about the Messiah, i.e. that he would free the Jews from the yoke of the Romans. Rather, he has to die on the cross according to the Father's will. This is scandal for Peter and thus he tries to persuade his master to forget about the cross. This however is practically the same as the devil who tries to tempt him not to do the Father's will.

Then Christ addresses all (this can hardly have been true in the historical sense at that time, since there were no people; but what follows is Christ's doctrine for all Christians): Whoever wants to follow Christ must deny himself his own selfish interests and be wholeheartedly dedicated to the Lord, being willing to suffer as he did.

Matthew who also speaks about Peter's confession (Mt. 16:13-20) lets Peter have deep insight into Christ's essence: "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God (Mt. 16:16)." The Father revealed this to Peter (Mt. 16:17). Thus this confession is more than the acknowledgment of being the Messiah as in Mark. And as a return gift Christ promises Peter to make him the head of the Church (Mt. 16:18) which probably Christ did not promise at that time yet, but only later. Mark's report is more "primitive" and thus more historical.

HOMILY

CHRIST HAD TO BE CRUCIFIED — A CHRISTIAN HAS TO FOLLOW CHRIST CRUCIFIED

I. Probably the most often used name for our Savior is Jesus. After all, that's the name given to him on the eight days, when he was circumcised. Jesus means savior. Next in

line concerning frequency is certainly the name Christ, though strictly speaking it is a title, not a proper name. The Greek name *Christos*, the anointed one is the same as the Hebrew equivalent: Messiah, Jesus is anointed by the Father in the Spirit for his career Savior.

1. Messiah meant many and different things to different people. But more or less there were the following ideas:

a. Before the Messiah came there would be a time of great tribulations, tumults of the people, quaking of places, confusion of leaders (4 Ezra 9:3). For fantastic descriptions one can consult The Sibylline Oracles 3:36 ff.

b. Into this chaos would come Elijah as the forerunner of the Messiah. This notion we find in the gospels. Jesus takes up that notion saying that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist (Mt. 17:12).

c. Then the Messiah would come. The nations would gather themselves against him (4 Ezra 13:33-35). But he would destroy hostile powers (4 Ezra 12:32-33).

d. Then would follow the renovation of Jerusalem (Enoch 90:28-29). All Jews dispersed over the world would return, and Palestine would be the center of the world (Sibylline Oracles 3:69 ff).

e. Finally, there would come the new age of peace and goodness.

f. Some would think the Messiah to be a prophet, others an expert of Scripture, others a priestly king and some a political national king. As a matter of fact, favored by their long subjection, most Jews expected the Messiah to free them from the yoke of the Romans and to restore the Davidic kingdom. Typical for this attitude is the word of the disciples to the Lord before he returns to the Father: "Lord, are you going to restore the rule to Israel now (Acts 1:6)?"

g. The ideas of a political kingdom is probably also in the mind of the apostles James and John and their mother, when she asks Jesus: "Promise me that those sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and the other at your left, in your kingdom (Mt. 20:21)."

h. With this background we can understand what Peter meant when he answered Christ's question ('who do *you* say that I am") with: "You are the Messiah (Mk. 8:30)."

2. a. Jesus avoided the title Messiah for himself. Only late did he accept to be celebrated as the Messiah, just when he entered Jerusalem in solemn procession on Palm Sunday (Mt. 21:1-9 par). And plainly did he answer the question of the high priest "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God" (Mt. 26:63 par) with: "Yes, I am (Mk. 14:62 par)." And he went into death for this answer. And that was the opposite of what Father had in mind for his son.

b. To be Christ, to be Messiah meant in God's design that Jesus should suffer and die on the cross. But since the term Messiah had the above political over-and undertones Jesus practically never used the title. Instead, he spoke about himself indirectly as the *Son of Man*, although he never said directly: "I am the Son of Man" This title he took from Daniel 7:13.

(1) The Son of Man ("Son of Man" as such means just "man") will come one good day on the clouds of heaven and judge heaven and earth (Mk. 8:38; 13:26; 14:62; Mt. 24:27, 37, 39, 44). This idea certainly all people and apostles liked.

(2) But before it would come that far, the Son of Man would suffer, and suffer much (Mk. 8:31; 9:12,31; 10:33,45; 14:21,41). This idea of a suffering Messiah was completely alien to the Jews and thus also the apostles.

c. Thus we understand Peter's reaction when Jesus says: "The Son of Man has to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, be put to death, and rise three days later (Mk. 8:31)." Peter has seen and acknowledged more in Jesus than the people as so often. And so he thinks he can even correct a wrong notion of his master. Why shall he suffer? Only more people do so. What Peter thinks is human, is what we all try to think, was even what Jesus was tempted to think, by the devil.

d. The devil also tried to tell Jesus: "Why should you suffer and die on the cross? Nobody will be convinced by this and follow you. Perform a show miracle, something nobody else can do and people will hail you. Jump down from the pinnacle of the temple in front of all people and all will hail you as the Messiah (Cf. Lk. 4:9-12 par)." And the devil went on suggesting to Jesus to become king of all kingdoms, to have great power, if he only would take it from him (Mt. 4:8-11 par), avoiding any hardships and sacrifices. But Jesus could only say: "Away with you, Satan (Mt. 4:10)!" Peter repeated

that same temptation for the Lord and thus Jesus could only repeat his word to the tempter: "Get out of my sight, you satan (Mk. 8:33)!"

e. Christ has become Messiah and that means Christ by dying for us on the cross. But it seems that the community of Mark partly wanted to overlook this fact. They liked more a glorious Christ, a miracle worker, a man of great power. Ideas which were in vogue also in Corinth, the community of Paul. For them also Christ crucified was a scandal and foolishness. But Paul can only insist: "We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews, and an absurdity to Gentiles: but to those who are called, Jews and Greek alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23-24)."

II. Jesus knew that he would become the Christ the Messiah by dying for us. To be a *Christian* thus means to be a *follower* of Christ crucified.

1. Anybody who wants to come after Christ, must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in Christ's step (8:34). We must say no to our own will, our selfishness and our planning which is not God's will. To be a Christian does not necessarily mean that we will develop all our God-given faculties and talents and develop something of a superman. Christ was not the superstar either. How many things did he not accomplish in his life? He died young before he had reached the best years of his life. The cross crosses many things out in our life which we can never develop. Dying on the cross, Christ was cast out of the society, by the official representatives of his people. And that is perhaps even the hardest part of carrying the cross: to be an object of derision and mockery, to look like a failure in our life.

2. "Whoever would preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will preserve it (8:35)". Crucifixion looked like annihilation. But in reality it was transformation into something higher. By his death and of course the subsequent resurrection all limitations of Christ's humanity were taken away and he became fully spiritual, a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). The same holds true for us. Holding on to our own plans, as well intended as they may be, but not in conformity with God's plans will make us lose even what we have. Crossing out our life makes us win the real life.

3. "What profit does a man show who gains the whole world and destroys himself in the process (8:36)?" God's will is the goal of our life. But if we would win all kingdoms without him, without his will, we would lose everything.

4. The reason is given in 8:37: "What can a man offer in exchange for his life?" If we lived our life in vain, for ourselves and our selfish interests, but not for God, we cannot remake it at the end of our life. The rich man, who had collected all the goods and built new barns but had never even thought of God, realized too late that his life was over and there was no second life for him to grow rich for God instead of collecting all the riches for himself. All he had done was growing rich for himself, but in reality he lost it all, his life too (Lk. 12:16-21).

5. To die for Christ means to confess him before men. But to refuse to take up one's cross is tantamount to denial of the Lord. Before the throne of his Father, Christ will side with all those who followed him. But whoever was ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of before his Father.

6. As long and endless suffering sometimes seems to be, it will be short. This is what Jesus wants to say with the last word: "There are some who will not taste death until they see the reign of God established in power (9:1)." This should be reason to persevere and be faithful. Suffering will be over before we know it.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(September 19, 1982)

Through his death Christ becomes the servant of all. And any follower must be willing to serve (gospel). His efforts to carry out God's wishes induced, as it is true in the life of any just man, the anger and hatred of those who act as if God did not exist (first reading). — James tells us to be peacemakers. Quarrels, discontent and fighting come often from our selfish ambition and jealousy.

FIRST READING: WISDOM 2:12.17-20

The Book of Wisdom was composed by an unknown author (not by Solomon) in the first half of the second century B.C., since it presupposes a period of moral degradation and religious

persecution which fits the one under Ptolomy VII Physcon (170-117). He wants to console his co-religionists in Egypt in their trials and persecutions and put them on guard against the dangers of pagan philosophy. Part I (1:1-5:24) contrasts the wise and impious man and describes wisdom as the source of temporal and eternal happiness. The encomium on wisdom (6:1-9:19) elaborates on the origin of wisdom and its value for rulers. Part III (10:1-19:20) pictures the work of wisdom in the history of Israel.

Today's first reading is taken from the first part, which in its first half (1:1-2:24) describes the relation of wisdom to virtue and sin, to life and death. To acquire wisdom, one must avoid sin (1:1-15). The ungodly because of their sins deserve death (1:16-2:25). They deny the immortality of the soul (1:16-2:5). They enjoy life to the full (2:6-9). They oppress the just (2:10-20).

The righteous man is inconvenient to the impious since the latter feels the good life as a reproach to his evil ways. Thus, instead of amending his life the impious want to get rid of the pious man, putting him to trials and even to death. The pious calls "blest the destiny of the just and boasts that God is his Father (Wisd. 2:16)." Thus, sarcastically the impious says: "Let us see whether his words are true; let us find out what will happen to him (2:17)." After all, according to the pious man God will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes (2:18). Thus, sarcastically the vile man wants to put the good man to trials and even to death (2:19-20).

All this reminds very much of Jesus Christ, the Servant of Yahweh, who was also innocently persecuted by his enemies but vindicated by God in his resurrection. This parallelism is the reason for the selection of this pericope.

SECOND READING: JAMES 3:16-4:3

Few letters of the New Testament are so full of practical experience as the Letter of James. And as it is always with such practical experience, there is no strict logical arrangement, but thought is loosely strung to thought. Today's reading we see as expressing three different ideas:

1. The opposite of true wisdom is jealousy and (selfish) ambition. They will cause all kind of disorder. Such a person is (a) fanatical, unbalanced and violent. (b) He is bitter

because he considers his opponents as enemies to be annihilated, rather than friends. (c) He indulges in selfish ambition; he is eager to display himself. (d) He is arrogant, taking pride in his knowledge, rather than humility.

2. True wisdom is

(a) pure;

(b) peaceably, since it looks for the right relationship between man and man;

(c) considerate; it knows what is true and false. It does not apply strict order of law; it knows to forgive, tempers justice with mercy; it knows that there are greater things than rules and regulations;

(d) reasonable (obedient to reason), ever ready to obey God; easy to be persuaded, not stubborn, willing to listen to reason and appeal; willing to yield;

(e) full of mercy for man in trouble, even if it be his own fault. Such a person does not say: "It's his own fault, why should I bother and help;

(f) full of mercy and good fruits. The mercy issues in practical help. It is not just lip-service;

(g) impartial, abiding by its course; does not waver;

(h) sincere, without pretence; makes no pose, never acts a part; does not conceal real aims and motives,

(i) All this one can sum up, saying: "Those who behave peaceably as well as make peace will reap justice (3:18)."

3. We must follow and do God's will, not look for our own pleasures and desires. All our difficulties are caused by our inner cravings:

(a) What we desire we cannot obtain and thus we kill and murder.

(b) We envy and cannot obtain and thus we quarrel and fight.

(c) We do not obtain because we do not ask.

(d) If we ask we do not receive because we ask (pray) wrongly because we look for our pleasures.

As one can see, this would be a good topic for a homily.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 9:30-37

We can distinguish two halves in today's gospel: (1) Jesus predicts for the second time his passion, death, and resurrection. (2) Jesus gives his disciples a lesson in true greatness: Great is the one who is willing to serve, the one who cares for the least important people.

Jesus foretells his passion, death, and resurrection three times: (1) Mk 8:31-33 (Mt 16:21-23; Lk 9:22), (2) Mk 9:30-32 (Mt 17:22-23; Lk 9:43-45), (3) Mk 10:32-34 (Mt 20:17-19; Lk 18:31-33). Each time the prediction becomes more precise so that some think that these summaries of the passion are formulated after the event by the Christian community. This might be true inasmuch as the exact wording is concerned, but we have to assume that Jesus actually predicted his passion, death, and resurrection. He had to expect a violent death (1) because he was conscious of being a prophet, and most prophets died a violent death; so also his forerunner, John the Baptist (Mk 6:17-29; Mt 14:3-12). (2) Jesus often broke the Sabbath which was punishable by death (Mk 2:7). (4) Beside the three suffering predictions, Christ spoke about his death very much in general, almost by way of passing, which sounds authentic and cannot have been made up later, e.g. Mk 10:45 ("the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, to give his life in ransom for the many") and Mk 14:24 ("This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of the many"). — A particular detail in this second prediction of suffering is that Jesus will be delivered into the hands of men (by Judas, but lastly through the Father himself).

The disciples still do not understand that Christ has to suffer. They still think about a glorious Messiah where they will have good seats to his right and left side (Mt 20:21). About that topic they quarrel on the way, but are ashamed to tell Jesus. Thus he talks about it openly and gives them a lesson on true greatness by placing a child in their midst: Great is not somebody who makes a career but who cares (=receives) the little ones, the insignificant, neglected people. Great is the one who serves.

HOMILY

TRUE GREATNESS

We could sum up the main ideas of the first reading and the gospel by saying: Christ was and is great by being servant in dying for us. We are great by serving in general and by caring for the little ones (children) in particular.

I. It is human to look for greatness in terms of achievement and success which one can express in figures and numbers. And so also Christ was tempted to make a name for himself (cf. temptations Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13). But he knew that the Father's will for him was that he should redeem mankind by his death and resurrection and that his greatness would consist in sacrificing himself on the cross as the Servant of Yahweh.

1. According to the gospels Jesus predicted three times his passion, death, and resurrection (Mk 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34 par). We may admit that the actual formulation with all the details as we have them in the gospel today are not the very words of Christ but the formulation of the early Church after the event. But Jesus certainly did expect a violent death for himself and predicted it. Thus he accepted his death with full awareness; it was no accident.

a. He was a prophet and considered himself a prophet with *the* message from the Father. But most prophet died a violent death. Thus he could tell the Scribes and Pharisees: "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, you frauds! You erect tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of the saints. You say, 'Had we lived in our forefathers' time we would not have joined them in shedding the prophets' blood.' Thus you show that you are the sons of the prophets' murderers. Now it is your turn: fill up the vessel measured out by your forefathers (Mt 23:29-32)." The forefathers of the contemporaries of Jesus killed the prophets and his contemporaries hypocritically decorated their tombs and monuments as if to say: "We would have never killed these prophets." In reality, however, they are about killing *the* prophet: Christ himself and thus sum up all evil of their forefathers.

b. Breaking of the Sabbath was sanctioned by death. And how often did Jesus break the Sabbath! Many of the laws and regulations were narrowminded in our understanding, but they actually existed. Jesus for instance cures a man who has been lame for thirty-eight years on a Sabbath and tells him to carry home his mat (Jn 5:8). But the Jews tell the cured man: "It is the Sabbath, and you are not allowed to carry that mat around (Jn 5:10)." For us that sound farfetched, even ridiculous. But in the Talmud, the Jewish explanation of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch, we find in the treaty Shabbath 73a a list of forty less one primary labors forbidden on a Sabbath: Sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters (over the erasure) striking with a hammer... carrying out from one domain to another. And this carrying is specified in Shabbah 93b: "If one carries out a living person on a bed, he is not culpable. But it is not allowed to carry the bed alone."

c. Christ's claim to be the Son of God was considered blasphemy which was punishable by death. And actually blasphemy was his verdict (Mt 26:65; Mk 14:64).

2. One particular aspect of Christ's death was the unthankfulness of his people. And he was great in accepting this ingratitude. He did his very best went out of his way to accommodate them, preaching that he was dead-tired (Jn 4:6) and hungry (Mt 21:18). Sometimes he did not even have time to eat anything because people pressed hard on him (Mk 3:20). And yet at the end they refused him, they rejected him and demanded him to be crucified (Mt 27:23 par) and even shouted before Pilate: "Let his blood be on us and on our children (Mt 27:25)." Christ accepted to be rejected by his people and he is great for that.

3. Another aspect is mentioned for the first time in today's gospel, the second prediction of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection: "The Son of Man is going to be delivered (*paradidotai*) into the hands of men who will put him to death (Mk 9:31)." It is not clearly said who will deliver Jesus into the hands of men. But that same expression deliver (in Greek *paradidomi*) is used when Jesus clearly fortells his betrayal by Judas: "He (Judas) went off to confer with the chief priests and officers about a way to hand him over (*parado*) to them" (Lk 22:4). At the Last Supper Jesus says: "The hand of my

betrayers (*paradidontos*) is with me at this table (Lk 22:21)." "The Son of Man is following out his appointed course, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed (*paradidotai*) (Lk 22:22)."

It was something shameful, something which should have never happened that Jesus was betrayed by one of his apostles. Unthankfulness is hard to bear, but betrayal is even harder to accept. The early Church found this betrayal of one of them a stigma and they could console themselves only by saying that it was foretold in Scripture. So Jesus says in Mk 14:21: "The Son of Man is going the way Scripture tells of him. Still, accursed the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." And the word in Mk 14:18 "One of you is about to betray me, yes, one who is eating with me" reminds of Ps 41:10: "Even my friend who had my trust and partook of my bread, has raised his heel against me." Jesus accepted this betrayal as the way to redeem us. And he is great because of this acceptance.

II. We are human too and want to be somebody. We want to achieve great things, make a name for ourselves, want to be grown-up and thus independent, as the apostles wanted. They talked about first places on the way.

1. But plans made without Christ cannot persist. The apostles were ashamed to talk about their discussion on first places in the face of Jesus. What sounded reasonable before, appeared clearly in all its selfishness. We should talk over all our plans with Jesus, in his presence; then we can be sure that we are not selfish.

2. For Christ, great is the one who serves (Mk 9:35). Most people want to be in charge, want to give signatures and orders, want to do things that makes them famous and known. Christ once took an apron, poured water into a bowl and washed the feet of his disciples, which usually was done by slaves. This example he explained by saying: "If I washed your feet, I who am Teacher and Lord, then you must wash each other's feet (Jn 13:14). We must do things which are helpful for our neighbors, low as they may be, not in order to be known and acknowledged.

3. Great is the man who cares for children (Mk 9:37). To welcome means to care (9:37). Children are helpless, de-

pendent and vulnerable. They need their parents and the grown-ups to grow. They expect everything from them. We often do something good to grown-ups, to influential people, to persons in high position, with the hope or even with the intention of getting something in return. A child cannot give anything in return. It does not have anything. Whatever we give a child we sincerely give, otherwise we would not give it. Giving ourselves to a child makes us great.

4. And here we can take child in the larger sense of any person in low position, of unimportant people of whom nobody speaks, whom nobody knows but God alone, the least of Christ's brethren. Here is also true what Jesus said concerning the invitation to a lunch: "Whenever you give a lunch or dinner, do not invite your friends or brothers or relatives or wealthy neighbors. They might invite you in return and thus repay you. No, when you have a reception, invite beggars, and the cripples, the lame and the blind. You should be pleased that they cannot repay you, for you will be repayed in the resurrection of the just (Lk 14:12-14)."

5. That we also shall be and act like children is true and Jesus says somewhere else (Mt 18:3; Lk 18:17; Mk 10:15). But we may add it shortly:

- a. We must be dependent upon God as a child toward his parents.
- b. We must be open, unconceited.
- c. We want to trust God as a child trusts his parents.
- d. We will be even vulnerable as Christ was vulnerable, being betrayed by Judas.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (September 26, 1982)

Today the Lord tells us to be broad-minded concerning discipleship. Whoever is not against him is for him. We must not give scandal (by being too narrow-minded) nor take scandal (gospel). In a similar way Moses told Joshua to let Eldad and Medad, who did not belong to their group, prophesy. In-

sofar as Moses was concerned all should be prophets (first reading). As usual, the second reading has an independent theme: James castigates wealth acquired by paying unjust wages and reprimands using wealth selfishly.

FIRST READING: NUMBERS 11:25-19

This is a rare pericope, often overlooked, selected in view of the gospel. After the first part of Numbers (1:1-10:10) has described the preparation for the departure from Sinai, the second part (10:11-21:35) goes on picturing the journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab. Since Moses cannot do everything alone, God tells him to elect seventy elders as helpers and advisors (Num 11:16-17). Moses calls the seventy elders and places them around the covenant tent. Then he takes some of the spirit that was on him and bestows it on the seventy elders. The result: They prophesy.

Two men, Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. But the Spirit came down on them too, and they also prophesied. They were on the list of Moses (registered), but they had not gone out of the covenant tent as the seventy had. Thus Joshua reports the incident to Moses and asks him to stop the two from prophesying.

But Moses is broad-minded and answers: "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!" The Spirit blows where he wants (cf. Jn 3:8). Nobody can make any restrictions on him.

As one can see, the incident of today's gospel is very similar.

SECOND READING: JAMES 5:1-6

This is the last of the six Sundays where the second reading is taken from the Letter of James. This is the strongest document of the New Testament which shows social concern. In the other books and Letters of the New Testament this social concern hardly shines through in opposition to many prophetic books of the Old Testament. The reason is: Most

Christian communities in the New Testament belonged to classes with little influence and were poor. The community of James, however, must have had rich and poor people. Thus James gives some advice to the rich people, in a similar way as the prophets did, for instance, Hosea and Isaiah.

James 5:1-3 speaks about the worthlessness of riches. We shall not place our hope and aim on riches, on earthly things. If rich people would know what they are doing, they would weep and wail for the terror of the judgment that is coming. The term "wail" (*ololyzein*) is onomatopoeic: one can almost hear the shrieking.

There are three main sources of wealth: (1) corn (grain), (2) garments, and (3) gold and silver. The first is not mentioned here. That garments were a source of wealth we know from Joshua 7:21 where Achan brings disaster on the nation and death on himself for a Babylonian garment. In 2 Kgs 5:5.22 Naaman buys garments as gift for the prophet Elisha. Paul tells us in Acts 20:33 that he never demanded gold, silver and garments from anybody for his support. But all such garments will be eaten up by moths. Gold and silver can in reality never rust. But for James they last so shortly that one can say, they will corrode.

James 5:4-6 speaks about the way and the end of a selfishly rich man. (1) A selfishly rich man has gained his riches by injustice, not paying laborers the just wages. Since wages were small in Palestine, they had to be paid the same day; otherwise people could hardly live. The salary had to be paid even before sunset (Deut 24:14.15; Lev 19:13; Prov 3:27.28; Jer 22:13; Sir 34:22). (2) A selfishly rich person has used his wealth only for himself, living in soft luxury, which destroys man's moral fibre and enervates him. He completely forgets his duty towards his neighbors. (3) A selfishly rich man has chosen the end for his riches. As a fattened cattle will be slaughtered (the aim of its fattening was the slaughtering) so a rich man will be "slaughtered" at the last judgment. (4) A selfishly rich man has condemned and killed the just man: that can be Christ, *the* just man and any just man. Both did not offer any resistance to the rich.

As one can see, this would be a good topic for a homily on wealth.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 9:38.43.45.47-48

There are clearly two halves in today's gospel:

1. An exorcist uses the name of Jesus to cast out demons, although he does not (externally) belong to the disciples of Jesus. The apostle John tries to stop him. John is mentioned here separately the only time in the Synoptic gospels and even in a certain unfavorable light. Thus the pericope must be historical. That John could be outspoken we know from the incident where he and his brother James want to call down fire from heaven to destroy the inhospitable Samaritans who do not want to let the apostles pass through their territory (Lk 9:54). But Jesus is broad-minded and answers: Nobody can cast out devils in my name and afterwards be against me. Anybody who is not against me is for me.

2. In the second half of the gospel Jesus speaks about scandal, (a) giving scandal and (b) taking scandal.

(a) Nobody must give scandal to the little ones, i.e. make them sin. The little ones can be children, unimportant, unknown, forgotten people, and apostles. But here in the context it refers to those who cast out demons in Jesus' name without belonging clearly to the disciples. To cause somebody to sin is so horrible and the punishment so severe that it would be a lesser evil for him to have a mill-stone placed around his neck and be drowned. The mill-stone is literally a donkey-stone, since a donkey was moving the upper stone of the mill. To be drowned was a Roman punishment and was a very detestable form of death for Jews.

The term Gehenna comes from *gê-Hinnom* or *gê-ben-Hinnom* = the valley of Hinnom or the valley of the son of Hinnom, a valley on the south-east side of Jerusalem. Here Ahaz sacrificed little children and also his own son (2 Chron 28:3); so did Manassah (2 Chron 33:6). Josiah declared the place unclean (2 Kgs 23:10). Then refuse was burnt here, loathsome worms breed on refuse. And fire smoked and smoldered at all times on the refuse. All this together gave a picture for hell where according to Is 66:24 the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die.

(b) We must not take scandal either but rather sacrifice the most precious thing or person, even if it would be as precious as a hand, an eye or a feet. Obviously, Jesus does not advocate self-mutilation.

HOMILY

**"ANYONE WHO IS NOT AGAINST US IS WITH US."
BE BROAD-MINDED — DO NOT GIVE SCANDAL!**

1. We easily admire a man of principles who does not make compromises, who is even willing to die a martyr for his convictions, even if his convictions would be wrong convictions. Like somebody who burns himself alive in protest against apparently wrong ideas of the Buddhist religion, or if people starve themselves to death in favor of wrong political ideologies as in Ireland. Even more, of course, do we admire those who did not bend their head before Baal, starting with Elijah, Thomas Moore, Cardinal von Galen, Cardinal Mindszenty, and innumerable others.

There can be no compromise between Christ and the devil. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" says Jesus in Mt 12:30 in the talk about Beelzebul. The devils stick together and are united, and only that way his rule can persist for some time. And so Jesus cannot cast out devils in Beelzebul's name, otherwise the devil's house would be divided. And in a similar way nobody can be in favor of the devil and of Jesus Christ at the same time.

In a similar way whoever denies Jesus Christ, him Jesus will deny before his Father (Mt 10:33).

Nobody can serve Jesus and money (Lk 16:13) taken as a god, because both demand the whole services of the whole person full-time.

2. As hard as it might seem to be radical and to be a man of principles, most of us, especially in younger years, will easily consider something as good *or* bad. There is hardly anything in between. It's either-or, not: this *and* that.

There are enough examples in early Christianity. Peter is asked by Simon Magus to give him the power to give the Holy Spirit by laying on hands as the apostles do. But Peter is not convinced of the sincerity of Simon Magus but rather fears that Magus wants to buy this spiritual power with his money. And so Peter bluntly answers: "May you and your money rot, thinking that God's gift can be bought (Acts 8:20)." And so till today the crime of buying or selling ecclesiastical, spiritual power is called simony.

Similarly resolute is Paul in judging the behavior of Elymas, "the magician", who wants to turn the governor Sergius of Cyprus away from the faith. How could such a man be in favor of Christ. Thus Paul says to Elymas: "You are an impostor and a thoroughgoing fraud, you son of Satan and enemy of all that is right! Will you never stop trying to make crooked the straight paths of the Lord? The Lord's hand is upon you even now. For a time you shall be blind (Acts 13:10-11)." The result is that the governor believes the teaching of Paul.

And when Jewish exorcists try to invoke the name of Jesus over those possessed by evil spirits, the evil spirit answers: "Jesus I recognize, Paul I know; but who are you (Acts 19:15)?"

Thus, we are not surprised to see that the apostles James and John were equally resolute and radical. One good day, when the Samaritans did not want to let the apostles pass through their territory, they wanted to call fire down on them (Lk. 9:54).

And the incident in today's gospel would make good sense to most of us: The apostle John wants to hinder an exorcist who tries to cast out devils in Jesus' name without belonging to the apostles' circle. Would Jesus not have the same opinion, he who had said: "He who is not with me is against me?" How could that strange exorcist claim to be with Christ?

3. And yet, the Lord is not of the opinion of John. Some have tried to explain this pericope as unhistorical, since Christ's answer is so unusual, so contrary to what we would expect. But the fact that John appears in an unfavorable light and is to an extent criticised by Christ cannot have been made up by somebody. Who would have dared to do so? Christ really wants to tell his apostles:

a. There is more than one way to God and to Christ. And it is not always true that one is either in favor of Christ or against him. One can be in favor of him in different ways. There is not only an either-or, but also a this *and* that. It is not indispensable that a person belongs to the Christian community in order to act in Jesus' name.

b. Every man has a right to his own thoughts, a right to think things out and to think them through until he comes to his own conclusions.

c. The truth is always bigger than any man's grasp of it. Nobody can grasp all truth. The basis of tolerance, of being broad-minded is not a lazy acceptance of anything, is not the feeling that there cannot be any assurance of truth any more but the realization of the vastness and greatness of truth. We are broad-minded because we have reverence for all the possibilities of truth, that truth has many colors and speaks many languages. Intolerance is often a sign of arrogance and ignorance because such a person thinks there is no truth beyond the truths he sees.

d. A man has the right to speak as long as he does not speak about doctrines calculated to destroy morality and to remove the foundation from all civilized Christian society.

e. We may hate a man's belief but must not hate the man.

4. "Who is not against Christ is in favor of him." This is the startling sentence of today's gospel. But what is the difference from Christ's other sentence: "He who is not with me is against me?" How are we sure that somebody is not against Christ? Is it enough to be charismatic?

a. Christ gives us the old rule: "By their fruits you can tell them (Mt. 7:17)." "A good tree does not produce bad fruit (Lk. 6:43)."

b. Truth depends on a clear doctrinal confession: "This is how you can recognize God's Spirit: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God (1 Jn. 4:2)."

c. There are many phenomena possible even among pagans, but the possession of the Holy Spirit is shown by the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Lord and the fact that somebody serves others. "Nobody who speaks in the Spirit of God ever

says, 'Cursed be Jesus.' And no one can say: 'Jesus is Lord,' except in the Holy Spirit.... To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (1 Cor. 12:3,7)."

d. The Shepherd of Hermas gives as criterion of truth a wholesome relationship to the whole congregation (Mand. 11:7-16).

e. One is member of the Church and of Christ as long as somebody does not categorically separate himself from Christ and curses Jesus (1 Cor. 12:3).

5. We shall be broad-minded according to Christ. And that means also:

a. We shall not give scandal to the "little ones" (in Greek: *mikroi*). These little ones refer in different contexts to different persons: to children, to simple believers, to apostles. But here in this context it obviously must refer to those strange exorcists who belong to Christ in a way, since they use his name but have not definitely joined him yet. These little ones we shall not drive away from Christ and obstruct their complete and definite way to Christ by being too strict and too rigorous. It would be an awful sin. And the punishment will be severe. It would be less hard for them if they would be drowned with a heavy mill-stone around their neck.

b. Whatever good these little ones do to the apostles and Christians, and it may be as little as giving a glass of water, will have its reward. The more reason therefore, not to give them scandal.

6. On the other hand, we must not take scandal ourselves: Nothing must become a reason or an occasion for sin for us. Whatever we love and like must not stand in the way between us and Christ. He, she, or it, may be as precious to us as our hand, our eye or our foot. We must rather separate from him or it, or to use the picture: we must cut the hand and foot off, pluck the eye out.