



BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

**MYSTERY OF BODY'S REDEMPTION
BASIS OF TEACHING ON MARRIAGE
AND VOLUNTARY CONTINENCE**

Pope John Paul II

**AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE NEW CODE TO CANON LAW**

Fr. Joseph M. de Torre

DOMINICAN TOWNS IN BATAAN

Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P.

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EDITORIAL

CHRISTIAN WITNESSING

One of the most salient features in the Christian's exercise of the prophetic function is the role of *being* a witness and *giving* witness. Since to be a prophet in its pristine sense is "to speak in the name of someone," a Christian prophet is a person who speaks in the name of Christ, acts in the name of Christ. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12 states clearly: "The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office: it spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give praise to His name."

Hence a Christian witness says and does things not of his own but that of Christ.

The greek word for "witness" is simply *martyrion*. To be a witness is to be a martyr. There is no need to aspire to be beheaded, to be tortured, to be burnt at the stake in order to be a witness of Christ and so be a "martyr" of Christ. We can be witnesses or martyrs of Christ in our day to day living, in the hustle and bustle of our daily existence. One has just to ask himself: "What would Christ want me to do at this time?" Or in another vein: "What is my Christian obligation at the moment?"

The peak undoubtedly of Christian witnessing is to die for the faith to which the greek term was preserved: martyrdom. The first Filipino candidate for canonization, the Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz, whose feast we celebrate on September 28, has blazed the trail for us. We can be Christian witnesses too in our own way.

From the inner sanctum of a conventual cell, like the one lived by St. Theres̄a of the Child Jesus to the lofty palatial thrones where St. Louis of France administered Christian justice; from lowly parish works where St. John Mary Vianney did his task, to the Vatican halls where St. Pius X managed Church affairs; from the lowly religious like St. Martin de Porres, to kingly Chancellors like St. Thomas Moore, every life situation imaginable has been the venue of Christian witnessing.

To be a Christian witness is not an impossible dream, an unreachable star. It is the very life of every member of Christ's mystical body imbued with the prophetic function. Again *Lumen Gentium*, no. 33 avers: "Thus every laymen, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal'."

General Audience of 21 July

MYSTERY OF BODY'S REDEMPTION BASIS OF TEACHING ON MARRIAGE AND VOLUNTARY CONTINENCE

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO N. 30 C744 — 26 JULY 1982)

On Wednesday, 21 July, the Holy Father returned by helicopter from Castel Gandolfo to the Vatican for the weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square. Basing his message on Paul's Letter to the Romans, Pope John Paul continued his catechetical series of reflections on marriage and celibacy.

1. "We ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we await... the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul sees this "redemption of the body" in both an anthropological and a cosmic dimension. Creation "in fact was subjected to futility" (Rom. 8:20). All visible creation all the universe, bears the effects of man's sin. "The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now". (Rom. 8:22). And at the same time, the whole "creation awaits with eager longing the revelation of the sons of God" and nourishes the hope of also being freed from the slavery of corruption, to obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19, 20-21).

THE OBJECT OF HOPE

2. According to Paul, the redemption of the body is the object of hope. This hope was implanted in the heart of man in a certain sense immediately after the first sin. Suffice it to recall the words of the Book of Genesis, which is traditionally called the "proto-evangelium" (cf. Gen. 3:15), and we could therefore also call them the beginning of the Good News, the first announcement of salvation. The redemption of the body, according to the words of the Letter to the Romans, is connected precisely with this hope in which, as we read, "we have been saved" (Rom. 8:24). Through the hope that arises at man's very origin, the redemption of the body has its anthropological dimension: it is the redemption of man. At the same time it radiate, in a certain sense, on all creation, which from the

beginning has been bound in a particular way to man and subordinated to him (cf. Gen. 1:28-30). The redemption of the body is therefore, the redemption of the world: it has a cosmic dimension.

AWAITING REDEMPTION

3. Presenting in his Letter to the Romans the "cosmic" image of redemption, Paul of Tarsus places man at its very centre, just as "in the beginning" he had been placed at the very centre of the image of creation. It is precisely man, they are men, those who "have the first fruits of the Spirit", who groan inwardly, awaiting the redemption of their body (cf. Rom. 8:23). Christ, who came to reveal man to man fully by making him aware of his sublime vocation (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22), speaks in the Gospel from the divine depths of the mystery of redemption, which finds its specific "historical" subject precisely in Christ himself. Christ therefore, speaks in the name of that hope that had already been implanted in the heart of man in the "proto-evangelium". Christ gives fulfillment to this hope, not only with the words of his teaching, but above all with the testimony of his death and resurrection. So therefore, the redemption of the body has already been accomplished in Christ. In him has been confirmed that hope in which "we have been saved". And at the same time, that hope has been opened anew to its definitive eschatological fulfilment. "The revelation of the sons of God" in Christ has been definitively directed toward that "glorious liberty" that is to be definitively shared by the "children of God."

AUTHENTIC THEOLOGY

4. To understand all that "the redemption of the body" implies according to Paul's Letter to the Romans, an authentic theology of the body is necessary. We have tried to construct this theology by referring first of all the words of Christ. The constitutive elements of the theology of the body are contained in what Christ says, recalling "the beginning", concerning the question about the indissolubility of marriage (cf. Mt. 19:8), in what he says about concupiscence, referring to the human heart, in his Sermon on the Mount (Cf. Mt. 5:28), and also in what he says in reference to the resurrection (cf. Mt. 22:30). Each one of these statements contains a rich content of an anthropological and ethical nature. Christ is speaking to man — and he is

speaking about man: about man who is "body" and who has been created male and female in the image and likeness of God. He is speaking about man whose heart is subject to concupiscence, and finally, about man before whom is opened the eschatological prospect of the resurrection of the body.

"Body", according to the Book of Genesis, means the visible aspect of man and his belonging to the visible world. For St. Paul, it means not only this belonging, but sometimes also the alienation of man by the influence of the Spirit of God. Both the one meaning and the other are in relation to the "resurrection of the body".

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

5. Since in the previously analyzed texts Christ is speaking from the divine depths of the mystery of redemption, his words serve that very hope which is spoken of in the Letter to the Romans. "The redemption of the body", according to the Apostle, is ultimately what "we await". So we await precisely the eschatological victory over death, to which Christ gave testimony above all by his resurrection. In the light of the Paschal Mystery, his words about the resurrection of the body and about the reality of the "other world", recorded by the synoptic Gospels, have acquired their full eloquence. Christ, and then Paul of Tarsus, proclaimed the call for abstention from marriage "for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven" precisely in the name of this eschatological reality.

6. However, the "redemption of the body" is expressed not only in the resurrection as victory over death. It is present also in Christ's words addressed to "historical" man, when they confirm the principle of the indissolubility of marriage as a principle coming from the Creator himself, and also when, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ calls man to overcome concupiscence, even in the uniquely interior movements of the human heart. The key to both the one and the other of these statements must be to say that they refer to human morality, they have an ethical meaning. Here it is the question not of the eschatological hope of the resurrection, but of the hope of victory over sin, which can be called the hope of every day.

STRENGTH TO OVERCOME EVIL

7. In his daily life man must draw from the mystery of the redemption of the body the inspiration and the strength to overcome the evil that is dormant in him under the form of three-fold concupiscence. Man and woman, bound in marriage, must daily undertake the task of the indissoluble union of the covenant which they have made between them. But also a man or a woman who has voluntarily chosen continence for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven must daily give living witness of fidelity to that choice, heeding the directives of Christ in the Gospel and those of Paul the Apostle in his first Letter to the Corinthians. In each case it is a question of the hope of every day, which in proportion to the normal duties and difficulties of human life helps to overcome "evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). In fact, "in hope we have been saved": the hope of every day manifests its power in human works and even in the very movements of human heart, clearing a path, in a certain sense, for the great eschatological hope bound with the redemption of the body.

VICTORY OVER SIN

8. Penetrating daily life with the dimension of human morality the redemption of the body helps first of all to discover all this good in which man achieves the victory over sin and concupiscence. Christ's words, which spring from the divine depths of the mystery of redemption, permit us to discover and strengthen that bond that exists between the dignity of the human being (man or woman) and the nuptial meaning of his body. They permit us to understand and put into practise, on the basis of that meaning, the mature freedom of the gift, which in one way is expressed in indissoluble marriage and in another way through abstention from marriage for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In these different ways Christ fully reveals man to man, making him aware of "his sublime vocation". This vocation is inscribed in man according to all his psycho-physical make-up, precisely through the mystery of the redemption of the body.

Everything we have tried to do in the course of our meditations in order to understand Christ's words has its ultimate foundation in the mystery of the redemption of the body.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW

(A lecture delivered by Fr. Joseph M. de Torre, Consultor to
Cardinal Julio R. Rosales, at the Ayala Museum, Makati,
Metro Manila, on May 17, 1982)

1. Brief Historical Background

It all began when Pope John XXIII stunned the world on January 25, 1959, at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls (it was the Feast of the Conversion of the Apostle of the Gentiles), by solemnly announcing the three measures he had taken to achieve what he called the updating of the Church. This word *aggiornamento* (the streamlining or modernization of the Church), became a household word overnight. His three measures were: 1. To hold a Synod in Rome; 2. To convoke an Ecumenical Council; 3. To reform the Code of Canon Law.

His vision was a striking case of the unique assistance of the Spirit of God to his Church on earth and to its visible head, the Roman Pontiff. Christ is the Savior of the world, but he identifies himself with his Church¹, and so it is the Church that must really communicate this salvation to the actual world she lives in. But since this world is essentially temporal or changeable, she has to adapt herself to the changes precisely in her temporal or human element. Should this mean however that she should compromise with the world?

This is a very delicate point, and has given rise to two recurring misunderstandings of which Pope John Paul II spoke to the French Bishops when he visited their country in 1980, and more recently, last February to all the Jesuit Provincials assembled in Rome. I am referring to the two extremes of progressivism and integralism. The former advocates an outright compromise with the world, overlooking the divine or supernatural element of the Church accumulated in her past. Integralism, as a reaction, withdraws into a siege mentality, taking shelter in a petrified traditionalism, and condemning everything new or modern indiscriminately.

¹ Cf. Mt. 18:17-18 28:18-20; Jn. 20:22-23; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:24.

Last March 12, the Pope went on to remind the Bishops of Italy gathered at Assisi that St. Francis was "a man of the Church, who lived to the full this threefold dimension: knowledge of the past, opening to the demands of the present, dynamic projection towards the prospects of the future, and all this within the context of a very live Catholic sensitivity."² And later in the same address he talked about a "missionary dimension *ab intra*", that is, a "dynamism and vitality" "opposed to traditionalism and immobilism", that finds itself confronted with the profile of the programmed 'secularization' of life in the various sectors; and it discovers besides, not only its sacred and Christian 'yesterday', but also its 'today', tormented and exalting and its 'tomorrow', still unforeseen and unpredictable"³.

2. The Second Vatican Council

Pope John XXIII set the tone of this required renewal of the Church by stating that the world was in sore need of evangelization, and that to achieve this, the Church had to make herself understood by both reflecting upon herself as the depository of divine revelation, and taking a deep and comprehensive look at the contemporary world. Of course, it was not a question of jettisoning the past as a whole since adaption is not compromise or adjustment to fashion, but rather using the proper idiom and the right means of communication.

This required both a theological or doctrinal renewal in vital union with the past, and a pastoral or structural reorientation in vital union with the present. To this effect, the Pope decided to use a most powerful instrument at the disposal of the Church: an Ecumenical Council, that is, a gathering of all the Bishops of the Church with the Pope in order to define and lay down doctrinal and disciplinary matters affecting the universal Church. And since the Church as a human society can act effectively and rightfully only through her laws (framed, applied and enforced by her authority), the next logical step would have to be the reform of the Code of Canon Law, which would enshrine the theological and pastoral insights and directives of the Ecumenical Council.

The theme of this Ecumenical Council was then to be the Church and the world. This was the Second Vatican Council,

² *L'Osservatore Romano* (English), 22-III-82, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

which began its sessions on October 11, 1962, and ended on December 8, 1965. It crystallized in two Dogmatic Constitutions, one on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) and the other on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*); a Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) reforming the worship of the Church; and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*). These four are the pivotal documents of Vatican II, and they are supplemented by twelve more: nine Decrees and three Declarations. Following the mind of Pope John XXIII in their Opening Message, the Fathers of the Council stated: "We shall take pains so to present to the men of this age God's truth in its integrity and purity that they may understand it and gladly assent to it".

3. The Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law

While the Council was in session, Pope John died in June 1963, and his successor Paul VI pledged himself to bring the Council to a happy conclusion and to implement it. Accordingly, his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*, issued the following year, dealt with the dialogue of the Church and the world. But it was still John XXIII who already on March 28, 1963, a few weeks before his death, set up the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law. Pope Paul VI encouraged the long-drawn labors of this Commission, and so did after him John Paul I and the present Pope, who in 1980 decided to enlarge the Commission to 75 members more widely representing the Third World, and including Archbishops and Bishops, not only Cardinals. This brought Bishop Morelos of Butuan into it, thus, joining Cardinal Rosales as the two Filipino representatives.

The Code hitherto in force had been promulgated in 1917 by Pope Benedict XV, being the result of many years of compilation of various sets of laws passed by the Church over the centuries in answer to the pastoral needs of every time and place. But the industrial, scientific, technological and political revolutions of the 19th century had set the world in motion at an accelerated speed. What had been for centuries a settled, mostly rural and stationary world, was being transformed into

⁴ *The Documents of Vatican II*, Abbott Edition, Chapman, London-Dublin, 1966, p. 4.

a fast-changing, mostly urban and developing world, in which human relations were becoming physically closer and much more complex, due to the spectacular progress of the means of transport and communication, and the spread of education.

Finally, after two unprecedented world wars and a growing international tension aggravated by materialistic ideologies, the Holy Spirit inspired Pope John XXIII to take decisive steps in order to bring the Church into line with world developments. Let me now quote the opening lines of the Constitution *Lumen gentium* of Vatican II, which are a neat outline of the goal to be achieved: "Christ is the light of all nations. Hence, this most sacred Synod, which has been gathered in the Holy Spirit, eagerly desires to shed on all men that radiance of His which brightens the countenance of the Church. This it will do by proclaiming the gospel to every creature (cf. Mk. 16:15). By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind. She is also an instrument for the achievement of such union and unity. For this reason, following in the path laid out by its predecessors, this Council wishes to set forth more precisely to the faithful and to the entire world the nature and encompassing mission of the Church. The conditions of this age lend special urgency to the Church's task of bringing all men to full union with Christ, since mankind today is joined together more closely than ever before by social, technical, and cultural bonds."⁵

4. The Ecclesiology of Vatican II

If we take a look now at the eight chapters into which this Constitution is divided, we will get a good idea of the concept of the Church arrived at by Vatican II. The first chapter takes up the "Mystery of the Church", and here the keynote already appears: the Church in her human element is in constant need of renewal. The second chapter is entitled "The People of God", and here we have the core of the message: the Church is seen primarily as a people, rather than as a territory, as a pilgrim people rather than as a settlement. This is the change of idiom to speak to the contemporary world: an emphasis on personal and social values, which are nonetheless

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

traditional in the Church, but need a strong re-statement with a view to the adjustment of Church law to the modern world. This must be done, however, not by compromising with the materialistic ideologies of the world, but by reasserting as forcefully as possible both the supernatural reality of the Church and the unique value of the human person and his rights.

Thus, the third chapter deals with the sacred power or hierarchy of the Church. This sacred power is given by God to the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him, as originally given by Christ to Peter and the Apostles⁶ and subsequently transmitted through the sacrament of Holy Orders up to the present and until the end of time⁷. However, this hierarchy of the Church is only a part of it: the bulk of the Church as "people of God" is made up of the laity. It is then to the laity that the fourth chapter of *Lumen gentium* is devoted, and this is where Vatican II enters into what is perhaps its most innovative path. This chapter provides a new definition of the lay person in the Church, that supersedes the insufficient concept of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which limited itself to saying that a layman is someone who is neither a cleric nor a religious. *Lumen gentium* defines the concrete positive role of the lay person in the Church as "seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God"⁸. This is the "distinctive role" of the lay person referred to also in *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43.

Then comes the enlightening chapter five on the "universal call to Holiness": the division of roles in the Church does not affect the fact that *all* are called to Holiness by the reception of Baptism, but everyone must sanctify himself or herself in his or her position, the cleric as a cleric, the lay person as a lay person, the religious as a religious, each according to his or her own *charisma*.

Chapter six focuses on the Religious as stable forms of living according to the three evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, thus, foretelling "the resurrected state and the glory of the heavenly kingdom."⁹ The seventh chapter returns to the supernatural mystery of the Church, explaining the "eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church and her union

⁶ Cf. Mt. 16:18-19, 18:18; 28:17-20; Jn. 20:21-23; 21:15-17.

⁷ Cf. Mt. 28:20.

⁸ *Lumen gentium*, no. 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 44.

with the heavenly Church". And finally, the eighth chapter turns the attention to the Blessed Virgin Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

5. Pope John Paul II and the New Code

Let me now quote from the address of the present Pope (who also took a prominent part in the Council) to the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law at the close of its final plenary session last October in Rome:

"In their deliberations, the Council Fathers bore in mind the new Code of the future, and moreover provided the material and the guiding rules for it. According to them, the Code should be the fruit of the Council or rather the means for carrying out the resolutions of the Council and of achieving the results sought by the Council.

"But, as is well known, when the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council turned its attention to the mystery of the Church (in the Constitution *Lumen gentium*), and to its task or mission in the world of today (in the Constitution *Gaudium et spes*), it took a much wider view of ecclesiology and it opened up still wider areas in its consideration of the relationship of the Church with the world itself.

"Hence, the necessity arose for the laws to be structured so as to fit in with their view of ecclesiology and to be adapted to these ends. On the other hand, this necessity had been clearly stated by the Council itself where it pointed out that in the setting out of Canon Law, the mystery of the Church should be kept in mind (cf. the Decree *Optatam totius*, no. 16).

"For the whole reason for the existence of the laws of the Church and their foundation is to be found in this mystery, and in their own way, they should help to make this mystery known and to contribute to its realization . . .

"The task of the role of the Church as teacher is above all to determine and defend the field in which ecclesial charity is exercised. This it does by helping each one to be aware of his own rights and duties, to coordinate the performance of these rights and duties with the rights and duties of others through a proper harmonization of intent and action to promote the general good of the whole community. Paul VI, our

predecessor of venerated memory, speaks of this matter: 'The law . . . does not hinder pastoral activity, it supports it, it does not kill, it gives life. Its main task is not to repress or obstruct, but to stimulate, promote, protect and safeguard the area of true freedom' (Address to the Participants of the International Congress of Canon Law, held at the Pontifical Gregorian University on the occasion of the first centenary of the foundation of the Faculty of Canon Law in that university, 19 February 1977, in AAS 69, 1977, pp. 211-212)."

After reviewing and praising the work of the Commission, the Pope said:

"Nor has the great importance which Canon Law has in the Christian community escaped you, the pastors of the Church. You have also shown how necessary it is for priests to be instructed in the science of Canon Law, according to the different tasks they must carry out to safeguard and strengthen ecclesial communion.

"Nor has it escaped you that in the Church, there is a need for a *sure law*. This fact gives rise to your intention and desire that the preparatory work for the new Code be brought to a conclusion so that it may receive its definitive form and be brought into use for the good of the whole Church."¹⁰

6. Six Clear Guidelines Regarding the New Code

In the light of all above, we can now summarize the guidelines which have inspired the work of the Pontifical Commission and of all those who have collaborated with them in these eighteen years of painstaking labors:

1. Enshrine the insights and directives of Vatican II, both ecclesiological (*What is the Church?*) and pastoral (*How the Church ought to act in the world*), in answer to the needs of the world now and *in the future* just ahead of us: a more dynamic and flexible Church, with more emphasis on *personal* types of jurisdiction, taking into account the *mobility* of the modern world, even though *territoriality* must of necessity still remain the primary criterion of jurisdiction.

The Holy Father reminded the Jesuits in the aforesaid address of the need for that "mobility and vigor" in order to

¹⁰ *L'Osservatore Romano* (English), 16-XI-81, p. 9.

"understand the signs of the times"¹¹, and has not ceased to mention this idea to almost all the groups of Bishops in their *ad limina* visits¹², while stressing also to the Bishops the need to let the laity take up their own "distinctive role", particularly in the implementation of the social teaching of the Church¹³. This is a shining example of the principle of sound adaptation without compromising with the world.

2. Prevalence of deeply theological and interiorized spiritual criteria in the lay-out of the canons, starting with Vatican II's definition of the Church as "People of God" and of the particular Churches or dioceses as "portions of the people of God"¹⁴, rather than just territories. Then following up with the spelling out of the Church's task of teaching and sanctifying (sacred power), thus embodying the *salus animarum suprema lex*. Also taking a more pastoral approach to the canonical penalties and reducing excommunications to the very minimum.

3. Avoid false opposition between "law" and "pastoral". The basis of any pastoral action has to be the law since the very purpose of the law is to *direct to the common good* by guaranteeing the fulfilment of duties and the exercise of rights. The Church cannot exist without a law, just as any other society. A society exists when many persons are trying together to attain a certain end which is thereby their common good; and the law is the indispensable means for the attainment of that end. A lawless society breaks down in confusion and anarchy.

In the case of the Church, that end for the sake of which she exists on earth as a society or community is the salvation

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15-III-82, p. 11.

¹² See for example his address to the Bishops of Emilia-Romagna *ibid.*, 8-II-82, p. 10.

¹³ See also the address to the Jesuits in this regard. (*)

* In his second encyclical, *Dives in misericordia*, of November 30, 1980, no. 12, he had this to say: "*The Church shares with the people of our time this profound and ardent desire for a life which is just in every aspect, nor does she fail to examine the various aspects of the sort of justice that the life of people and society demands. This is confirmed by the field of Catholic social doctrine, greatly developed in the course of the last century. On the lines of this teaching proceed the education and formation of human consciences in the spirit of justice, and also individual undertakings, especially in the sphere of the apostolate of the laity, which are developing in precisely this spirit*" (italics in original: Daughters of St. Paul). See also my booklet *Social Justice and Human Liberation*, Sinag-tala, Manila, 1979.

¹⁴ Decree *Christus Dominus*, no. 11: Abbott Edition, p. 403.

of souls (*salus animarum suprema lex*), and the law that we all must follow for the sake of that end or common good of the Church ensures that justice will be done as far as humanly possible, and no arbitrariness or tyranny shall prevail when the duties and rights of the different types of persons (clergy, religious, laity) are duly spelled out, and a due process is instituted.

4. Not yielding to worldly pressures, compromising with the world: "My kingdom is not of this world"¹⁵; "In the world you will have affliction. But take courage, I have overcome the world"¹⁶; "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"¹⁷. The Church must follow the fearless path of the Apostles and the early Christians in their pagan environment and always bear witness to the light.¹⁸

Last February 2, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the Holy Father recalled in St. Peter's Basilica that Christ is a "sign of contradiction": "Did not Christ enter with this sign into the history of man? Does he not emerge before us from the various stages of human history? A period does not exist in which he has not been contradicted. And in this contradiction, the light to enlighten men has been revealed anew each time. Is not our century too the age of a multiple contradiction with regard to Christ?"¹⁹

Three concrete applications of this guideline:

(a) To strengthen matrimonial laws in defense of the marriage bond²⁰;

(b) To defend human life from the first moment of conception;

(c) To retain the confessional box, particularly for women, in defence of the right to privacy and to the preservation of chastity.

¹⁵ Jn. 18:36.

¹⁶ Jn. 16:33.

¹⁷ Rom. 12:2. Cf. also Eph. 4:14-15; I Tim. 4:6-7; 2 Tim. 4:2-3.

¹⁸ Cf. Mt. 5:14.

¹⁹ *L'Osservatore Romano* (English), 8-II-82, p. 1.

²⁰ See the Pope's address to the Roman Rota reported in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English), 8-II-82, pp. 6-7.

5. A wider application of the principle of subsidiary in both the relations of Bishops' Conferences with the Pope, and of the individual Bishops with the latter two, keeping the proper balances. The role of Bishops' Conferences better defined taking into account the growing interdependence of communities in the modern world. More consultation and mutual information. Fast communication.

6. Do away with both extremes of legalism on the one hand, which does not grasp the spirit of the law, and anarchism, which spurns the law with the pretext of individual liberty, overlooking the primacy of the common good or principle of solidarity which leads to obeying the laws.

Now the Holy Father, supreme legislator of the Church on earth²¹, has the last word. It has been said that the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law, expected this year, will be perhaps the most important Church event since the Second Vatican Council. This is the moment to pray for this event and for its successful issue. But it is also the time to realize and appreciate the urgent need in every diocese for well-trained canonists not only to implement the law but to educate the faithful in order to understand it and live its spirit. For the effective functioning of the Church as "Sacrament of Salvation" good will and simple piety are not enough: a truly juridical mind is also required in all, a mind which loves and understands the law without being legalistic or ready to yield to worldly pressures, and never overlooks the exclusively supernatural aim of the Church: the salvation of all souls by leading them gently but firmly along the right path to Heaven through the practice of social love on earth.

To priests and laymen alike, the new Code of Canon Law — now awaiting promulgation by Pope John Paul II — should be of great interest.

That it will affect the whole Church, all its members of whatever station in life, is obvious. But that it is expected to provide the means of achieving the results of the Second Vati-

²¹ Cf. Mt. 16:19.

can Council, the Church's monumental effort to reach out to the modern world, definitely invites deeper study and appreciation.

On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII announced to the Church his intention to convoke an ecumenical council and to revise the Code of Canon Law that was currently in force. Though he was only able to begin both the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council and the intended revision of the General Law of the Latin Church, he nonetheless defined the general outlines of the work to be done in the future for adapting the laws of the Church. On March 28, 1963, he set up the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law. His idea was very clear: the new Code should put into effect everything that the council was going to confirm and lay down.

As is well known, when the Second Vatican Council turned its attention to the mystery of the Church and to its task or mission in the world of today, it took a much wider view of ecclesiology and opened up still wider areas in its consideration of the relationship of the Church with the world itself.

The reason was clear: the Council found out that without vitiating the immutable supernatural mission of the Church, the Church nonetheless has to cope with the changing scenario that the modern world has brought out. Thus, the need to structure the Church laws to accommodate this change.

Just what these considerations and views are that Vatican II took and how they are enshrined in the new Code of Canon Law are questions that have now acquired currency. Fr. Joseph M. de Torre, who was appointed Consultor to Cardinal Julio Rosales in the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law, now attempts to answer these questions in the lecture.

Born in Madrid, Spain, on May 25, 1932, Fr. Joseph M. de Torre has been lecturing in his social economics and ethics at the Center for Research and Communications (CRC), Manila, since 1971. He obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1953 from the University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome. In 1955, he was ordained priest and subsequently became chaplain of

various university centers in England and Ireland. He lectured on the humanities, particularly philosophy and theology, while carrying on a continuous pastoral work with people of all walks of life and age groups. In 1968, he came to the Philippines.

He has published a number of articles and booklets on philosophical and theological subjects mainly related to the Second Vatican Council. Since 1975, he has edited *Social Morals (The Church Speaks on Society)* and written *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity*, both published in Manila by CRC. He has also edited *The Church Speaks on Marriage and Celibacy*, and written *The Roots of Society (The Metaphysical Ground of Social Ethics)*, both published in Manila by Sinag-tala Publishing, Inc. His latest book is *Christian Philosophy*, published by Vera-Reyes, Inc., which Cardinal Sin has dubbed as "an answer to the confusion obtained in our intellectual world today."

Throughout the 70s, he has also been delivering a two-year series of lectures on "Theology for Laymen", covering fundamental theology, the creed, sacraments, liturgy, Church history, morals and so forth, under the sponsorship of the Bahahaw Cultural Center, Quezon City, while serving as chaplain and spiritual director of several other educational centers for people of all levels of society.

EPISCOPAL MOTTO: "LAXABO RETE"

TEXT: "MASTER, WE HAVE WORKED HARD ALL NIGHT LONG AND HAVE CAUGHT NOTHING; BUT IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL LOWER THE NETS" (Luke 5:5).

There is an old Jewish story which might help set the tone for this episcopal ordination of BISHOP-ELECT LUCILO B. QUIAMBAO, Auxilliary Bishop for the Diocese of Legazpi.

One day a young fugitive, who was trying to hide himself from the military, entered a small Jewish village. The people of that village were very kind to him, giving him a safe place to stay. But when the soldiers started searching the houses looking for the fugitive, everyone became nervous and fearful. The soldiers threatened to burn the village and kill every man in it, unless the young fugitive were handed over to them before dawn.

The people then went to their rabbi and asked him what to do. The rabbi, who was caught in the dilemma whether to hand over the boy to the enemy or to have his people killed, withdrew into his room, took his bible and started to read — hoping to find an answer before dawn. After many hours, his eyes fell on the words: "It is better that one man dies than the whole people be lost."

The rabbi closed the book, called the soldiers and told them where the boy was hidden. And so the young fugitive was apprehended, tortured and killed. And there followed a big feast in the village because the rabbi had save the life of the people. But the rabbi did not join the celebration. He stayed instead in his room feeling very, very sad and remorseful.

At that moment a prophet entered and asked: "Rabbi, what have you done?" The rabbi said: "I handed over the young fugitive to the enemy." Then the prophet said: "But don't you know that the young man you have handed over is the Messiah?" "But how could I know?" anxiously replied the rabbi. Then the prophet said: "If, instead of reading your bible, you had tried to visit this young boy and looked into his eyes, perhaps you would have known."

My dear Brothers and Sisters, the young boy is now a *man* — a full grown courageous man. In fact, it took only a second reading of the Bible and a second look into the eyes of the man for the "Rabbi" of Legazpi to decide...and finally, hand him over. Today, the once young fugitive — the man, bravely stands before us — all just too willing and ready to "die".

But — levity aside — that precisely is the meaning of one's Ordination to the fullness of Christ's Priesthood — the Episcopacy. To *die* to one's self and will completely and unconditionally — by "emptying one's self". To *die* so that he can be possessed absolutely by Christ and be a consistent Apostle of his Incarnation. And so with Paul, the Apostle and Bishop to the Gentiles, the *Chosen One* can truly say: "I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Our Bishop-Elect beautifully and succinctly expresses *his* "dying" in the very words of Simon Peter now adapted for his episcopal motto: "LAXABO RETE" — "Master, if you say so, I will lower the nets" (Luke 5:5).

Now, what precisely does "dying" mean to Simon in the context of that fishing episode? If we may borrow some of the favorite "catch-words" of our contemporary lingo, we can perhaps describe Simon as a man from the "grassroots." A fisherman by profession through "non-formal education" or through *praxis*, Simon had been *immersed* through and through in the world of fish and in the fishing industry. Supposedly, too, he had a clear *analysis of the structure* of the sea-world, as well as valuable *insights* into the *ecological* and *environmental* pressures affecting the behavior and life-pattern of the schools of fish in the Sea of Galilee. And with Simon's fishing *experience and expertise*, he surely must have possessed the knack of reading the "signs of the skies" that signalled when and where and what fishes were there to catch. In short, Simon Peter was truly a veteran fisherman — *the* expert and authority in the science of fishing out there by the Sea of Galilee.

But that whole night must have been one of their rarely unlucky nights. They caught absolutely nothing. Tired and exhausted, they were all set with their nets for home. At this point, a young man — allegedly a carpenter by profession who perhaps never had his feet immersed in the waters of that sea — arrived into the scene... walked over to Simon... coached on

him when and where to fish...then finally, *ordered* the exhausted Simon to put out and lower the nets once again into the deep.

My dear Friends, if you were Simon — *the* expert, *the* authority, *the* veteran fisherman, who probably had for the first time met the man — how would you honestly feel? How would you feel — if you were just as *normal* as Simon who could be rugged and temperamental as he had been?

Some psycho-religious experts would perhaps tell us Religious, that the possible strong “negative feelings and reactions” arising from that situation, if repeatedly experienced, might just build up to some disturbing inward “struggle and tensions” which, if not duly overcome, might boil up to some forms of “crisis”. And these “human crises”, they tell us, might be identified probably as “crisis of authority”... or “crisis of identity” or even perhaps what they would commonly call a “crisis of relevance.” Men of faith, on the other hand, also tell us that all these forms of “human crisis” simply boil down to a “crisis of Faith” or in plain language — the *lack* or *loss of faith*.

Simon Peter, however, at least for once and for that singular moment, obliged and allowed himself to let his heart take over his dizzy head — curiously perhaps just to enable himself to *see* what blinded reason always fails to see... or to understand what only “fools” and children can understand. And so utterly “emptying himself,” Simon — the authority and expert fisherman — submissively *in faith* bowed to the Master: “...if you say so, I will lower the nets.” Friends, that was Simon’s way of “dying” ...a “death” by an act of faith solely on the strength of God’s Word.

But, Simon Peter’s Faith *is* the very foundation of our life and mission as Christians, as Religious, as Priests and Bishops of Christ. This same Faith, however, is what is being challenged and put to test today by the standards of our secularized World and Age — the Age of Technology, or what they love to call the “Age of Relevance.”

The challenge today, they tell us, *is* to be relevant. And to be “relevant” you must be *immersed* — immersed in the life and needs of the “grassroots” (“*Babad na babad sa tao*... And hopefully, too, “*babad na babad din sa Ebanghelyo*). And they also tell us that to be relevant your knowledge about the world must be *experiential* — not merely theoretical. And you should

have some kind of an *expertise* that should qualify you to a position of *authority*. . . . Outside of that you have no place for your noble mission under the sun. Not even our religious habit or clerical attire — they tell us — will get people to revere us Religious, as they used to in the Age of Faith — not anymore. Today, we have to earn it, and to earn it — we are told — we must "dialogue" with the world. . . . We must accommodate. . . . We must conform. . . . We must be *immersed* — and immersed we become one "in spirit and in truth" with the relevant secularized world. And now we become relevant. . . . We are "in". Perhaps, we can fish now merely on the strength of our fishing "tools and paraphernalia and expertise." Peter, in fact, did. . . . But it turned out to be "dark" . . . too dark for him to catch fish that whole night.

To be consistently relevant, the next challenge is to tune in always to the "signals" coming through from the Lab-stations of Science and Technology. Amazingly, its *analysis of the structure* of the world's human problems is indeed impressive — impressive, because its solution is fast, efficient, relevant and overpowering. In the face, for instance, of massively structured political and social injustices and oppression, the only option — to be relevant and effective — is the *option for violence*. And the temptation is indeed becoming more and appealing even to some of us — the "chosen peacemakers" of God whose "folly is wiser than men, and whose weakness more powerful than men." Peter at least once had succumbed to that temptation which drew a fast reproach from the Lord and Master: "Put back that sword where it belongs, for those who live by the sword will die by the sword." Peter was just trying to be practical and relevant — though not really too effective. Perhaps he lacked the "expertise".

Immersed in the spirit and mood of the world, one becomes now more understanding and sympathetic with the cause to "humanize" — to its "emotional limits" what is of the Divine. In effect, some begin to question the practicality and relevance of a "consecrated celibate love," of a "self-emptying poverty," and of a "freeing and liberating obedience." Now the "immersion" is complete.

Ironically, the Church whose Founder had originally equipped her with a redeeming "Faith-message" — precisely if only to be *relevant* for all times to a faithless atheistic world — is now being branded "irrelevant" simply because she refuses to

compromise and conform to the false values and spirit of the world. And yet, many of His "chosen ones" perhaps get lured and swim right into its "fishing nets". Is our Faith withdrawing and removing itself from the Hand of Him who has promised to maintain it and sustain us? Or, as classically expressed by the "false prophets" of this secularized Age and time: "If — *instead of reading your bible, you had tried to visit this young man and looked into his eyes, perhaps you would have known.*"

Friends, please don't get me wrong. We are not trying to close our eyes and disregard the stark realities and reasonable demands or requirements by the world we have got to save. Muchless, are we trying to advocate the one extreme belief — that God can do everything and so man may do nothing; or, the other extreme — that man can do everything so God may do nothing. Rather, we seek to strike a balance, inspired and motivated by Faith, for the golden truth lies in-between the two as expressed by St. Paul: "I can do all things in God who gives me strength"; or, as embodied in the Bishop-Elect's motto: "Master, if you say so, I will lower the nets."

We hear it from among ourselves that — to be a Bishop or a Religious Superior of a Community today is an "extremely difficult" or an "impossible task." Certainly, it will be "*extremely difficult*"... if one attempts always to try to please everybody all the time — for convenient personal security or for fear of the Cross. "*Extremely difficult*" indeed... if one believes he has an exclusive monopoly of the charism of getting people always to listen to him but not himself listening to them. "*Extremely difficult*"... if one's concept of his authority and power is not one of *service* and of *stewardship* that demands accountability to God and to the people he serves. And similarly, it will be "impossible" indeed... if one allows himself to fall into the temptation of presumptuously "playing God" to his people or to his community. And finally, it will be "*impossible*"... if one is not utterly committed to his being a "*Priest-and-Victim*" to be broken daily for others... committed to his being a *King* — not so much to govern as an "arm-chair administrator" as to tend his flock as a real shepherd and pastor... committed to his being a *Prophet* to teach and challenge undauntedly the false values and maxims of the times, utterly trusting in His comforting assurance: "And know that I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Brothers and Sisters, Simon Peter's "emptying himself" by his act of faith and unconditional trust in the Word of the Master, is a gentle reminder to us all — that the success or failure of our "fishing venture" is based not so much on the guarantees of our expertise or relevance as on the strength or weakness of our faith in Him who orders: "Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch."

And so Peter sees the huge catch. And he falls on his knees at the feet of the Lord. He has felt his smallness and the nothingness of his expertise and scientific fishing technique before the extremely overpowering miracle of Faith. Perhaps, like Simon Peter, we too should ask the Lord — not so much to "depart" from us as to accept us and forgive our presumptions and unbelief....

And to you, Bishop Quiambao, the Lord's call is even louder and clearer: "Do not be afraid (anymore). From now on you will be a fisher of men." Congratulations to you. And welcome to the fishing industry.

(*HOMILY DELIVERED BY BISHOP JOSE C. SORRA, D.D., BISHOP OF VIRAC, AT THE EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF BISHOP-ELECT LUCILO B. QUIAMBAO AT ST. SCHOLASTICA CHAPEL IN MANILA ON APRIL 27, 1982*).

HISTORY

IV. DOMINICAN TOWNS IN BATAAN

By

Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.

1. A B U C A Y

*Early history of Abucay as "Partido de Bataan."
Its famous Church. The Dutch attack.*

The "Partido de Bataan", which in 1587 was entrusted to the spiritual care of the Dominican Fathers, comprised the area that lies between Orani and Orion. It is an expanse of land, extending from north to south and bounded by the sea in the east and the neighboring mountains in the west.

Here the Dominicans founded their first town in Bataan—and their second in the Philippines, the first being San Carlos in Pangasinan. This Mission was known for many years by the name of "Partido de Bataan."

Its population in 1587 barely reached the number of seven hundred "tributes" which were scattered in thirty ranches, some of which were located at the foot of the hills and others in the swampy region close to the sea.¹ In this marshy terrain the missionaries had to travel in search of souls on foot — often unshod — or to ride in a banca, not infrequently under the scorching sun or a heavy downpour. It was perhaps due to these unfavorable circumstances that the former preachers of the Gospel had abandoned those places for more hospitable lands where with a lesser effort they could reap a more abundant harvest.²

After learning the dialect, the missionaries undertook the arduous task of gathering the many ranches into organized

¹ FERRANDO, JUAN, O.P., *Estado de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario en 1848*, MS in AUST, Section "Provincia", pp. 11-12. In the early years a "tribute" was equivalent to about three persons. In the 18th century to four, and in the 19th to five. Therefore, the population of the "Partido de Bataan" must have been about two thousand people.

² *Ibid.*

towns, then called *visitas*, by transferring them to more advantageous places, usually near a river and far from swamps or stagnant waters.

The first town that they founded was officially accepted as a Dominican ministry by the first Provincial Chapter of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary held in Manila on June 10, 1588, under the advocacy or patronage of St. Dominic³. That town was named Abucay only in 1646.

Abucay lies north of Balanga, south of Samal, at half a league from the slopes of the mountains to the west, and almost two kilometers from the seashore to the east⁴.

Its structures for religious purposes⁵ must have been of bamboo cane and nipa shingles at the start, and later of wood in part. The first stone church and convent were built in or before the early forties of the 17th century by Fr. Jerónimo de Belén. The historian Santa Cruz says: "He built of stone the church and convent of Abucay, a spacious structure as far as it is possible hereabouts, the destruction of which at a later time spelled misfortune to the Dutch, as we shall say in its place."⁶

In fact, as we have already said in our previous article, this town was attacked by the Dutch in 1647. The *Alcalde Mayor* of Pampanga, instead of engaging the enemy in *guerrilla* warfare, waited for him behind the walls of the church and convent which, although strong in themselves, could not withstand the power of the artillery, and thus without a struggle and without heeding his followers' insistence to fight in the open, he surrendered unconditionally. The Dutch murdered in cold blood most of the native soldiers many of whom were chieftains, and only those who could manage to jump over the

³ In the founding of towns we have to distinguish from the juridical point of view between towns founded *de jure* and those founded *de facto*. At the outset most of the towns were founded *de facto*, i.e., without any intervention of the civil authorities, at least as far as we know; later, especially in the 19th century, they were established in accordance with all civil requisites, as we shall later see.

⁴ FERRANDO, *Estado . . .*, 12v. To adhere strictly to historical truth and facts, we shall speak of leagues as our sources do. A terrestrial league is equivalent to 4.225 kms.; the maritime league to 5.572 kms.

⁵ The buildings of a parish in the Philippines have been, and still are: the church, the *convento* or rectory, the cemetery with its chapel, and the *barrio* chapels or *visitas*.

⁶ BALTASAR DE SANTA CRUZ, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Zaragoza*, 1693, p. 47, col. 2.

windows or took shelter in the nearby thickets were spared. However, the Dutch kept prisoner the *Alcalde Mayor*, Diego Antonio de Cabrera, and the Dominicans Tomás Ramos and Jerónimo de Sotomayor, in the hope of obtaining a high ransom for them. These three were later taken to Djakarta, but the priests, once freed, drowned at sea on their return trip⁷.

Under the aegis of the Dominican Fathers, the ruined church and convent soon gave way to new equally solid and beautiful buildings, although we cannot say, for lack of informative sources, who restored them and when. The buildings that have come down to our times are in all likelihood those which rose over the ruins of Father Belen's structures, since there is no record of any war, earthquake or any other calamity having damaged them to a considerable extent until 1942, except for the fire of 1870.

Social and cultural achievements of an outstanding Vicar⁸

An outstanding Vicar of the early years of evangelization was Father José Blancas. He was a zealous preacher and an observant Religious. He is also known for having written a *Tagalog Grammar* and the words of the first letters of a *Tagalog Vocabulary*, continued later by Frs. Miguel Ruiz and Tomás de los Reyes, who also were Vicars of Abucay. Besides he composed some devotional books in the same dialect and

⁷ In Blair & Robertson we found the following additional data on the church of Abucay in 1647: "Patio made of stone..." (XXXV, 265); "they burned the convent and the woodwork of the church, but the fire did not extend to the altar..." (*ibid.* 268). "This village has a very costly substantial church and convent, built of stone, in sight of the sea, belonging to the Fathers of St. Dominic" (*ibid.* 262). "Church ordered demolished by civil authorities" (XXXVI, 119).

⁸ The towns or ministries founded by the Dominicans in the Philippines were called "Vicariás" and their Pastors "Vicars" from the beginning until 1898. The reason was that the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Order of Preachers in the Philippines was essentially a missionary Province and as such it did not consist of at least the three regulatory convents, as the other Provinces of the Order required, but of the Convent or Mother House of Santo Domingo de Manila and of the Mission Stations called "Vicariás". The "Vicariás" were regional and local. The regional "Vicaría" roughly corresponding to a civil province, was governed in the name of the Provincial by a Vicar, while the local "Vicariás" — equivalent to towns — were under local Vicars. In turn the towns consisted of, besides the "población", or town proper, a number of "Visitás" each of which corresponding to one or more barrios or *barangays* of today. The "Visitás" were provided with a chapel built of light or strong materials, and many of them eventually became "Vicariás" and towns.

bequeathed to posterity a collection of sermons in Tagalog which unluckily was among the losses in the burning of Santo Domingo Convent in 1941. However, there is a copy of the same book in the National Library⁹.

During Father Blancas' stay in Bataan there was a printing press there. As it seems, during the years 1609-1612 the first press of movable types, "semi-invented" in Binondo some years earlier by Father Blancas with the help of Juan de Vera, a Chinese, was then temporarily transferred to Abucay.¹⁰ But during the same period some books were apparently printed in Binondo, using perhaps for the molding of the types the same matrices cast at Binondo in 1602. So in 1610 or thereabouts there were probably two different presses, one in Binondo and the other in Bataan, using types cast in the same mold¹¹.

In this year Father Blancas printed in Bataan, where he had been assigned by the Provincial Chapter of 1610¹², the *Arte y Reglas de la Lengua Tagálog*, which is a masterpiece of printing, if we take the period into account.

Holiness among the natives of Abucay and the "Partido de Bataan."

When giving a brief but glowing description of the town of Abucay in 1690, Father Peguero had this to say about the virtue of the natives: "...they have been always very good Christians, and from time to time there have been many persons of deep prayer and rare virtue"¹³.

The most outstanding example among them all is perhaps a woman named Melchora. The historian Father Salazar writes about her:

"The name of this native woman was Melchora, but her family name is not known, because she was usually called 'Mel-

⁹ PELÁEZ, JOSÉ DIEGO, O.P., *Abucay-Bataan*, MS in APSR, Section "Bataan", Vol. 1, Doc. 3, Fol. 1 (52).

¹⁰ VELASCO, MARIANO, O.P., *Ensayo de Bio-bibliografía*, MS in APSR, Section "Bibliografías", Vol. I, p. 71 ff.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, Manila, Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1872, Vol. 1, p. 65.

¹³ PEGUERO, JUAN, O.P., *Compendio historial*, MS in AUST, Section "Provincia," Fol. 12.

Augustinian Order and other Religious Families should be reinstated into the administration of the curacies and "doctrinas" in the Philippines which they had as of before the issuance of the Royal Cedula of December 11, 1776. Besides, he forbade the Bishops and Vice Royal Patron to secularize any curacy without an express order from his Royal Majesty²⁰.

The imprint left in Abucay by two 19th century Vicars

On March 19, 1836, Father Jesualdo Miñano, O.P., was the Dominican priest who accepted and administered Abucay when it was reassumed by the Dominican Order, and was its Vicar until August 17, 1838. Father Bonifacio Cabero relieved him for a while, but on October 4 of the same year, Father Alberto Planas took over until May 6, 1860. He is one of the best known among the Vicars of Abucay and even of Bataan²¹.

For many years he was also Vicar Forane of Bataan, and for some time Vicar Provincial. He was a zealous parish priest and a tireless preacher. As we have already mentioned in our preceding article, together with Father Benito Rivas and with the support of the *Alcalde Mayor*, he worked hard in the attraction and conversion of the Aetas of his jurisdiction. They planned for them barrios with huts near the *población*, cleared out the fields and had them planted with different crops, but to their dismay and frustration the Aetas withdrew to the forests whence they came²².

The next Vicar, truly worthy of the name, who left a deep imprint in Abucay, was Father José Diego Peláez. On May 27, 1870, while he was absent in Orani, a fire destroyed part of the town, including the church and the convent with all that they contained. In the convent only the Register of the Dead was spared. In 1888, he had already rebuilt the whole church and most of the convent. In 1882, due to a cholera epidemic, he moved

²⁰ JOAQUÍN FONSECA, O.P., *Historia de los PP. Dominicos*, Madrid, 1871, Imprenta y Esterotipia de M. R. Rivadeneyra, Vol. V, p. 527. JOAQUÍN RODRIGUEZ SAMPEDRO, *Legislación Ultramarina*, Madrid, Imprenta de Manuel Minuesa, 1866, Vol. VII, pp. 773-775, where the Royal Decree is found.

²¹ PELAEZ, *loc. cit.*, Fol. 52.

²² *Ibid.*, Fol. 52v.

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the cemetery to the outskirts of the *población*, though he was unable to enclose it within a stone fence. He died, still Vicar of Abucay, on May 21, 1892²³.

Statistics on population

Partido de Bataan, 1587	700 tributes
Santo Domingo de Bataan, 1621 ²⁴	1,350 inhabitants
Abucay, 1751 ²⁵	1,846 "
Abucay, 1848 ²⁶	5,797 "
Abucay, 1898 ²⁷	8,151 "

The Dominicans leave Abucay

Then, on the last days of May of 1898 the end came, when at the start of the second phase of the Philippine Revolution, the Spanish forces of Coronel Lucas de Francia, stationed in northern Bataan, being unable to resist the onslaught of the insurgents, retreated to Pampanga. With him went the Dominican Vicars of Abucay, Samal, Orani and Hermosa, thus, terminating the centenary labors of the Friars Preachers in Bataan and more concretely in Abucay. Its last Dominican Vicar was Father Francisco Govea.

2. SAMAL

Location

This town is bounded on the south by Mabatang at a distance of half a league, on the north by Orani at less than a league away, on the east by the sea that caresses the patio of the Church with its billows, and on the west by Mt. Samat, half a league afar²⁸.

²³ OCIO, HILARIO MARÍA, O.P., *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila, Establecimiento tipográfico del Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1895, p. 775.

²⁴ *Lista de las casas o doctrinas que tenía la Provincia en 1621*, MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios," Vol. IV, Doc. 1, Fol. 1 (385).

²⁵ *Informe al Rey nuestro Señor, año de 1751*, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelánea," Vol. III, Fol. 47 v.

²⁶ *Estado General de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario... perteneciente al año de 1848*, Revista Católica, No. XCI, enero de 1848, Barcelona, Imprenta y Librería de D. Pablo Riera, 1850, p. 466.

²⁷ OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 1, p. 53.

²⁸ FERRANDO, *op. cit.*, Fol. 12.

Origins

Samal, the second town founded by the Dominicans in the old "Partido de Bataan," under the patronage of St. Catherine of Siena, started, as so many other towns in the Philippines, as a "Visita," of Abucay, and as such was accepted by the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary in the Provincial Chapters of 1596 and 1598. As a Visita, it was not supposed to have a resident priest, although it had its own chapel, where the Vicar of Abucay or one of his assistants, when needed, used to say Mass and to administer the Sacraments. Samal, however, was an exceptional case, for, as it grew in Christian population, it was provided with a permanent priest, though unofficially.

In 1641, Samal had gained such an ascendancy that the Provincial Chapter held in that year decided to raise it to the rank of Vicaría. By this time, Samal had its own Visitas, namely, those of San Pedro Mártir de Babuyan, and of Our Lady of Orani. Its first Vicar was Father Tomás Ramos.

Church buildings

According to Father Juan Peguero, "two churches of stone were built, one in Abucay and the other in Samal, both so spacious and artistic that they could have called the attention even in the Court (*i. e., in Madrid*), but which were ordered demolished by the Governor in 1647, to hinder the Dutch in using them as strongholds behind their massive walls". The church of Samal had been built by Father Juan Zubelsú. Father Ocio adds that the new churches built over the ruins of those destroyed were as good as, if not better than, the original ones²⁹.

The Dutch attack: the tide turns

After the sack and burning of Abucay in 1647, the Dutch turned their arms to Samal, sending a small foraging party in boats, perhaps to look for provisions. But a small garrison of Pampangueños repelled them, killing some and forcing the rest to retreat to their boats. This happened in the month of July. Later in October, the Dutch General, in order to protect his men from the fury of typhoons, stationed them in

²⁹ OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, p. 54.

Mariveles, but then an epidemic brought perhaps by the humidity of the surrounding forests sent the General himself and many of his remaining men to the grave. Thereupon the rest left for Djakarta³⁰.

An illustrious victim at the hands of the Negritos
(1727)

In the church of Samal was buried Father Antonio Pérez, who, having been entrusted with the spiritual care of the Pangasinanes who were cutters of timber at the foot of the mountains for the construction of ships, went to Samal on the occasion of the town fiesta to visit his Provincial Superior. But on his way back the Negritos waylaid him. These nomads of the forests killed him with a shower of arrows, then chopped his head off and took it to their lair, wrapped in a piece of his own habit. After many days, however, the head was retrieved, still intact and uncorrupted, and was buried in the same grave as his body. He had labored in Zambales for eleven years and sixteen in Pangasinan, where he had founded the town of Salasa.³¹ Indeed the Negritos had been harassing the missionaries now and then.

The Negrito problem was not new in Samal. During his term of office Governor General Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera received a request from the Gobernadorcillo Don Pedro Dimasangcay to the effect that the people there be exempted from the payment of taxes and from *bandalas*³², which they were hard put to pay because often they could not cultivate their fields, since the Negritos often swooped down from the mountains, killing people in the rice fields and even in the very towns³³.

³⁰ SANTA CRUZ, *op. cit.*, p. 104, cols. 2, 105.

³¹ *Acta Capitulum Provincialium*, Vol. II, pp. 185-186.

³² *Bandala* or *Vandala* was "the requisitioning of rice and other products from the Filipinos by the government at fixed price. Besides being lower than the market price, the amount was often paid late or not at all" (John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City, 1979, p. 409).

³³ Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Binondo", Vol. I, Fol. 1.

Samal is turned over to the secular clergy (1768)

The ministry of Samal was handed over by its Vicar, Father Diego Garrido, to *Bachiller* Anastasio Medonio on June 27, 1768³⁴.

Vicissitudes under the Dominican administration during the 19th century

When the Dominicans returned to Samal in 1841, its first Vicar was Father Pedro Payo, who in time would become an Archbishop of Manila. He found the church, rebuilt in the second half of the 17th century, to have been burned in 1836³⁵. The task of reconstructing it and the convent was a difficult one, and no single parish priest could claim the honor to have done it alone, but rather all, or almost all the parish priests of the period contributed to its completion³⁶.

Father Miguel Portell, for one, is said to have defrayed the galvanized iron roofing of the Church, which indeed was less artistic than the tile roof of the original church. He as well had its patio filled and levelled, built the convent, the municipal tribunal and the school with three halls, which by the end of the 19th century could boast of an enrolment of 512 boys and 458 girls attending classes every day³⁷.

Aside from the church, which is 68 yards long, 14 yards wide and nine yards high, the town had a big chapel in the barrio of Calaguiman, dedicated to San Vicente Ferrer, where masses used to be said every Monday, and mothers from the neighboring towns as well as from the nearby provinces like Pampanga and Bulacan used to flock with their children to consecrate them to the Saint³⁸.

The cemetery of this town, like its plaza, is fenced with a walling of lime bricks, constructed by one of its Dominican Vicars.³⁹

³⁴ Cf. APSR, MSS, Section "Bataan", Vol. I, Doc. 24, Fol. 240.

³⁵ TROBAT, JOSE MA., O.P., *Parroquia de Samal*, MS in APSR, Section "Bataan", Vol. I, Doc. 8, Fol. 3 (57) v.

³⁶ OCIO, *Monumento*, p. 54.

³⁷ *Libertas*, "Samal", February 17, 1900.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ PAGUIO, WILFREDO C., *History of the province of Batuan as recorded in the Dominican sources in the Philippines*, Faculty of Graduate School, University of Santo Tomás, June, 1974, pp. 144-145.

IV DOMINICAN TOWNS IN BATAAN 561

Population statistics of Samal

1751	1844 heads ⁴⁰		
1818	2305	"	41
1848	3432	"	42
1898	5293	"	43

The last Dominican Vicar of Samal leaves Bataan

When in the last days of May of 1898, on orders of Aguinaldo, the towns of Southern Bataan rose up in arms, quickly overpowering the small Spanish garrisons of Orion, Pilar and Balanga, the Vicars of the northern towns withdrew to Pampanga under the protective wing of the forces commanded by Coronel Lucas de Francia. But when he and his soldiers surrendered, the Fathers fell into the hands of the insurgents at Hagonoy. Father Miguel Portell, Vicar of Samal, was one of them⁴¹.

⁴⁰ *Informe al Rey Nuestro Señor, año de 1751.* Ms in APSR, Section "Miscelanea", Vol. 3, Fol. 48.

⁴¹ BUCETA, MANUEL y BRAVO, FELIPE, O.S.A., *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico de las Islas Filipinas*, Madrid, 1850, Vol. I, p. 357.

⁴² *Revista Católica*, loc. cit.,

⁴³ OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, p. 54. "The population of this area (i.e., Partido de Bataan) when it was an encomienda of Don Gabriel de Esguerra reached 1,300 tributes. Afterwards, due to wars, epidemics and smallpox and to the labor of cutting timber for the galleons, "bandalas", etc., it went down to about nine hundred tributes, being an encomienda of Fernando Ayala, Francisco de Esteibar and of the King" (Juan de los Angeles, loc. cit., fol. 48).

⁴⁴ HERRERO, ULPIANO, O.P., *Nuestra Prisión*, Manila, 1900, pp. 310-312.

HOMILETICS

BIBLICAL NOTES AND OUTLINES FOR HOMILIES OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1982

by

Fr. Herman Mueller, S.V.D.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 3, 1982)

Today, we meditate on the greatness and beauty of Christian marriage. God made man and wife one flesh (first reading). What God has joined together, no man must put asunder. There must be no divorce (gospel)! — In the independent theme of the second reading the author of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us: Jesus is one with his brothers.

FIRST READING: GENESIS 2:18-24

The Priestly Source (P) (Gen. 1:27) reports how God creates man as the culmination of creation: Only when everything is prepared for man: light and darkness, ocean and dry land, sun, moon and star, fish and birds, and all the other animals does God make mankind, as male and female. Both together only make up the whole man.

The Yahwistic Source (J) in today's first reading (Gen. 2:18-24) lets God create man as the center of creation. Before man is made, nothing can grow. One should read 2:4b-7 as: "At the time when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted yet, for the Lord God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil. And there was no stream welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground yet (obviously again, because there was no man yet who could perform that complicated irrigation system in the Orient which existed in Mesopotamia, the cradle of mankind). Then, the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being."

Then, things can grow with man irrigating the land and tilling the soil. And God places man into the garden of Eden, creates all animals and brings them to man that he names them, i.e. dominates them, knows their essence (for the Jew, a name always expresses the essence of a thing, animal or person). And yet, man is alone and lonely because no animal is his equal. And thus God says: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him (Gen. 2:18)."

And God creates woman out of man's rib (*selá*), after the Lord cast a deep sleep on the man. This rare expression *selá* is not very clear. But in Sumerian mythology there is a curious parallel: A woman was formed from the rib of the god Enlil. She was known as the "Lady of the Rib" as well as the "Lady of Life", since the Sumerian term has the double meaning of "rib" and "life". That last meaning of *selá* has been lost in Hebrew, but if it was there, we can understand why Eve is called "the mother of the living (Gen. 3:20)."

Now, the man is no longer alone and lonely. He breaks out into the nuptial song: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (2:23)." And the consequence is that from now on the man will leave his father and mother, his family, and cling to his wife and both will be *one* flesh, one person for good, for life.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 2:9-11

For six Sundays now, the second reading is taken from the Letter to the Hebrews. It was written 85-90 A.D. (Clement of Rome — ca. 95 A.D. — cites it) by a disciple of Paul, many think by Apollos, to Greek speaking Jewish Christians in Italy (perhaps Rome). It wants to stimulate their somewhat stagnant faith and show them that they have no reason to think that they lost something by leaving the Synagogue and joining the Church. On the contrary, Christ is the true eternal high priest, and his sacrifice is the only, true sacrifice, not the many Jewish sacrifices in the Temple. This central theme, the Priesthood of Christ, nowhere occurs in the Pauline Epistles. Furthermore, the style of the Letter to the Hebrews is different, the manner of citing Scripture, the arrangement (doctrine and exhortation alternate throughout; whereas Paul brings first the dogmatic part and then, the didactic OT exhortatory part of the whole letter); and there is no reference to Paul's important

topic: justification by faith, not by the Law, although the letter is written to Judaeo-Christians: all reasons why Paul cannot be the author.

The content: Part I (1:5-2:18) Christ is superior to the angels. Part II (3:1-5:10) Jesus is the faithful high priest. Part III (5:11-10:39) Jesus is the true high priest. Part IV (11:1-12:13) Adherence to Christ through persevering faith. Part V (12:14-18) Orientation of Christian life compared with the religious situation as seen in the OT.

Today's second reading is taken from the first part. The Letter starts with a wonderful introduction (1:1-4): God has spoken to us in many different ways through the prophets. But at the end, he spoke to us through his only Son who redeemed us and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, superior to the angels. Part I tells us (1) that Christ is superior to the angels because he is Son of God (1:5-14). (2) Therefore, we must recognize his authority (2:1-4). (3) Christ is brother of men (2:5-18).

As Son of God, Christ is closer to God than the angels. But because of this he is not farther from us. His sacrifice (on the cross) led him to the glory of the Father and effected his solidarity with us. Jesus begins his life "lower than the angels (2:9)," on our level, and even dies for us, and thus, he becomes the pioneer of our salvation (2:9). Christ's glorification is no evasion from human condition. Rather, his glorification is based on the acceptance of painful realities of human life, including suffering and death (2:10). Through this suffering he has been made perfect (2:10; 5:8-9). Christ took our painful condition and made of it the way of true life. By this suffering, he showed solidarity with us; and glorified, he calls us his brothers (2:11). Thus, Christ who sanctifies and we are sanctified (by him) have all one origin: God the Father, and Christ makes and calls us his brothers.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 10:2-16

The pericope consists of two parts: (1) indissolubility of marriage (10:2-12), (2) Christ's blessing of the children (10:13-16). The section might have been an early catechesis on marriage, followed by a section on family. The short form omits the second half. And then, the first reading and gospel correspond perfectly.

On Jesus' way to Jerusalem, to his death, Pharisees come up to test him (in a malicious way): "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" This formulation probably goes back to Mark, who asks that question "Is divorce allowed?" for his Christians. For a Jew, divorce was possible, and thus, a Pharisee would have rather asked as we have it in the parallel version of Mt. 19:3: "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" A Jew would ask: For what reason is divorce allowed?"

Deut. 24:1 states: "When a man after marrying a woman and having relations with her, is later displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent (*'erwath dabar*), and therefore, he writes out a bill of divorce and hands it to her, thus, dismissing her from his house... then her former husband, who dismissed her, may not again take her as his wife after she has become defiled." Thus, a discussion arouse what this *'erwath dabar*, this something indecent, is. The strict Shammai understood "adultery" by it. The lax Hillel explained it as any offense and displeasure like burning the soup. Would Jesus have sided with Shammai, he would have been condemned as too strict, would he have sided with Hillel, they would have judged him lax.

Jesus escapes the dilemma and rejects the legislation of Moses in Deut. 24 as a concession to human weakness, to the hardness of heart of the Jews, not as a commandment. They just do not understand the original meaning of marriage, expressed in Genesis 2:21-24: Man and wife shall be *one* flesh and form such an intimate and close unity that they leave their former close family unity. Such a marriage is not man-made but God-made, and thus, cannot be dissolved by man.

If someone divorces his wife and marries another, he commits adultery. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery. The latter was not allowed for Jews, but only for Romans. Thus, Marks adapts the saying of Christ to Roman circumstances.

The second half of the gospel talks about Christ's attitude toward children. Children in the ancient world were neither to be seen nor to be heard. Even the Jews considered it a waste of time to occupy oneself with children because they could not yet understand the law and the doctrine of salvation. This probably was also the reason why the apostles wanted to keep them away from Jesus. Christ, however welcomes them, takes them in his arms and blesses them (said only in Mark) by

laying on hands. And he proposes them as model for those who want to receive the kingdom of God. Since this happens in baptism, many see in the expression "do not hinder them" (*kōluete*) an insinuation of infant baptism, referred to here in Mk. 10:14 and Jn. 3:3-4. The expression *kōluen* = hinder is used in connection with baptism in Acts 8:36; 10:47; Mt. 3:13-14.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to such persons like children: small, insignificant, guileless, open trustful, obedient in faith, who can say "Abba" (Father) to God with childlike candor and familiarity, not self-opinionated, dependent upon the Father, not closed off by pride in his own knowledge and accomplishment, readily accepting what is given to him without claiming anything, since the kingdom is a gift, which one enters or receives, bearing no grudges, accepting authority.

This is obviously a separate topic for a homily.

HOMILY

"THEY ARE NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE." THE GREATNESS OF MARRIAGE

1. When we read the Book of Genesis with its anthropomorphic style, picturing God like a man, we may smile and think that we can write better. And yet, both writers, the author of the Priestly Source (P) and the author of the Yahwistic Source (J) were really theologians and had deep insight into God and man. Among other things, they also described the nature of man and also the greatness, beauty and essence of marriage. Nobody has surpassed that statement.

2. The author of the Priestly Source pictures man as the culmination of creation, to be more exact, man as man and woman. Only when God has prepared everything for man does the Lord create man. Man could not live without light and darkness, the firmament separating water above the sky from water below sun, moon and stars, birds and fish and all the many animals. And then, humanly speaking, God deliberates before he goes on to his culminating act of creation. (When he creates the universe, he just speaks and there it is.) "God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen. 1:26).'" Man is created after the image and likeness of God

because he shall rule as God rules: "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground (1:26)." All this reminds of Ps. 8: "What is man that you should be mindful of him . . . You have made him little less than the angels . . . You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet (Ps. 8:5-7)."

Who this man created according to God's image and likeness, becomes clear in Gen. 1:27: "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them." Man is man *and* female. Only husband and wife together make up the whole man. The male alone is one-sided as the female alone is one-sided. Only both together form the whole person. From that angle, man is created to marry so that he can become complete and whole.

3. a. The oldest theologian, the Yahwist portrays man as the center of creation. Nothing can grow before man is created. And so the second creation story starts with a long sentence telling us what did not exist yet: When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, there was no field shrub yet on earth, and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the Lord God had sent no rain yet and there was no man to till the soil and no irrigation well was welling up, watering all the surface because there was no man. But then, "the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being (Gen. 2:7)."

b. Now that man is there, things can grow since man irrigates the land, which was very important in Mesopotamia the cradle of mankind according to the Bible, the present war-torn Iraq. A paradise at that time had to have plenty of water. Here in the garden of Eden are even four rivers. As nice as the paradise is, God says what the man feels and men have felt ever since: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him (Gen. 2:18)." God forms all the various animals and brings them to the man. The man rules them by giving them a name, which expresses the essence of each animal. But "none" (of the animals) proved to be the suitable partner for him man (2:20)." Man is still alone in the midst of all the animals he rules.

c. Thus, the Lord God "cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman

the rib that he had taken from the man (2:21-22)." Woman is the dream of a man, his better half, the one whom he can lean on, his helper and adviser, his supplement.

God brings the woman to the man who then shouts out for joy: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh this one shall be called 'woman' (*'ishah*), for out of her 'man' (*'ish*) this one has been taken (2:23)," This woman is of the same nature as the man; they are equals. There is, of course, a difference; but this is almost secondary. The man is in Hebrew *'ish* and the woman *'ishah* which the English "man" and "woman" imitates. "Flesh" and "bones" express in Hebrew the whole human person, not just that particular part of his body. And if man is called "flesh" it means something good; otherwise, the man would not have been jubilating. But perhaps one could consider "flesh" as man in his frailty and "bones" as man with his strength. Man is both.

d. Since God has created man and woman, since he has made them as oriented toward one another, as supplement of one another, "a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body (flesh) (2:24)," one person.

e. God has created man and woman. Before he makes the woman, he even deliberates ("I will make a suitable partner for him — 2:18") which in the report of the Priestly source is said when God creates man, which of course means man *and* woman (1:26). Marriage is installed by God himself, is God-made, not just man-made. And thus, it cannot be dissolved by man.

f. There is, to be honest, a certain subordination of woman in this story: Man is created by God directly; woman, however, is created by God via man, from "his rib". This is even for St. Paul the reason to deduce that woman must obey man and that woman must cover her head as a sign of her subordination to man (1 Cor. 11:7-8). But this is not the main idea here in Genesis; rather, both are equal.

4. To the beauty of these texts in Genesis Jesus did not have to add anything, but he tried to restore them in their original grandeur.

a. Human as we are, people will try to find a way out of the indissolubility of marriage. Otherwise, some people would find marriage just too hard as we hear it from the apostles in the other parallel report: "If that is the case between man

and wife (i.e. if they cannot divorce) it is better not to marry (Mt. 19:10)." But Jesus insists in the indissolubility and grants the possibility not to marry only to those who received a special charism from God, the charism of celibacy: "Let him accept this teaching (of celibacy) who can (Mt. 19:12)."

b. So even if we admit that the Church made some exceptions to the dissolubility of marriage, as St. Paul with the so-called Pauline Privilege: When a partner of a pagan couple that was validly married becomes Catholic and the pagan partner does not want to live with his Catholic partner in peace and harmony, the Catholic partner can re-marry (1 Cor. 7:12-16); and if some hope that the Church will find and permit more exceptions, we should not easily say that this indissolubility of marriage is an ideal which is not in our reach; otherwise, Christ will have to blame us also of hardness of heart.

5. The apostles went on elaborating the greatness of marriage:

a. For Paul and his disciples the mystery of mutual love between husband and wife can be understood only if we consider it a following of the love between Christ and his Church: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church. He gave himself up for her to make her holy, purifying her in the bath of water by the power of the word to present to himself a glorious church, holy and immaculate, without stain or wrinkle or anything of that sort (Eph. 5:25-27)."

b. Husband and wife sanctify one another (1 Cor. 7:14). That's one main purpose of marriage.

c. They shall guard one another in sanctity and honor not in passionate desire as do the Gentiles who know not God (1 Thes. 4:4-5).

6. Only indissolubility of marriage can bring out some of the finest qualities in man and woman:

a. They can *supplement* one another. They take themselves as they are with their good qualities and limitations. Nobody can be supplemented who is not limited. So nobody should be surprised to find out his or her limitations, but rather expect them. On the other side, nobody is so poor that he or she could not contribute to the perfection of the partner. This is a life-process.

b. Only those who stay together for life are *reliable*. It is one of the finest qualities in a person to be reliable. Mistakes and failures there will be, but they can be forgiven and improved on. We all need forgiveness.

c. Only those who stay together for good will be *responsible* people: responsible to God, responsible to one another and responsible to their children.

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(October 10, 1982)

Already Solomon considered wisdom more important and more worthy than riches (first reading). That same wisdom, which is a grace of God, will enable us to sell everything and follow Christ. For only one who abandons everything can be a disciple of Christ (gospel). — The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that the word of God effects what it says (second reading).

FIRST READING: WISDOM 7:7-11

The second part of the Book of Wisdom (6:1-9:19) is an encomium of Wisdom, describing its origin and value for rulers. After the rulers are addressed to seek after wisdom (6:1-23) Solomon is portrayed as teacher of wisdom (6:24-9:19). Solomon promises to describes wisdom (6:24-27). His wisdom was given to him in answer to prayer (7:1-14).

Solomon is as human as anybody else, being born of a mother after nine months of pregnancy, was reared in swaddling clothes and cried as any baby does (7:1-6). But he knew that wisdom is more important than scepter and throne (6:8), than gold and riches (6:8). He knew also that only God can grant wisdom. Thus, he prayed for wisdom (7:7). This prayer is reported in 1 Kgs. 3:4-15. And God gave him the wisdom which surpassed the wisdom of all his contemporaries, reported in 1 Kgs. 5:9-14 (NAB): "God gave Solomon wisdom and exceptional understanding and knowledge, as vast as the sand on the seashore. Solomon surpassed all the Cedemites and all the Egyptians in wisdom. He was wiser than all other men . . . He uttered three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five . . . Men came to hear Solomon's wisdom from all nations."

The most outstanding sentences of today's first reading are certainly: "All gold, in view of her (wisdom), is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be counted mire (7:9)." "I prayed, and prudence was given me (7:1)." The first read-

ing was selected with the gospel in mind. Then it wants to say: Riches are nothing in comparison to wisdom. But only a wise man can live without riches. Such wisdom is grace only God can give. Thus, one has to pray for this wisdom, for the strength to live without riches.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 4:12-13

As we saw last Sunday, the second part of the Letter to the Hebrews (3:1-5:10) speaks about Jesus the faithful high priest. The first section (3:1-4:14) contrasts first the faithfulness of Moses and of Jesus (3:1-6). Both were faithful, but Jesus surpasses Moses by far. Moses was only the servant in the house of Israel, not the builder of the later synagogue, since only God can be builder. Jesus however, as Son built his Church.

From this follows a warning against unfaithfulness (3:7-14). This is an unfolding of Ps. 95:8-11. God wanted to lead the Jews into the rest of the promised land. But since they did not obey God's commandments and always complained with the exception of Joshua and Caleb they were not allowed to enter the promised land. The Jews missed their "today".

Thus, he has made another "today" for us, the given span of time, to reach our rest, as God rested on the seventh day (4:10). We shall enter our eternal rest in heaven.

And here our reading of today sets in: We will enter this eternal rest, we will reach our eternal destiny, if we are faithful to God's word. 4:12-13 is one of the finest descriptions of the power of the word of God. This word of God is living and active, not just a dead letter with black ink. It does not just talk and say something, but it effects what it says. As in the beginning of creation God simply said "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3) and there was light, so also now things come into being whenever God says something. This word of God as such does not directly speak about the Logos as the Word of God, the second divine person, (as many Fathers of the Church see it), yet, we may also apply it to him and then, we see that Christ as word is present and alive in Scripture because Scripture does not only speak about Christ, but we hear Christ in Scripture.

We cannot hide before the word of God. We stand in front of it, in front of Christ (again if we take it as Logos = Christ).

We have to give ourselves the way we are. The word is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating the intimate recesses of our spiritual being, laying bare and judging all the secrets of our life, putting us before the decision to accept the word of God (and thus Christ) or reject it (him). Nobody can remain neutral, everybody has to take a stand.

As one sees, this is a possible topic for a homily.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 10:17-30

The pericope of today consists of three parts: (1) 10:17-22: an ideal (young) man comes to Jesus inquiring about the conditions of inheriting eternal life and is not willing to sell everything and follow Jesus. (2) 10:23-27: Jesus speaks about the dangers of riches. (3) 10:28-30: Christ outlines the reward of renunciation.

1. A man comes running to Jesus. He is often called "young" man. But judging from what he has already done in his life, he may not have been that young but may have been in the middle age. He is sincere (as Christ's answer proves), but a bit flattering, after all, calling Christ with the unusual title "good teacher". Since the man does not see in Jesus the Messiah yet, and the title "good" is a quasi divine title (at least the way Jesus takes it), the expression "good teacher" can only be a flattering personality cult which Christ rejects. To say that Christ considered himself as mere human, is out of place. He could reject the title in the sense that only the Father is God without origin (whereas the Son is generated by the Father) and thus, the absolute good. Others would reason: Christ tells him: "Why do you call me 'good'? Only God is good. Thus, draw the conclusion that I am God."

The man wants to inherit eternal life and wants to know how he is going to do this. For a Jew the prerequisite would be to observe the commandments. Jesus quotes the commandments of the other tablet dealing with duties toward our neighbors, telling us what not to do with the exception of the positive fourth commandment to honor father and mother. Confidently, not arrogantly, the man points out that he has observed them all from his childhood. Jesus looks at him love (an expression proper to Mark) and tells him that only one thing is missing: He must sell all his possessions and then come and follow Christ be a disciple of his. This the young man is not able to do.

2. Christ looks now at his disciples (before he had looked at the man) and tells them how difficult it is for a rich man (the rich man who left proves it) to enter the kingdom of heaven. The disciples are amazed at this word. But Jesus can only repeat what he said. In fact: "It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. This is obviously an hyperbole and some have tried to soften the expression "eye of a needle" and explain it as small side gate, or put "rope" instead of "camel". But even then, it would be difficult. Christ wants to say with plain words: Practically, it is impossible for a rich man to go to heaven. The reaction of the apostles shows that this is the meaning: "Then who can saved" Humanly speaking no rich man. But God can give anybody his grace, not to keep his riches and become internally detached, but to give away his riches.

3. Peter fast as always and spokesman of the apostles as often, contrasts the young man who could not relinquish his riches and they themselves who left everything and followed Christ. The implicit question (formulated in Mt. 19:27): is: "What reward will we get for this?" Christ answers: Whoever gives up home, brothers or sisters, mother or father, children or property (notice, "wife" is not mentioned. Was it because in later times Peter took his wife along on missionary journeys? cf. 1 Cor. 9:5), for Christ's sake will receive all this back already here on earth a hundredfold (this is only mentioned in Mark), and in the life to come everlasting life. Obviously, Jesus cannot mean that we will receive back material goods a hundredfold (that would forfeit the purpose) but things more than hundredfold precious than what we left. Here Mark has the blessings in mind one receives entering the Christian community, where all are our brothers, sisters, and children, and where we have a home everywhere.

HOMILY

HOLY SCRIPTURE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WEALTH

If we are rich or poor, we all take a look at riches and most of us would like to have a good share of them. But if we are Christians, we have to take a closer and deeper look and ask ourselves: "What does God say about riches and wealth?"

After all, what finally counts in life is the question: 'How can I enter eternal life.' And in that context we have to ask: "Are riches useful for our eternal destiny or an hindrance?"

If we look at Scripture, the Old and the New Testament, there are basically three answers, each of which one can unfold:

I: *Riches are a sign of God's blessing.* This idea we find in the Old Testament.

1. The faithful Israelite was of the opinion that God rewards the good person already here on earth. Thus, wealth is accepted as a blessing of God and a sign of divine benevolence. Abraham is the Father of the Jews and of all believers, the one who has found favor with God. God has told him to leave Ur and go to Haran and then to Canaan since the Lord will make him the father of many nations and in him all shall be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3)." Abraham follows and does as God directs him and thus, the Lord blesses Abraham "in livestock, silver and gold (Gen. 13:2)." Here it is not said explicitly that God gave Abraham all this. But we find this explicit statement in the mouth of Abraham's sermon who goes to Mesopotamia to look for a wife for Abraham's son Isaac: "The Lord has blessed my master so abundantly that he has become a wealthy man; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, and camels and asses (Gen. 24:35)." The same statement is made about Isaac: "Since the Lord blessed him, he became richer all time, until he was very wealthy indeed. He acquired such flocks and herds, and so many work animals, that the Philistines became envious of him (Gen. 26:12).'

2. When God through Moses guides Israel into the promised land, he promises them richest blessings, if they only observe God's commandments. He will give them "a land with fine, large cities . . . with houses full of goods of all sorts . . . with cisterns vineyards and olive groves so that they can eat their fill (Deut. 6:13). If they are lacking nothing (Deut. 8:9), they shall not forget God and remember that only in God's power they could obtain all that wealth (Deut. 8:17).

3. Especially the Wisdom Books are quite optimistic concerning wealth since it was a time of prosperity, by and large. People who work and use their time well will be blessed by God with riches, whereas a lazy person will soon loose what he has: "Go to the ant, O sluggard, study her ways and learn wisdom; for though she has no chief, no commander or ruler, she procures her food in the summer, stores up her provisions in the

harvest. How long O sluggard, will you rest? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest. Then will poverty come upon you like a highwayman, and want like an armed man (Prov. 6:6-11)."

Poverty is a punishment for ignoring God: "When the just man eats, his hunger is appeased. But the belly of the wicked suffers want (Prov. 13:25)." "In the house of the just there are ample resources, but the earnings of the wicked are in turmoil (Prov. 15:6)."

II. *Riches are illusionary dangerous*, is the second insight.

1. Often enough riches are aquired by oppression of the poor as especially the prophets point out. And the rich people easily forget God. This oppression of the poor even viciates the worship of people. Yahweh wants rather charity than sacrifices. "Woe to you who join house to house, who connect field with field till no room remains, and you are left to dwell alone in the midst of the land (Is. 5:8)!" says Isaiah. The houses of the rich "are full of treachery as a bird-cage is of birds. Therefore, they grow powerful and rich, fat and sleek" laments Jeremiah (Jer. 5:27). And Amos, the prophet of social justice tells the rich: "Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land! You ask... We will buy the lowly man for silver, and the poor man for a pair of sandals.... I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentations (Amos 8:4.6.10)." "I hate, I spurn your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemnities. Your cereal offerings I will not accept (Amos, 5:21-22)."

2. Riches are transitory and do not last. Thus, "let not the rich man glory in his riches (Jer. 9:22)!" "A partridge that mothers a brood not her own is the man who acquires wealth unjustly: In midlife it will desert him; in the end he is only a fool (Jer. 17:11)."

3. Even worse, riches cause a lot of worries. The more a persons has, the more he wants to have. He is never satisfied. "Sleep is sweet to the laboring man, whether he eats little or much, but the rich man's abundance allows him no sleep... Riches are kept by their owner to his hurt. Should the riches be lost through some misfortune, he may have a son when he is without means. As he came forth from his mother's womb, so again shall he depart, naked as he came,

having nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand... He goes just as he came... All the days of his life are passed in gloom and sorrow, under great vexation, sickness and wrath (Ecclesiastes 5:11-16)."

4. A rich man is never sure for whom he acquires his riches. Many will take from them to his great distress, and after his death he may have to leave them with somebody to whom he never intended to give anything: "Where there are great riches, there are also many to devour them. Of what use are they to the owner except to feast his eyes upon (Ecclesiastes 5:10)." "There is the man to whom God gives riches and property and honor, so that he lacks none of all the things he craves; yet, God does not grant him power to partake of them, but a stranger devours them (Ecclesiastes 6:2)." — Similar sentences and even stronger we also find in James 5:1-5.

5. Finally, one meets in the Old Testament an attitude outspokenly hostile to riches and in sympathy with poverty. On the one hand, poverty is virtually identified with piety and wealth with godlessness, thus, especially in the psalms: Thus, the psalmist can pray: "Incline your ear, O Lord; answer me, for I am afflicted and poor. Keep my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you (Ps. 86:1-2)." "The Lord sustains the lowly; the wicked he casts to the ground (Ps. 147:63)." A sword the wicked draw; they bend their bow to bring down the afflicted and the poor, to slaughter those whose path is right. But their swords shall pierce their own hearts. Better is the scanty store of the just than the great wealth of the wicked (Ps. 37:14-16)."

III. *We have to choose between God and riches.*

One is almost choked when one comes from the Old Testament to the New Testament and sees what the latter has to say about riches. The change could hardly be more brutal.

1. Nobody can serve two masters: God and Mammon (money). With these words of Christ in Mt. 6:24 one can sum up the pronouncements of Christ concerning possessions.

a. The reason for this is that money easily becomes a god, an idol which claims us fulltime. But only God can demand our services fulltime. Thus, there is an inevitable clash. Here, we can refer back to the second part of homily. Everybody knows from experience how our whole thoughts

and our life can be dominated by the desire for money so that we completely forget about God and the kingdom. One cannot divide the affection between God and money.

b. A rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God. This is demonstrated by the story of today's gospel. A man has observed God's commandments faithfully from his childhood. Jesus loves him (a very rare expression in the gospels) and encourages him to sell everything and give it to the poor and then come and follow him to be his disciple. But he is not able to do it. Then the Lord explains the incident to his disciples: "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Mk. 10:23-25)." In other words, "for a man it is impossible but not for God." With God all things are possible (Mk. 10:27). It does not make sense to soften the expression "eye of a needle" and explain it as small side gate, or put "rope" instead of "camel". The reaction of the disciples makes clear what Jesus meant: It is virtually impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

c. To leave all possessions is in Mark not an advice only for those who want to be perfect (in opposition to Matthew 19:21), in other words, for Religious, but for everybody who wants to follow Christ as a disciple. It is not that riches as such are evil, or that poverty as such is good. There are enough poor people who want to steal and rob.

d. But for Christ wealth is not a blessing of God, or a gift of God that man may enjoy with gratitude and use as a means of increasing his heavenly account and assuring his salvation. He clearly says: "Woe to you rich (Lk. 6:24)!" Only the man who cuts himself off from wealth can escape perdition. One cannot say either that earthly riches are a commodity entrusted by God to the stewardship of men.

2. Yet, Christ was not opposed to the wealthy classes as a social reformer or antagonist. He accepted the hospitality of well-to-do people. There were the women of Galilee whose support and help he accepted (Lk. 8:2f), the two well-to-do sisters of Bethany who were his friends (Lk. 10:38ff; Mk. 14:3-9), the two magistrates Nicodemus (Jn. 19:39) and Joseph of Arimathaea (Mk. 15:43), and also the rich tax superintendent, Zachaeus, who gave away only half his goods (Lk. 19:1-10). None of these is excluded from the kingdom. Thus, it seems that to renounce wealth does not necessarily mean to abdicate proprietorship.

3. And there seems to be one way to escape the dangers of riches in Lk. 16:1-13, although the parable is such much discussed: We must use our riches to give alms to the poor and make us thus, friends in heaven. Then, we can expect God to open for us the difficult road to salvation (Lk. 16:9). The rich man has a responsibility for the poor. The one who serves God gives the money for the poor. True wealth is not what we possess but what we give away.

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(October 17, 1982)

Christ did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as ransom for many (gospel). As the Servant of Yahweh he offers his life in atonement and thus, will see his heirs and have a long life (first reading). He is thus, the highpriest who can feel with us since he was even tempted as we are, but did not sin. Consequently, we can approach him (as brother) with confidence (second reading).

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 53:10-11

This is a very short form of the fourth Servant of Yahweh song of Deutero Isaiah (Is. 52:13-53:12) which in its complete form we saw on Good Friday.

The outstanding features are:

1. The Servant is servant, slave, humble, unassuming.
2. He *gives his life* as an offering for sin (in Greek: *didōmi tēn psychēn hyper* (or as in v. 12 *anti*). In other words, the Servant suffers vicariously, which is said here for the first time. And as we see, Christ applies it to himself in today's gospel, which is again a rare case. Because of his suffering our sins are taken away.

3. Because of his suffering, the Servant shall see his descendants, his heirs. Or as St. Paul would put it: He shall become a "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). That is the paradox: He died that others will live, that others will be born.

4. The Servant himself will see the light in fulness of days, in other words: he will go on living himself because of his suffering and death.

As we will see, the gospel takes up many of these points.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 4:14-16

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews often finishes a section with a conclusion, which at the same time is an inclusion, i.e., repeats the topic which was announced at the beginning of the section. Thus, at the end of Part I of the Letter (1:5-2:18), in 2:17-18 we read: Hence, he had in all things (4:15), to become like (4:15) his brothers so that he might become a merciful (B) (4:16) and a faithful (A) (3:2) highpriest (3:1; 4:15) for the things of God (5:1) in order to expiate the sins of the people (5:3); for in what he suffered (4:15) himself, having been tested (4:15), he is able (4:15) to those being tested to offer help (4:16). Here in these two verses, we have the announcement of the two sections of the pictured as the faithful high priest and section B (4:15-10) he stands before us as the compassionate high priest.

At the end of section A (3:1-4:14), in 4:14 comes now the conclusion-inclusion: Having (4:15) therefore a great high priest (3:1; 4:15) who has gone through the heavens (3:1) — Jesus (3:1), the Son of God — let us hold fast to the profession (3:1). This is the first verse of today's second reading.

Hebr. 4:15-16, the beginning of section B (4:15-5:10) which speaks about Jesus the compassionate high priest, marks the introduction and is a parenthesis. These two verses form the end of today's second reading.

If we write them with the cross-references they look like this:

- 4:15 For we do not have (4:14) a high priest (2:17; 4:14; 5:10) unable (2:18) to suffer (2:18; 5:8) with our weaknesses, but (one) tested (2:18) in all things (2:17) in like manner (2:17) without sin.
- 4:16 Let us approach therefore, with accorded right to the throne of grace so that we might receive mercy (2:17) and find grace for timely help (2:18).

(Taken from: Albert Vanhoye, S.J. *A Structured Translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Rome: Pont-Bibl. Inst. 1964, p. 14).

The main ideas are:

1. Jesus is a *great high priest*. He has gone through the heavens, not just through the holy of holies as the earthly high priest. We have professed faith in him because he is *trustworthy* (faithful) for the relationship with God. He is close to God (as God and as mediator) and us (as our brother).

2. He is *merciful*. He can feel with us since he was tested as we are with the one exception that he did and could not sin.

3. Thus, we must not have fear to draw near to him with full confidence.

The second reading could lend itself to a separate homily on Christ who is really like us, who was even tempted but did not sin. On the other hand, many thoughts by chance fit in with the topic of gospel and first reading: Christ who suffered for us, in this case as the faithful and merciful high priest.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 10:35-45

This pericope marks the end of Jesus' instruction of his disciples about his suffering (Mk. 8:27-10:52). It is made up of two parts which originally probably were not together, but have been joined by Mark: (1) Ambition of James and John (10:35-40). (2) Christ's instruction on greatness (10:41-45). The latter instruction we find in Lk. 22:24-27 in another context. Thus, we are not sure which was the original setting for the saying.

Today's gospel omits the third prediction of Christ's passion (Mk. 10:32-34 par) because we saw the first (Mk. 8:31-33 par) already on the twenty-fourth and the second prophecy (Mk. 9:30-32) on the twenty-fifth Sunday.

But as it was, the idea of suffering just did not enter the mind of the apostles. Thus, they only hear: "We are going up to Jerusalem ((Mk. 10:33)." With their idea of political Messianism in mind this can only mean: Now Jesus is going to restore the kingdom in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, whereas for Jesus it grimly means that he is going to be crucified in Jerusalem by his own leaders.

Thus, James and John have their idea ready; They want the best places (at the right and the left side of Christ) in

his kingdom. Before they express the idea they want a blank check from him, as it were. "We want you to grant our request." But Jesus forces them to show their real hand and formulate their wish openly. Such ambition seems to be too much for Matthew. Thus, he (Mt. 20:21) attributes this request not to the disciples, but to her mother, and the two names of the disciples are not mentioned either. Sparingly, they are called "sons of Zebedee".

Christ's judgment is not as condemning as the other apostles probably would have made it. The request is ambitious. But why not! If the disciples only would not overlook the way to such greatness: suffering. And yet, Christ cannot assign places in his kingdom (in heaven). That is up to his Father alone. Christ obeys his Father in all things.

When the rest of the apostles hear about the ambitious request of James and John they get angry because they feel cheated. Thus, the Lord once more, as he had done after their dispute over who is the greatest (Mk. 9:33-37) gives them a lesson on true greatness: Great (in opposition to worldly rulers is not one who lords it over his subjects but who serves others.

HOMILY

MY VOCATION IS SERVICE

I. We all want to become great, on way or the other.

1. The two apostles James and John had the same wish.

a. They had a clear mind and a powerful will. When John the Baptist started preaching, they are among the first to follow him (Jn. 1:35) and they were among the first to follow Jesus (Jn. 1:37.41). They left their father and the hired servants (Mk. 1:20). Obviously, they came from a better family and their experience would stand them in good stead. They soon belonged to the intimate circle of Jesus (together with Peter), witnessed his transfiguration (Mk. 9:2-8) and the raising up of the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:37).

b. James and John as well as the other apostles were children of their time. And during the time of Jesus the

Messianic expectation of the vast majority of the Jews was characterized by the following features: (1) The expected Messiah would be a human being, a political figure, a king from the dynasty of David. (2) He would overthrow the political dominion of the Romans and establish the kingdom of God in which Israel would rule over the other nations. (3) The idea of a suffering Messiah was unacceptable. No wonder then that they consistently overheard Christ's predictions of his suffering. And when he predicted his dying on the cross a third time with the words: "We are on our way up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death," they heard only the big word "Jerusalem" which stood for them for all great things of the Messianic kingdom in the above political sense. Here in Jerusalem, Christ would erect his rule. They would ask that question even before his ascension: "Lord, are you going to restore the rule to Israel now (Acts 1:6)?"

c. Thus, the two sons of Zebedee want to make sure that they will have the best jobs in the kingdom. "Make one of us sit at your right and the other at your left," they say. They could have also said: "Make one of us the Minister for External Affairs" and the other "Minister for Internal Affairs"! They wanted to be great by having good positions.

2. Many have the idea that greatness consists in being boss, in giving orders, in being superior.

a. Christ censors this in his private talk with his disciples after the ambitions request of James and John: "You know how among the Gentiles those who seem to exercise authority lord it over them; their great one make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you (Mk. 10:42)." And yet, we know that often enough people judge the greatness of man according to how many people he can control, of how many servant he has at this disposal, on how many people he can impose his will. Many acquire greatness by taking away power from others which is utterly egoistic.

b. We may not always have such a domineering attitude in the most outspoken form but in a more subtle way by being bossy and unapproachable:

— How often do children complain that their father is very strict and does not accept any idea of their children,

or that a mother is old fashioned and insists on her way of doing things. And that can go so far that children prefer not going home but rather stay with their friends.

— How often does a young assistant feel disappointed that his pastor does not talk things over with him. He means well, yes, and he is even a hard worker. But he alone does the planning and lets nobody in, and a parish council is a waste of time for him.

— And there is one or the other bishop who has a name for being a great organizer, for getting things done but has poor relations with his priests.

— How many, mayors, principals, governor, even Christian and Catholic ones try to keep power to themselves. Would the Lord not have to blame us for trying to lord it over our subjects!

II. Christ tells his disciples and us: "It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all (Mk. 10:43-44)."

1. There are people who try to make service their business. On many gasoline stations we find the slogan: "Service is our business." There are in fact mechanics who will crawl under your car oftener than others and get themselves dirtier than any of their competitors. They really give you that extra service and even spend some extra time, over-time, just for you. And such a company wins more customers. We appreciate such service. And yet, what the Lord means is more than such service. After all, such mechanics do not just serve in order to help, but in order to get a higher salary, an earlier promotion. And the company does it in order to get more customers and thus, in the long run in order to make profit.

2. Christ expects selfless service from us. We shall not serve others in order to be promoted, in order to be recognized or appreciated, in order to get heavenly reward. To serve God's people is a grace and thus, a gift in itself. We know that God will reward us, but we do not demand it nor work for it. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Although I am not bound to anyone, I made myself the slave of all so as to win over as many as possible. I became like a Jew to the Jews in order to win the Jews. To those bound by the law I became like one who is bound that I might win those bound by

the law. To those not subject to the law I became like one not subject to it that I might win those not subject to the law. To the weak, I became a weak person with a view of winning the weak. I have made myself all things to all men in order to save at least some of them (1 Cor. 9:19-23)." As one sees, Paul is selflessly working for others in order to win them for Christ, not for his own reward. — In a similar way, the apostle sums it up: "It is not ourselves we preach but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5)."

III. Christ's highest and most unselfish service he expresses in the words: "The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve — to give his life in ransom for the many (Mk. 10:45)."

1. Since the title "Messiah" had so many political over- and undertones, Jesus avoided this title for himself and did not want to be addressed with it either. Instead, he used the title "Son of Man", which as such means simply "man". But it comes from Dan. 7 and expresses the coming of this Son of Man on the clouds of heaven in power at the end of times. But this concept perhaps Christ himself fused with the concept of the "Suffering Servant of Yahweh" in Is. 52:13-53:12. And thus, whenever Christ in the gospel calls himself indirectly "Son of Man" as in our gospel today, he speaks about himself as the one who suffers for us. Deutero Isaiah speaks for the first time about vicarious suffering which Jesus applies to himself. By his suffering and death on the cross, he gives his life in ransom for the many, i.e. for all.

He gives his life and he sheds his blood for us to redeem us from our sins. This is the most unselfish service anybody could think of. And so, the Greek term *didōmi hyper* or *anti* = to give for, as already found in Is. 53:12, has become the technical term for Christ's sacrificial act on the cross. At the last supper the Lord says: "This is my body to be given for you (*hyper hymōn didomenon*) (Lk. 22:19)." Christ's call is to serve, to redeem us by his service which goes as far as dying for us as servant and slave on the cross.

2. Anybody who follows Christ must be willing to serve by taking his share in Christ's suffering. Jesus tells James and John: "Can you drink the cup I shall drink or be baptized in the same bath of pain as I (Mk. 10:38)?" "Cup" and "baptism" are symbols for the suffering. Thus, Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemani: "Abba (O Father), take this cup

away from me (Mk. 14:36)!" And in Lk. 12:50 Christ says, with regards to his suffering: "I have a baptism to receive. What anguish I feel till it is over."

The apostles claimed to be able to drink the cup of suffering and to be plunged into it as in a bath. And as a matter of fact, they were able because the Lord gave it to them. — Are we able?

Today is Mission Sunday. Possible homilies would be: "The cost of discipleship": 23rd Sunday, Year C, September 7, 1980. "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world": 5th Sunday Year A, February 8, 1981. "Christ exalted and head of his body send his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations": Solemnity of Ascension, May 31, 1981. "He must increase — I must decrease"; 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 13, 1981.

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (October 24, 1980)

Already Jeremiah had foretold that remnant would return from exile, led by God in mercy, among them the blind and the lame (first reading). Jesus fulfills this, making the blind Bartimaeus in Jericho see and follow him (gospel). — In the independent theme of the second reading, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews meditates on Jesus the merciful high priest.

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 31:7-9

The Book of Jeremiah contains in Part I (2:1-25:13b) prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem from the time before the fall of Jerusalem. Part II (25:13c-38; 46-51) brings prophecies against the Gentiles. In Part III (26-34) we read prophecies of restoration, and Part IV (36-45) describes the sufferings of Jeremiah.

Today's second reading is taken from Part III. As a dark background for the prophecies of restoration there are still some talks from the time before the exile: in which Jeremiah tells his fellow Jews that the Temple would not save them, unless their conduct would be accordingly (Jer. 26). The Jews should not try to rebel against the Babylonians but be submissive in order to save as much as possible (Jer. 27), although the wrong

prophet Hannaniah tries to say the opposite (Jer. 28). To the Jews in Assyrian exile Jeremiah writes to settle down in Assyria since the exile would last quite some time (Jer. 29).

Then follows the "Book of Consolation" (Jer. 30-31). After the great affliction God will restore his people. Israel will be again God's people (30:1-31:1). After all, God has loved Israel with an everlasting love and continues to be faithful (31:3). Israel will return (Jer. 31:1-6).

Jer. 31:7-14 gives some more details of this return. The first two verses make up our first reading: This return is good news and reason to about for joy (31:7). God has saved a *remnant* with which he will make a new start. God will gather them from the farthest parts of the earth. Among them will be the blind and the lame. (This verse is the reason for the selection of this reading for today, since it fits in with the blind of the gospel.) Other weak people returning are: Women with children and those in travail. They went away into exile with tears and they return with joy.

And since water is a sign of blessings, there will be plenty of water along the road. And the path shall be smooth that one can walk. Of course, these natural blessings stand for something spiritual. All this will happen because God is a father to Israel. But (Ephraim = Israel) is God's first-born, i.e. other nations shall follow Israel.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 5:1-6

We saw last Sunday that Part II (3:1-5:10) of the Letter to the Hebrews talks about Jesus as the faithful highpriest. In the first section (3:1-4:15) Christ is described as faithful. The second section (4:15-5:10) pictures Jesus as the compassionate high priest.

After an introductory parenthesis (4:15-16) follows the definition of high priest (5:1-4) which then is applied to Christ (5:5-10), after which follows an announcement of the three sections of Part III (5:11-10:39) in 5:9-10.

There are basically two aspects of the priesthood: (1) the union with God, and (2) the union with men.

(1) Union with God:

(a) Every high priest and every priest is called by God (5:4). He does not appoint himself.

(b) He is mediator between God and men. Thus, he must be admitted into God's presence.

(c) He is a priest forever (5:6).

(2) Union with men:

(a) A genuine solidarity must unite the priest to those whom he represents before God.

(b) He is able to feel and suffer with men since he is man himself full of weakness.

(c) He offers gifts and sacrifices for the sins of men as he also offers sacrifice(s) or his own sins on the Day of atonement (in the Jewish liturgy).

Applied to Christ (Hebr. 5:5-8; the last two verses are missing in today's second reading) this means:

(1) (a) The Father appointed Christ high priest from all eternity in his eternal generation from the Father ("My Son you are; I today have begotten you" Ps. 2:7); in concrete by Christ's (death) and resurrection anticipated by the Last Supper.

(b) Christ is the perfect mediator since he is enthroned at the right hand of God and proclaimed Son of God.

(c) Thus, he is a faithful high priest. We can trust him. We can approach him. He gets things done.

(2) (a) He is close to us as our brother and thus, can feel with us.

(b) He was (as we saw in 4:15) even tempted as we are, but did not sin.

(c) He offers *one* sacrifice for our sins. In opposition to the sacrifice of the OT Christ's sacrifice is perfect and thus, does not have to be repeated. The Mass is no new sacrifice; it rather sets Christ's one sacrifice on Calvary timelessly present and makes its fruits available to us.

(d) He is a priest like Melchizedek, that means he is king and priest as Melchizedek (according to the story in Gen. 14) was.

(e) He is merciful and thus, we can approach him without fear.

This is, as one sees, a fine topic for a homily separate from the main idea of the first reading and the gospel.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 10:46-52

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the last Easter feast and thus, for his suffering and death. Crossing the region east of the Jordan (10:1) he comes to Jericho, one of the oldest cities of Palestine (cf. Jos. 2:2f). Herod the Great and his son Archelaus adorned it with splendid buildings. It is about twenty miles (thirty kilometers) north-east of Jerusalem, on the western edge of the broad valley protected by the mountains of Judah of the Jordan. Here is one of the finest oases with rich vegetation caused by the many springs. A lonely road leads to Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 10:30), in recent years newly built, shortened asphalted. Here Jesus performs the miracle, reported in the Synoptics.

It must have been quite historical since the blind man is mentioned by name, which seldom happens in Mark or the other gospels. Only Mk. 5:22 mentions Jairus by name and in Mk. 15:21 Simon of Cyrene is mentioned as the crossbearer who is the father of Alexander and Rufus. And Lk. 19:2 mentions the taxcollector Zachaeus by name. Many assume that these persons were members of the early Christian community. Thus, also Bartimaeus. The name is patronymic: Son of Timaeus. Timaeus could come from *tamé* = unclean or Timotheus = fearing God.

The pericope occurs in all three Synoptic gospels. In Mark and Luke there is one blind man, in Matthew two. Most think that Mark reports the healing only of the one who became a member of the early Christian community. Another difference is: In Mark and Matthew the healing takes place when Jesus leaves Jericho, in Luke while entering the city. Since the old Jericho had been replaced by a new city built by Herod the Great and his son Archelaus some try to harmonize the difference by saying: Jesus healed while leaving the old and entering the new Jericho. But it could also be that Luke has changed the place because of redactional reasons: In his gospel follows the story of Zachaeus in Jericho after the healing of the blind which can consequently take place only entering Jericho.

HOMILY

"LORD, MAKE ME SEE TO FOLLOW YOU ON THE WAY"

1. There are two blind men pictured in the gospel who are quite attractive and likable, whom everybody admires for their clear stand in favor of Jesus: The man born blind in Jn. 9 and the blind Bartimaeus of Jericho (Mk. 10:46-52 par).

2. Since Mark seldom gives the name of a person in a narrative, we may assume that Bartimaeus was known and probably a member of the early Christian community. Mark 5:22 mentions Jairus, the official of a synagogue by name and Mk. 15:21 Simon of Cyrene, the man who carries Jesus' cross and his two sons Alexander and Rufus (the last is mentioned by Paul in Rome 16:13), and in Lk. 19:2 we find the name of Zachaeus the taxcollector. All of these were probably early Christians.

3. Because of the great heat, the abrupt change in temperature between day and night, the great quantities of dust and the scarcity of water to wash regularly, the number of people with eye diseases and blindness was rather great. Since there was no social security, no hospital, many blind would try to make a living by begging as we see in Jn. 9:8 and so also here in Mk. 10:46.

4. Bartimaeus has *great persistence*. When he is told that Jesus is passing by, he is determined to see Jesus and be cured by him. He keeps on shouting: "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me!" [He does not care what other people say. He does not mind if they are annoyed by his shouting. He knows only one thing: Jesus can help me and he alone.

5. We do not know if Bartimaeus had heard something about Jesus before. But since a longing for the Messiah was very common at that time and since one feature of this Messiah pictured in Is. 35:5; 42:7.16.18 would be that he would open the eyes of the blind, Bartimaeus could expect his healing from Christ.

6. Bartimaeus' *response* to Jesus' call is *immediate*. In opposition to the crowd Jesus is not annoyed by the shouting of the blind man, but rather stops and has Bartimaeus brought to himself. The blind man jumps up right away. He throws

his cloak aside to be able to run faster. Nobody has to tell him twice: "He is calling you. Get up! You have nothing to fear!" All of a sudden people are sympathetic with him and feel no longer annoyed.

Bartimaeus sees his life-time chance and acts, acts right away. He does not put off his decision, does not wait till it is too late. It is not enough to have some good emotions, a certain longing for doing something in our life, for putting aside a bad habit, for giving ourselves more completely to Jesus. We have to act now, when Jesus calls. Tomorrow it might be too late. Certain things we can do only once.

7. Bartimaeus *acts with determination*. He knows what he wants. He wants to see again. He does not act of a vague admiration for Jesus. When we go to a dentist we do not ask him to pull any tooth at random, but the one definite which hurts. If we go to Jesus we must examine ourselves and present him our weak spots.

8. The blind man's *knowledge of Jesus is imperfect*. He calls him "Son of David." Thus, his notion of Messiah is that of a political hero, the one who is going to free the Jews from the yoke of the Romans, as the contemporaries saw the Messiah and as the disciples did too. Nathan had said that there would be a ruler on the throne of David for good: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever (2 Sm. 7:16)."

Usually, Jesus refused the title Messiah since he did not want to be associated with these political over-and undertones, since he did not want to be a mere miracles performer, but rather told his apostles that he had to die on the cross and redeem mankind by dying (and rising) as we have seen several Sundays already (Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33). But Jesus did not reject the confession of Bartimaeus. Now, he was on the way to Jerusalem and during his solemn entrance there he would accept the celebration of the simple people, hailing him as Messiah, the "one coming in the name of the Lord (Mk. 11:9)" also. With his suffering so close, wrong understanding would be cleared off soon.

In spite of his inadequate knowledge of Jesus, Bartimaeus had faith in the Lord which soon also made his understanding of Christ more perfect. We do not have to be perfect theologians before we become Christians. Faith is compatible with

imperfect knowledge, as long as we study according to our talents and possibilities. Faith is for most an embracing of the person of Jesus more than a consent to a truth and an insight in complicated definitions. And yet, faith has to be and become enlightened also: we believe in order to understand.

9. *Bartimaeus follows Jesus "on the way"*.

a. That means first: he becomes a disciple of Jesus. The healed man does not only thank the Lord, which would be much already. But he wants to be one with him, wants to follow him wherever he goes. To his disciples the Lord said: "Come, follow me (Mt. 8:22; 9:9; 19:21; Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27, Jn. 1:45)!" Bartimaeus recognized this call implicitly in his cure and followed the Lord.

b. To follow Christ on the way means in the context to follow him to Jerusalem to his death. From Mk. 10:17.32 on Jesus is on the way to Jerusalem, on the way to his suffering and death. Thus, if Bartimaeus follows Christ "on the way", he follows him and is ready to suffer also. The expression to "walk on the way" has since become a technical term for the Christian way of living which is basically a following of Christ unto death. Thus, Saul wants to arrest anybody in Damascus who is (living according) to the way (Acts 9:2). Paul on the other hand, left all those who would not believe and spoke ill of the way (Acts 19:9). In both cases: to be or to live on the way means to be a real Christian.

10. The *blind Bartimaeus becomes seeing*, whereas the seeing Pharisees and partly even the disciples at that moment do not see, do not understand that to follow Christ means to follow him into death. And so, the miracle of healing the blind is at the same meant as eye-opener for the disciples to tell them: Whoever wants to follow Christ has to be willing to follow Christ crucified. Before Jesus speaks for the first time clearly and openly about his suffering in Mk. 8:31-33 and Peter wants to put it out of the mind of the Lord since the apostle is still blind, Jesus heals a blind man (Mk. 8:22-26) which is not just intended to be beneficiary for the blind man but shall be an eye-opener for Peter and the apostles as well: not to close their eyes for the need of suffering.

b. The blind Bartimaeus prays: (in the version of Lk. 18:38): "Jesus, have mercy on me (Iesou, eléson me)!" Is it only chance that at the beginning of the Mass we sing or pray the same prayer: "Christ have mercy on us" which was in

the old Liturgy still the Greek "Christe, eleison" or "Kyrie, eleison!" Perhaps, we can pray this prayer with the intention that God may open our eyes so that we understand the need of suffering, especially in every Mass.

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(October 31, 1982)

Israel's creed was and is: "The Lord our God is Lord alone. Love him with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (first reading). This same commandment, Christ calls the first of all commandments and adds to it inseparably: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (gospel). In the independent theme of the second reading, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews meditates on the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the priesthood of the Old Testament.

FIRST READING: DEUTERONOMY 6:2-6

That the Book of Deuteronomy does not want to be a mere collection of laws and that the stress with the laws is not just on the mere observance but on love becomes clear with today's first reading. There are two sections in Part II of Deuteronomy (4:44-28:69): The first section talks mainly about God and his covenant and thus, about laws which God himself gave (4:44-11:32), the second section unfolds prescriptions which God announced through Moses (12:1-26:19), which is the Deuteronomic Code. Before these many commandments are announced, Moses makes clear that love of God is the essence of the Law (5:32-6:13). The core of this pericope is today's second reading.

Going into the promised land the Jews shall keep faithfully all commandments; then they will have a long life, which for a Jew at that time is the highest good, since not much was revealed yet about life hereafter. Then God is going to give them the promised land, flowing with milk and honey; a description of Palestine which is true only if one comes from the southern desert between Egypt and Palestine.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 contains the famous *Shema*: "Listen Israel. Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone!" Or: Yahweh, our God is one Yahweh! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your

God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and will your strength!" The first translation ("Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone") means that Yahweh is God alone in opposition to the Canaanite cult of Baal. The second translation ("Yahweh, our God, is one Yahweh") is a confession of the oneness of Yahweh in face of the multiplicity of divergent traditions and sanctuaries of Yahweh. In other words, Yahweh is one God, although he is worshipped at different sanctuaries (at the time). Both interpretations can claim support from Deuteronomy. — Since the Jews, in order not to take the name of God in vain, substituted the written name "Yahweh" with "Adonai = Lord", many translations do not show the above difference and translate "The Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (NAB, similarly NEB, RSV).

This creed of monotheism was so important that every Jew (men) was enjoined to recite it twice a day (morning and evening), carried it on small strips of parchment, enclosed in leather cases on the left arm or the forehead (called phylacteries), and wrote it on the doorposts of their houses as we see in Deut. 6:6-9).

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 7:23-28

The second readings of today and the coming two Sundays are taken from Part III of the Letter to the Hebrews (5:11-10:39) which pictures Christ as the true high priest, outlining the specific characteristics of his priesthood. And this means in short: Christ's priesthood is superior. After a preamble (5:11-6:20) which is mainly a parenthesis, the first section (7:1-28) describes Christ's priesthood as higher than the Levitical priesthood. The second section (8:1-9:28) shows the superiority of the new worship, the sanctuary and the mediation provided by Christ the priest. The third section, finally (10:1-18) sums everything up, saying: Christ's sacrifice is superior to the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law.

Today's second reading is taken from the first section (7:1-28). Jesus is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (7:1-10), who was such a great priest that even father Abraham gave a tithe from his spoils. (7:4). Yet, the old priesthood was insufficient (7:11-19). Thus, it has been replaced by Christ's priesthood replacing the Levitical priesthood, for

he does not descend from Levi (7:11-14), and the law that restricted the priesthood to the physical descendants of Levi is thus also abolished.

The new priesthood is superior to the old (7:20-28) :

- The priests of the OT became priests without an oath. Christ became priest by an oath of his heavenly father: "You are a priest forever (7:21)."
- In the OT were many priests, Christ is the only one (7:23).
- Priests of the OT lived a short time, Christ lives forever (7:24).
- Priests of the OT sinned and had to offer sacrifices for their sins, Christ is without sin and does not have to offer sacrifices for himself (7:26-27).
- 7:28 takes up the point in 7:20 by way of inclusion once more: The high-priests of the OT were appointed by Law, Christ is appointed-high priest by oath.

As one sees, this is a wonderful topic for a separate homily.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 12:28-34

This pericope is reported in all three Synoptic gospels: Mt. 22:34-40 has it in the same context, but the scribe comes with the intention to trap Jesus, whereas in Mark he comes with a sincere motive. Most think that Mark has the more original setting. The report in Lk. 10:25-28 is in a different context, i.e. in the Travel Narrative (Lk. 9:51-18:14) by which Luke interrupts the frame of Mark between Mk. 9:50 and 10:1. Thus, we can assume Luke refers to the same incident.

Shortly before Jesus is going to be rejected by his own authorities, Mark shows that at least not all rejected Christ. Here is a scribe, who is probably also a Pharisee, who is sincere. Jesus has to make him the honest compliment that he is not far from the kingdom. A rare statement, as rare as that look at the rich young man who comes to Jesus and asks him: "Good Teacher, what must I do to share in everlasting life (Mk. 10:17)?" When this man can honestly say that he has observed all commandments since his childhood, "Jesus looks at him with love (Mk. 10:21)."

Since the scribe asks sincerely, Jesus answers sincerely without asking a counter question first as he otherwise often does. "Which is the first of all the commandments?" has the many commandments in mind with which the Scribes came up in the course of time, bringing the ten commandments to 613 commandments, of which 365 were prohibitions, following the number of the year, and 248 positive commandments, allegedly from the members of the body. Several scribes had tried to bring out one main principle, being a compendium of all the laws. Hillel gave the following: "What you hate to yourself, do not do to your neighbor (Shabbath 31a in the Babylonian Talmud)." Simon the Righteous stated: "On three things stands the world: on the law, on the worship, and on works of love."

Being asked about the first commandment, Jesus singles out the *Shema'* of Deuteronomy 6:4-5: We shall love God with all our heart. But he adds right away: "This is the second, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Thus, both commandments the first and the second are one commandment.

The scribe sincerely praises Christ for the answer and adds that the commandment of love is more important than sacrifices, a topic which we find in the writings of the prophets (Hos. 6:6; Is. 1:11).

Jesus can only agree with him, approve his insight and tell him: "You are not far from the reign of God." Did the scribe take a stand and accept Christ and thus, enter the kingdom? Nothing is said. One cannot just simply discuss things with Christ and go on talking, as we do when we talk; one has to take a stand and either accept Christ or reject him. That people realized and thus, nobody had the courage to ask Jesus any more questions.

HOMILY

THE DOUBLE COMMANDMENT

I. *We can love (God and neighbor) because God loves us first.*

1. When the scribe came to Jesus and asked him: "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Christ referred him to the creed which every Jew was praying twice a day, placing

it at the same time as phylacteries on the left arm and on the forehead and at the doorpost of the house so that he would never forget it: "Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength (Deut. 6:4-5 = Mk. 12:29-30)." We do not have to examine the exact difference between heart, soul, mind and strength. The author does not want to say that there are four parts in man or four layers. Man is rather a unity. There is no dichotomy. Love demands the attention of our whole human personality; there is no corner where love should not rule.

It is interesting to see that the author places the existence of the one true God ahead of the command of love. It goes to show: we can love only because there is one true God. And that means (although it is not said explicitly here) that God loves us first. We can love him and our neighbor only because God loves us. The initiative comes from God. Our love is only a response.

2. St. John in his first letter, which is predominantly speaking on love, especially charity, makes it quite explicit that any love in us originates in God: "Love is of God (1 Jn. 4:7)." "We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love (1 Jn. 4:16)." "We for our part, love because he (God) first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19)."

3. This love God has for us shows itself in particular in the Incarnation of Christ and his death for us: "God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: he sent his only Son to the world that we might have life through him (1 Jn. 4:9)." "The way we came to understand love was that he laid down his life for us (1 Jn. 3:16)." Or as Jesus says to Nicodemus: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life (Jn. 3:16)."

4. This love God has for men is not only general, he does not only love all, but he loves us, he loves me in particular. We can say that he thought of me from all eternity and loves me:

— We can apply to ourselves the words of Proverbs 8:22-31 "The Lord begot me, the firstborn of his ways, the forerunner of his prodigies of long ago. From of old I was poured

forth, at the first, before the earth. When there were no depths, I was brought forth . . ." This text in the literal sense, of course, refers to the divine wisdom which was at God's side, long before God created heaven and earth. And God took delight in his wisdom. But as the Liturgy often applied this text to Our Blessed Lady who was in God's eyes long before the earth existed, so we can apply it to ourselves: God thought of us individually long before creation. He guided all the infinitely complex series of causes that brought our fragile life into existence.

— Equally true for us individually is the text of Jer. 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you."

5. The consequence is: we can and must love in return: God and men: "Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another (1 Jn. 4:11)." "We too must lay down our lives for our brother" (1 Jn. 3:16) since Christ laid down his life for us, revealing thus his love for us (1 Jn. 3:16).

II. *Love of God and love of neighbor is one inseparable double commandment.*

1. It was almost something revolutionary when Jesus reduced the many commandments to one double commandment. Who could observe 613 commandments as the Pharisees had them: "Almost two new commandments for each day, if one would divide them during the year. In such a similar context Jesus probably once said: "Come to me all you are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me . . . for my yoke is easy (in Greek: *chrestos*) and my burden light (Mt. 11:28-30)." The Greek term *chrestos* can mean "adopted to its purpose", "good of its kind". Christ's yoke is adopted to our strength, is tailor-made as it were, for he reduced the many commandments to the double commandments of loving God and our neighbor.

2. It is true in the apocryphal book of *The Twelve Patriarchs* of the second century B.C. we find both commandments put side by side. Thus, in Issachar 5:2: "Love the Lord and love your neighbor! Have compassion on the poor and the weak!" And again, in Issachar 7:6: "I loved the Lord, likewise also everyone with my whole heart" says Issachar. But

since this Book was translated into Greek by a Christian many texts are interpolated, and furthermore, nothing is said that they are a double commandment, inseparably placed together, as Christ did. No Rabbi placed both commandments together. In the Old Testament, the commandment to love God stands in Deut. 6:5 and the commandment to love our neighbor in Lev. 19:18, therefore far apart.

Christ is asked about the first commandment and he singles out the commandment to love God. But he adds right away the commandment to love our neighbor, specifying both by saying: "There is no other commandment greater than these." Apparently, he is quoting two commandments which is actually true since they were two in Old Testament. But since the Lord is asked about the first commandment (which is singular) and he quotes two, for him these two must belong together.

3. But even if one would have a doubt, John makes it crystal clear that one cannot love God without loving one's neighbor and one can love one's neighbor only in loving God: "If anyone says, 'My love is fixed on God,' yet he hates his brother, he is a liar. One who has not seen (1 Jn. 4:20)." "The man who claims to be in light hating his brother all the while, is in darkness even now. The man who continues in the light is the one who loves his brother; there is nothing in him to cause a fall. But the man who hates his brother is in darkness (1 Jn. 2:9-11)." "That is the way to see who are God's children, and who are the devil's. No one whose actions are unholy belongs to God, nor anyone who fails to love his brother (1 Jn. 3:10)."

4. We love God as much as we love our neighbor, we love our neighbor as much as we love God. On the other hand, hate of our brother, alienation from our brothers and sisters, leads to hate of and alienation from God. And in a way hate of our brother and neighbor is one of the most heinous sins as the example of Cain and Abel shows (Gen. 4:1-16). John takes it up in his first letter: "This, remember, is the message you heard from the beginning; we should love one another. We should not follow the example of Cain who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother... Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that eternal life abides in no murderer's heart (1 Jn. 3:11-12.15)."

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(November 7, 1982)

Today, we meditate on the totality of giving. The widow of Zarephath gives Elijah a little cake, thus, giving him all the flour and oil she has (first reading). The poor widow in the Temple gives all she has to the Lord although it is only about a cent (gospel). — The independent theme of the second reading elaborates the unique sacrifice of Christ.

FIRST READING: 1 KINGS 17:10-16

The history of the prophets Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings is full of miracle stories. There is a historical nucleus, but the details do not want to be taken literally. What the author intends to show is God's powerful word which is irrepressible. The prophet speaks in the name of the Lord and what he says and announces comes true.

Since widows were often a target of social injustice, the author pictures how God takes care of one widow in his wonderful ways.

Here in this story the widow of Zarephath is a victim of a drought caused by the sins of King Ahab.

The prophet Elijah, the champion of true monotheism against the fertility cult fostered by King Ahab, and even more by his wife Jezebel, suffers of course from this drought also and is directed for support to this widow of Zarephath. She had just left her house with her only son to collect some sticks, bake the last bread for her son and herself, eat it and then die. This very moment Elijah comes from his trip, asks for some water and something to eat. When she tells the man of God her story, Elijah encourages her to trust in the Lord and then provides for the prophet's need first before she prepares something for her son and herself. She trusts in God's providence and the miracle happens: Flour and oil do not stop till the famine is over.

This reading is obviously selected with the widow of the gospel in mind.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 9:24-28

Today's second reading is taken from the second section (8:1-9:28) of Part III (5:11-10:39) of the Letter to Hebrews. The whole third part speaks about the specific characteristics of Christ's priesthood, showing us that Christ's priesthood is superior to the priesthood of the Old Testament. The second section outlines the superiority of the new worship, the sanctuary and mediation provided by Christ the priest. This it does in a chiasmic form: the first part (c) corresponds to the last (C), the second (b) to the second-last part (B) etc.:

- c. The old worship was earthly and figurative (8:1-6)
- b. The first covenant was imperfect and provisional (8:7-13).
- a. The old institutions of worship were powerless (9:1-10). In opposition to this is now shown in chiasmic form, i.e. in reverse sequence:
 - A. The new institutions are efficacious (9:11-14).
 - B. The new covenant is perfect and lasting (9:15-23).
 - C. The new worship is heavenly and real (9:24-28). The last two verses: vv.27-28 form the conclusion and the transition to the third section (10:1-18).

In short, in Christ's priesthood everything comes to fulfillment what was foreshadowed in the old priesthood.

Today's second reading shows how the new worship is heavenly and real (9:24-28). This it does by contrasting the old and the new worship:

— The old sanctuary was made by hands; Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary not made by hands.

— The priests of the OT had to offer sacrifices again and again; Christ offers a sacrifice only once, once and for all.

— The high priest offered (once a year) blood and animals, Christ offers His own blood.

— After performing his priestly work in the Holy Place, the high priest came out of the Temple and showed himself to the people, indicating that the work of atonement was finished; at the parousia Christ's priestly work is finished. The high

priestly work of Christ in heaven means (7:25) He always lives to make intercession for us (9:24). Now he appears in the presence of God for us. In other words: He always presents his act of sacrifice on Calvary to God the Father. The Mass is no new sacrifice, but renders timelessly present the historical sacrifice on the cross so that we can share in it, offer it with Christ, who always intercedes for us.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 12:38-44

Today's pericope consists of two parts: (1) 12:38-40 Warning against the Scribes, (2) 12:41-44 The widow's mite. Both parts might have been placed together because of the catchword "widow" in 12:40 and 12:42 and may not have happened at the same time. Yet on the other hand, the first forms an impressive contrast to the second: the widow surpasses by far the scribes.

(1) The warning against the scribes is the sharpest in Mark, surpassed only by the long sermon against them in Mt. 23. We can assume that the present formulation has been made by the early Church when the break with Judaism was obvious. Nevertheless, the core is historical since Christ antagonized the leaders of his people by his teaching and they slowly but steadily rejected him.

Among other things (details in the homily), they devour the savings of widows by reciting long prayers for them, or: they devour the savings of the widows *and* (kai) recite long prayers for appearance. The second reading is more likely; the first occurs in some few manuscripts where the connection between first and second half "and" (in Greek *kai*) is missing.

(2) The treasury of the Temple means the cells where the valuables were stored: sacred vestments and vessels, provisions of wine, oil, flour, and incense for the sacrifice, gold and silver reserves. It was one hall of the court of women around whose walls were placed thirteen trumpet-shaped chests for offerings.

Here Jesus one good day takes a seat and observes how people offer money into the collection box. People would give the money to the priest, specifying for what purpose the money should be used. Thus, Jesus could hear what the widow told the priest. The different chests were designed for different

purposes, the thirteenth for free will offerings, especially for worship in the Temple. Many assume that the widow designed her contribution for this box.

The smallest Roman coin was a kodrantes (= Latin quadrans, a quarter of an *as*, about one sixty-fourth of a laborer's daily wage); the smallest Greek coin was a *lepton* which amounted to half a quadrans. Mark, writing for Christians in Rome explains the Greek coins by Roman coins. The widow has two *lepta*, thus, she could give one and keep one for herself. But she gives both, she gives all.

With this double pericope Mark finishes the public life of Christ. Mk. 13 contains the eschatological discourse about the end of Jerusalem and the world. And with Mk. 14 begins the passion of Jesus. Thus, the picture at the end is: The leaders of the Jews reject Christ, the simple people like him (Mk. 12:37) and thus, there is hope. Some commit themselves totally to him.

First reading and gospel suggest a homily on total giving. If one takes the first half of the gospel in addition, then one has a powerful contrast to this total giving.

HOMILY

TOTAL GIVING

Christ never equated education with arrogance nor poverty with virtue. One can be well educated and humble and dumb and arrogant. Thus, if today's gospel pictures the scribes as arrogant and sure of themselves, and the poor widow as generous and open to God, it does not want to say that this is always the case. It rather depends on the person. A little bit of a scribe is in all of us.

Taking the first and the second half of today's gospel together for our homily, we want to meditate on total giving of oneself to God and our neighbor and the lack of it.

I. The Scribes in the time of Jesus in many ways were a model for dedication to God's word, for serious efforts to keep God's commandments and for instructing people in God's ways. And yet, Jesus had to blame them and anyone of us who does the same.

1. To study God's Torah, God's law was and is a special privilege given to few. And law was to be taken in the broader sense as "word of God". Every scribe was supposed to teach free, not for money. Freely he had received, freely he should hand on. To be sure that he could make a living, every scribe had to learn a trade, a craft. This made him feel with other people, kept him close to the working class, and made him independent. He never had to preach according to the whims of the person who supported him financially. But many had a way around that total giving of oneself to others and thus, to God. The scribes would tell people, especially widows that there would be nothing more pleasing in God's eyes than to support a scribe and that this would be the safest way to heaven. Jesus has to condemn this selfishness. "These men devour the savings of widows (Mk. 12:40)." Widows and other pious people, especially women have been the prey of impostors ever since until today. But where is the real giving in such a case on the part of those who should hand on free what they have received freely? Surely the preacher of the word has to live also, but not by oppressing the others, or by using smart ways of getting "free-will offerings".

2. Jesus also blames the scribes of all times for *making a show with prayers* and practices of religion: "They recite long prayers for appearance's sake (12:40)." The lack of total giving in such prayer becomes even more obvious if we take the reading of some manuscripts: "They devour the savings of widows by reciting long prayers for appearance's sake." It is still possible to use religious connections for self-gain and self-advancement. Some are in the Church in order to look for what they can get out of it, not for what they can put into it.

But even when the prayers are not said for the special purpose of getting money for it, but only in order to be seen and admired as a religious person, as a man of God, the finest is gone, since it is not done for God. It is not total giving of oneself to God; it is not being with the Father.

3. The *desire for prominence* is another lack of total giving of oneself to God and neighbor. "They look for front seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets (12:39)," Christ tells the scribes of all times. In the case of the scribes in the time of Jesus, it meant that they wanted the first seats in the

synagogue on the bench before the Ark containing biblical scrolls, facing the people. And in case of banquets, strict precedence was observed.

It is still true that many accept an office in the Church because they consider it a reward for something they have done instead of giving themselves totally to God and his people.

4. The *longing for respect* also hinders total giving. "They like to parade around in their robes and accept marks of respect in public (12:38)," is what Jesus has to tell such people. A man who gives himself totally, however, wants to obliterate himself rather than to exalt himself.

II. The two widows of today's liturgy on the other hand, show total giving to God and man.

1. When Elijah comes to the town of Zarephath in a time of drought, a widow is one of many suffering from famine. She had just left her house with her only son, wants to collect some sticks, bake the last bread, eat it with her son and then die. Just at that moment, the prophet Elijah comes and asks her for something to drink and eat. Humanly speaking, the woman must think to herself: "You are a man of God, Elijah and thus, have connections and means to get something to eat. Why do you ask me poor widow to give you the last thing I have? You should rather give me something than ask something from me." But she believes in the power of total giving. She believes that God can provide for her, even if she gives away everything she has. And so the miracle happens: The jar of flour does not go empty and the oil in the jug does not run dry till the famine is over.

To give to others has never made one poor; often even in a material sense, a person get back what he gave and even more, as everybody who gives totally experiences. But it makes even richer in a spiritual sense.

2. The widow in today's gospel is another example of total giving.

a. She is really poor and has two *lepta*, the equivalent of one Roman *quadrans*, which is the equivalent of one sixty-fourth of a laborer's daily wage. She could give one *lepton* and keep one for herself, but she gives both. She has learned to pray for the daily bread and today gives away her daily

bread to God and to the poor. For such people have an eye for other people's need and share their last crust with them, if need be.

b. She realizes that giving must be sacrificial. Not the amount matters, but the cost, the cost of the gift to the giver. The sacrifice of the gift costs, not the size. Generous total givers give till it hurts, they do not give from the superfluity, from the abundance, but from what they could badly use and need themselves.

c. Total giving has something reckless in it, something humanly foolish, the men of this world do not understand and will even condemn. Did the Lord not tell us to take care of ourselves? Did he not tell us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but not more, and that thus true love of neighbor starts with ourselves? All this is true. But there are not too many people who have to be reminded about that. Most people want security for themselves. This hinders them from total giving. We often give, but almost always keep something back. We do not want to surrender ourselves totally to God. Yet, we can follow Christ only if we give away everything which stands between him and us. Even if that which we keep is very small, it hinders us from following Christ completely. As St. Therese of Avila puts it: "It does not make a difference how you tie a bird: with a chain or a golden thread, it just cannot fly."

d. We may have little, but if we give all we have, the Lord can do much with it. Every little thing counts.

3. This pericope stands shortly before Christ's passion. He is going soon to give himself totally for us, dying for us on the cross, redeeming us and giving us divine life in turn. All this was possible only by Christ's total giving.

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (November 14, 1982)

The author of the Book of Daniel encouraged his fellow Jews in the time of the persecution by Antiochus IV (175-163 B.C.): God will spare his own people. But even if they die, they will rise from the dead (first reading). Mark in the time of the Palestinian War before 70 A.D. encouraged his Christians and us with the look at the Parousia of Christ, which is close at hand. Then the Lord will gather his elect from the four winds. Preceding wars and persecutions shall

test us as Christ was tested by him suffering (gospel).—In the independent theme of the second reading of the Letter to the Hebrews, we meditate how Christ's sacrifice is perfect and thus, offered only once in opposition to the many and repeated sacrifices of the Old Testament, and how nevertheless he constantly intercedes for us in heaven and this intercession is made present at every Mass.

FIRST READING: DANIEL 12:1-3

Alexander the Great had conquered the Orient and came to Jerusalem in 332 B.C. He established the greatest empire the world had ever known. After his death in 323 B.C., his generals took over. There were four dynasties. Only two of them entered sacred history: The Ptolomies secured control of Egypt, the Seleucidae of Mesopotamia and Syria, from 312 to 65 B.C. Among their number was the infamous Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) The Ptolomies first gained control over Palestine. In 198 B.C. the Seleucidae took over, trying to Hellenize everything. Matters reached a head when Antiochus IV in 168 B.C. desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem and tried to exterminate Judaism. The Jewish reaction was the heroic fight for religious freedom, described in the two Books of the Maccabees.

The Book of Daniel is the answer of a fervent Jew to this attack of Antiochus IV. He did not want to participate in this prescribed pagan cult, and he wanted to show that God is the ruler of history after all, who will succeed, who will help his faithful ones, who will send a savior. Going back to the time of the exile and the narratives about Daniel and his companions, this unknown author of the time of the Maccabees found interesting parallels between the anti-Jewish tactics of Antiochus and those of Nebuchadnezzar in the Daniel narratives, and his message is: Take courage from the example of Daniel and his companions. Do not fear your persecutors. God will crush all his enemies. In Dan. 2:32-45 (vision of the statue with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet partly of iron and partly of clay), 7:2-8 (vision of four animals: bear, leopard, dreadful beast with ten horns), 8:3-27 (vision of two animals: ram, he-goat with one horn and then a little horn) he describes Nebuchadnezzar, the Medes and Parsians, Alexander the Great and the Diadochi, and finally, the Seleucidae with Antiochus IV Epiphanes who will be overcome. After a fixed number of

seventy weeks (Dan. 9:2.24) the Savior will come, the Messiah, the Son of Man. If surviving the persecutions or not, there will be a resurrection.

Our first reading today comes right after the description of the persecutions of Antiochus (Den. 11:21-39; 40-45). At that time (after these and other persecutions) prince Michael shall arise, the guardian of the Jews, and all faithful Jews, written in the book, will escape. Those dead (death is only a sleep) will arise. There will be a transformation so that risen people will shine brightly, especially those who strengthened those in persecution ("those who lead the many to justice") will be like the stars forever. It is the first description of the resurrection in the Old Testament.

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 10:11-14:18

Today, we have the last reading of the Letter to the Hebrews, taken from the third section (10:1-18) of the third part (5:11-10:39) telling us that Christ's sacrifice is superior to the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, since it causes eternal salvation. That argument is developed in chiasmic form (the first part corresponds to the last, the second to the second last). A: The old covenant is insufficient since sacrifices have to be repeated (10:1-3). B: The exterior sacrifices of the Old Testament are replaced by the real sacrifice of Christ (10:4-10). B': In the old covenant, priests were standing. They are replaced by Christ enthroned (sitting) (10:11-14). A': The new covenant suffices from now on with out need of sacrifice (10:15-18).

The Levitical priests had to offer sacrifices daily, since sacrifices of animals could not take away sins. Christ's sacrifice takes away sins and thus, it is offered just once. The Levitical priests offered sacrifice standing. Christ's work (death, resurrection and ascension) is completed. Thus, he can sit down on the throne beside the Father. No sacrifice is needed therefore, since Christ offered the sacrifice once and for all.

And yet, in relation to the ongoing life of the Christians, his priestly work continues:

— 7:25 He forever makes intercession for us.

— 9:24 He entered heaven to appear before God on our behalf.

The sacrifice of the Mass is not a new sacrifice but places Christ's sacrifice timelessly present so that we can share in

Christ's sacrifice. Christ has perfected those who are sanctified, so that we can enter the heavenly sanctuary while attending the liturgical worship, when he makes intercession for us. This could be expressed by the image of standing, as we see it in Acts 7:56. But the author here prefers the image of sitting.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: MARK 13:24-32

Mark 13 concludes the narrative of the ministry of Jesus and prepares the disciples for the events to come. It falls into the literary form of farewell discourse. Such a farewell discourse of Moses we have in Deut. 31-32, of Joshua in Jos. 23-24, of Samuel in 1 Sam. 12, of David in 1 Chr. 28-29, of Paul in Acts 20:17-35, of Christ in Jn. 13:31-17:26 and here. At the same time Mk. 13 belongs to the literary form of apocalyptic writing, speaking about the last events in colorful picture, where we have to distinguish between picture and content as in the Book of Daniel.

The structure of Mk. 13 (cf. Jan Lambrecht, S.J. *Die Redaktion der Markusapokalypse*. Rom: Biblical Institute 1967, p. 286, and Wilfrid Harrington, O.P. *Mark*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1979, p. 198-199) is chiastic; *Introduction* 13:1-4 Christ foretells the destruction of the Temple and is asked a double question by his disciples: When this happens and when the end of the world will come, which is one and the same question for the disciples.

- I. The Signs of the Parousia 13:5-23
 - a. Take heed that false prophets do not lead you astray (5-6)!
 - b. Wars must come first (7-8).
 - c. Take heed of persecutions (9-13)!
 - b' Wars, destruction of Temple (14-20)
 - a' Take heed of false Christs and false prophets (21-23)!
- II. The Parousia of the Son of Man 13:24-27
 - a. Signs in the skies (24-25)
 - b. The appearance of the Son of Man (26)
 - c. The gathering of the elect (27)
- III. The nearness of the Parousia 13:28-37
 - a. Parable of the fig tree (28-29). Parousia near.
 - b. Will come "within this generation" (30)

- c. Christ's word will not pass away (31)
- b' Nobody knows the day (32)
- a' Parable: The doorkeeper watches. Parousia sudden (33-36)

Conclusion: Take heed (37)!

The gospel of today speaks about the Parousia of Christ. After great tribulations, of which the first reading spoke in more details, Christ will come, not so much to judge but to gather the elect.

The second half of the gospel reminds us that the Parousia is near. When the signs in Part I take place (persecution, wars) one knows that the Lord will come soon as a budding fig tree announces spring time. He will come "within this generation". In any case, Christ's word is reliable. The exact day however, nobody knows.

In times of tribulation, we shall, as the Christians around the time of the Palestinian war before the destruction of Jerusalem, look forward to the Parousia, to the coming of Christ which is near.

HOMILY

KEEP ME SAFE IN TRIALS FOR YOUR PAROUSIA, LORD, WHICH IS NEAR!

Summing up the many thoughts of today's liturgy and especially of Mk. 13, we could say: "Keep me safe in trials for your Parousia, Lord, which is near!"

I. *Keep me safe!*

1. The Liturgical year comes to a close. Next Sunday we still have the Feast of Christ the King and then comes the first Sunday in Advent. Thus, our thoughts go to the end, the end of our life, the end of the universe of the coming of Christ at his Parousia at the end of time. Endtime is eschatological time, time full of trouble and anxiety, of uncertainty, persecutions and wars. Such times have occurred again and again and are going to come till the final coming of Christ.

2. In such times we look for safety. The Book of Daniel wanted to give such safety to his fellow Jews in the time of the great persecution of the Jews during the time of the Maccabees. The apparent rulers of history: Nebuchadnezzar, the Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great and the Diadochi, the Seleucidae and especially the present (at that time present) Antiochus IV Epiphanes are, according to the conviction of the author of the Book of Daniel, not the ones making world history. It is rather God who rules history, although it might look as if everything gets out of control. God rules. And he gives dominion to a Son of Man (which in the light of fulfillment of the New Testament is Christ himself) (Dan. 7:13-14). And even the very atrocious persecutions of Antiochus IV will come to an end after a determined time (the author says seventy weeks, that is: year weeks or 490 years) in the time of Antiochus.

Then price Michael, the guardian of God's people, makes sure that those written in the book of life, those who cooperated with God's grace will be saved. But whoever died a martyr in the persecutions will rise from the dead, which is only a sleep. They will be transformed and he like resplendent stars.

3. Mark wanted to give similar safety to the Christians in the time of the Jewish War which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. For this purpose, he wrote chapter 13 of his gospel. For Mark as for the unknown author of the Book of Daniel, it is clear that God rules history in the midst of all disasters and tribulations. Persecutions, disasters will be at all times. And every time people think it is the end, it will not be the end yet.

But even more, persecutions, tribulations have a positive purpose, and this is an idea Mark has beyond and above the Book of Daniel. We shall accept tribulations as testing and being tested, as Christ accepted his passion and suffering and thus, was made perfect.

Tested we are by making our right decision and keeping it, by not believing in wrong prophets who always will come up in such eschatological times and make people believe that they are Christ, that they have God's message and God's word for the future, although in reality it is their own "wisdom" and thus a fallacy (cf. Mk. 13:5-6. 21-23).

4. We also pray now at the end of the year: "Keep me safe O Lord, in all tribulations, uncertainties, persecutions and

times of unrest!" God rules history also today, although we are not sure and humanly speaking think that some super-powers try to determine the destiny of many or some deranged people who assassinate a world leader or even the Holy Father. The author of the Book of Daniel and St. Mark tell us: God is the Lord of all events. Tribulations, hardships, wars there will be till the Lord comes.

II. Keep me safe for your Parousia, Lord, which is near!

1. The first Christians had lived with Christ, had experienced him day by day. For them Christ was a reality. He had said: "I am going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, that where I am you also may be (Jn. 14:3).." Thus, they were looking forward to this coming of Christ with all their heart. They were praying every day: "Come, Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20)!" St. Paul in 1 Cor. 16:22 reports it even in the Aramaic original: "Maranatha = Lord come!" which could also be taken as hope and as a statement: Maranatha = the Lord is coming."

2. Christ's Parousia will mark the day of the Lord on which he will reveal himself in his splendor and majority as we see in today's gospel. Finally, all that the disciples had hoped for during Christ's lifetime will come true. No enemy can hinder Christ nor his disciples anymore. He will be fully in charge. He will destroy Anti-Christ (2 Thes. 2:8) and all his enemies (2 Thes. 1:7,10).'

All his elect will appear before him. We have reached our eternal destiny. Nobody can be any longer between Christ and us and block our way to him.

This is what the first Christians saw very vividly and thus, longed for. From this longing they were living and acting.

3. And this *Parousia* of Christ *will come soon*. Proof of this are the persecutions and the wars in which the Christians are living. They indicate the soonness of the Parousia trees in Palestine lose their leaves, it was easy to spot such a budding fig tree. For Mark, the Parousia is as easy to spot as such a budding fig tree. [And the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Mark even says: This generation will not pass away before all these things take place (13:30)." This word is not very clear. Does Mark refer to the tribulations before the end of the world and thus, the Parousia? Does he refer to the

Parousia itself? If he does, then of course, Mark would have been in error. This is what some say. Being inspired, Mark of course, could not teach this but only express this as an opinion. And thus, we would have here an opinion of the early Church.

4. In any case, the fact is that for the first Christians and for Mark, the Parousia of Christ was coming soon. And that was their greatest hope and the greatest motor for their prayers and actions. We are easily inclined to say: they were wrong and we live as if the Lord would not come for centuries. What we shall learn from the first Christians is that urgency, that promptness which helps us to take the last out of us, which gives us the dedication to use our time well. After all, the Lord is coming soon, even if that were many years.

5. Nobody knows when he is coming. And thus, we better live as if he would come today, tonight.

**THIRTY-FOURTH AND LAST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE**

(November 21, 1982)

We conclude the ecclesiastical year with the feast of Christ the King. See some introductory remarks on November 23, 1980. The readings of year B portray Christ as king whose sovereignty is eternal (first reading), as ruler of the kings of the earth, who makes us a line of kings, of priests to serve his God (second reading), as king who testifies to the truth (gospel).

FIRST READING: DANIEL 7:13-14

We saw that the Book of Daniel wants to encourage the Jews in the time of the persecution during the time of the Maccabees by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) telling them that God rules history, God overcomes Nebuchadnezzar, the Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great and the Diadochi, the Seleucides and Antiochus IV, described in the three visions of Dan. 2:32-45; 7:2-6 and 8:3-27.

When all these kingdoms are conquered, an eternal kingdom is erected. The occupant of the throne does not come from below as those described by the beasts in the above visions, but from above, on the clouds. He goes to "the Ancient of

Days" to God, and receives from him dominion, glory and kingdom. All peoples, nations and languages shall serve him. His dominion is everlasting and shall not be taken away from him. It shall never be destroyed. That this description is important, one can see from the fact that it is written in poetry. The occupant is called Son of Man, which in Hebrew simply means man.

This Son of Man is in the original context the faithful Israel as a collectivity, but slowly he becomes one person who represents at the same time all faithful Jews. And in the application of the New Testament, Jesus is this Son of Man. He himself used this title implicitly for himself (Mt. 26:64; Mk. 8:31.10:33).

Applied to Christ, we get a wonderful description of his kingdom.

SECOND READING: REVELATION 1:5-8

Today's second reading is taken from the introduction to the Letters to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation (1:4-8).

1. The seer sends greetings from God the Father, the seven spirits and (and here the second reading begins) from Jesus Christ who;
 - a. is the faithful witness (a favorite term in the Johannine writings),
 - b. the first-born of the dead; he rose first.
 - c. the ruler of kings on earth (1:5) :
2. Three predicates about Christ follow:
 - a. He loves us (the Present is used; thus, he did not just love us in the Past, especially when he died for us).
 - b. He freed us from our sins by his own blood (1:5).
 - c. He has made us a royal nation of priests in the service of his God and Father (1:6) so that every-redeemed has free access to God (as Christ has) and can adore and make intercession in the name of the whole world. Thus, Ex. 19:6 is fulfilled and 1 Peter 2:9.
3. A doxology follows (1:6) : To this Jesus be glory and power for ever and ever.

4. Christ's Parousia is imminent (1:7). This is the theme of the Book of Revelation, as we see in Dan. 7:13-14 and Zech. 12:70. Then Christ reveals his glory. His murderers then will look at him a second time, full of remorse which however is too late. At the first time, they had (wrongly) thought that they had destroyed him. Lament (uselessly) will also all those who rejected him by not believing in him in their life. This statement is affirmed with a double "Amen" in Greek (*nai*) and Hebrew (*amēn*). The NAB says: "So it is to be! Amen!" The RSV: "Even so. Amen."

5. God himself speaks the final word of the introduction, taking up again the predicates of 1:4 (not in today's reading): He is the timelessly-eternal God, the beginning and the goal of all creation, the Alpha and the Omega (the first and the last letter in the Greek alphabet). The whole world is subject to God's omnipotence, which comes to its climax by Christ's triumph.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: JOHN 18:33b-37

Jesus was crucified on the charge of being a messianic pretender as the title on the cross proves "the king of the Jews", king being the Roman equivalent for Messiah, Messiah being taken in a political sense as the Jews took it.

Did Jesus accept the title Messiah? Before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court, Jesus answers the high priest: "You have said it" (Mt. 26:64), "I am" (Mk. 14:62), in Lk. 22:67 he refuses to answer, since they would not believe him anyhow. Asked if he is a king before Pilate, Jesus answered: "You say it" in Mt. 27:11, Mk. 15:2; Lk. 22:3.

John makes everything of this trial before Pilate more explicit, as we see in today's gospel. The charge of claiming to be a king originates from the Jews. Jesus rejects this claim at least in the sense they have in mind. He is not a political king, he is not the political Messiah. But a king he is.

And Jesus defines his kingship by saying: I was born and I came into the world to bear witness to the truth (Jn. 18:37).

There are several possibilities for a homily:

1. Christ is coming for his Parousia, not some centuries from now, it is imminent and thus, we have to live accordingly.

This is suggested by the first reading: "See he comes amid the clouds (Rev. 1:7). Also the Book of Daniel brings similar ideas.

2. The second reading brings also a second topic: We share in Christ's kingship.

3. The gospel suggests the topic: Christ is king by giving testimony to the truth.

HOMILY

CHRIST IS KING BECAUSE HE WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH

Christ is King in many ways. And we see him as king in many different pictures. John the evangelist portrays Christ as king by giving witness to the truth.

1. The term *martyr* is a favorite expression in the gospel and the letters of John, occurring 64 times out of 173 in the whole NT. It means to testify to something one has seen or experienced as eyewitness. John the evangelist wants to make clear to his readers that he writes nothing but what "we heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched, we speak of the word of life... that you may share life with us (1 Jn. 1:1-3)".

2. John the evangelist can do this only because he reports what *the* witness, Jesus Christ, reported. Standing before Pilate Jesus sums up his life task by saying: "The reason I was born, the reason why I came into the world, is to testify to the truth (Jn. 18:37)." He said the same to Nicodemus at the beginning of his public ministry: I solemnly assure you, we are talking about what we know, we are testifying to what we have seen (Jn. 3:11)." And thus, the seer of Patmos calls Jesus "the faithful witness (Rev. 1:5)" the "Amen, the faithful witness and true (Rev. 3:14)."

3. Christ has been sent from the Father to witness to all he has been seeing in the Blessed Trinity, to reveal the Father to us so that accepting his witnessing, we may have eternal life. There are two texts in the gospel of John which sum up this witnessing and the content of it:

a. *Jn. 3:31-36*: "The One who comes from heaven testifies to what he has seen and heard . . . Whoever does accept this testimony certifies that God is truthful. For the One whom God has sent speaks the words of God; he does not ration his gift of the Spirit. The Father loves the Son and has given everything over to him. Whoever believes in the Son has life eternal. Whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure the wrath of God."

Christ comes from heaven and testifies to what he has seen and heard from the Father, he preaches the good news, the truth, to us. Whoever believes in Christ receives by believing eternal life, and Christ and the Father will give a believer the Holy Spirit in fulness.

b. In *Jn. 5:24-30* Jesus expresses this witnessing in a similar way, although the term witness does not occur there: "I solemnly assure you, the man who hears my word and has faith in him who sent me, possesses eternal life. He does not come under condemnation, but has passed from death to life. I solemnly assure you, an hour is coming, has indeed come, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who have heeded it shall live . . . An hour is coming in which all those in their tombs shall hear his voice and come forth."

Christ who preaches what he has witnessed and thus, preaches the Father's word can request faith in him. Everybody is placed before the decision either to accept him and have eternal life already now, or to reject him and have excluded himself from eternal life already now. What comes at the Parousia is only a manifestation of the decision everybody has already made here on earth. Those who heard Christ's witnessing word, accepted it and thus, have eternal life ever since (5:24-25) will later after their physical death at the Parousia come out of their tomb (5:28).

4. To make faith in him and thus, in the Father easier, Christ has many *witnesses* to his *testimony*:

a. John the Baptist witnessed to Jesus and prepared his way. And in this context the term *martyr* — is often used: He came as witness to witness to the light (*eis martyriam, hina martyresē*) (*Jn. 1:7*) . . . but only to witness to the light (*Jn. 1:8*). And again, we read in *Jn. 1:15*: "John witnessed to him (Christ) 'The one who comes after me ranks ahead of me.'" Similarly does he witness that the Holy Spirit came upon Christ (*Jn. 1:32*).

b. *Jesus' own works* bear witness to him (Jn. 5:36). Even Nicodemus admitted this. These works are not only Christ's miracles but also his whole public ministry, his preaching that gives life (Jn. 5:19-30).

c. The *Father* is his witness, having prepared the way for him in the Old Testament by speaking and appearing to the Jews. Unfortunately, most never heard his voice nor saw his face, i.e. never understood the real meaning of his word; God's word must be living in our heart, otherwise one does not understand the testimony of Christ.

d. *The Scriptures* give testimony to Jesus. Studying them with an open mind, one will find many references to Jesus already in the Old Testament. After all, he was already the rock in the desert, giving the Jews living water (1 Cor. 10:4). And he is the fulfillment of all prophecies (2 Cor. 1:20).

5. And yet, in spite of this long line of witnesses, the Jews did not believe Christ's testimony. And thus, he added the *last* testimony: his *death*. And ever since the term martyr in the course of Christian times has taken the meaning of testifying under trying circumstances, yes, of shedding one's blood. Christ became king because he witnessed to the Father by his death. True it was not easy for him either. He sweated blood and even prayed on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me (Mt. 27:46)." But the way he died testified even to the centurion how extraordinary he was. No crucified person who could hardly breathe, could shout as Jesus did: "It is consummated (Jn. 19:30)." "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit (Lk. 23:46)."

6. If we apply all this to us, meditating on Christ who witnessed to the truth, being truthful himself, we may tell ourselves:

a. Christ is reliable and faithful, being the fulfillment of all prophecies. How are we with our promises?

b. Standing before the Sanhedrin and being asked: "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" he could have answered with a distinction: "It all depends how you mean this." He could have said, "No" since his enemies had the wrong idea about his Messiahship anyhow. But he said a clear "Yes" and went into death for telling the truth. Is a clear word as dear to us as it was to him? Do we stand on the side of truth, even if this would mean to die a martyr or have great disadvantages?

c. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ said: "Say 'Yes' when you mean 'Yes' and 'No' when you mean 'No'. Anything beyond that is from the evil one (Mt. 5:37)." Are we reliable in our talk? Do we use white lies, double-meaning speech?

d. When Christ gives testimony to the Father, nobody can remain neutral. We either accept him and have eternal life already now, or we reject him and we have condemned ourselves already now. There is a host of witnesses to what Christ said and says, and we cannot have an easy excuse if we do not accept him as the Jews did not accept him.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (November 28, 1982)

With Advent a new cycle starts; this year 1982-1983 is Cycle C. Advent commemorates the coming of the Lord at his Parousia, his coming in the Church and his coming at Christmas. In the new Missal our thoughts during the last three Sundays of the ecclesiastical year and during the first Sunday of Advent are directed toward the Parousia. The remaining three Sundays of Advent prepare us for the arriving of Christ at Christmas. Only the first reading of Sunday C speaks about the Lord's coming for the incarnation.

During Advent, all three readings are selected and grouped around the same theme. The Lord will raise up for David a just shoot (fulfilled at Christ's incarnation) (first reading). The Lord is coming for the Parousia (second reading and gospel). Be prepared by watching and praying (gospel), by growing in holiness (second reading)!

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 33:14-16

Part III (Jer. 26-35) of the Book of the prophet Jeremiah contains prophecies of restoration for the Jews of the Northern Kingdom in exile and for the Jews in Judah, just shortly before they are deported into exile.

Sunday 16 of the year B (Jer. 23:1-6) contained in 23:5-6 almost the same message as today's first reading. To the Jews standing before the deportation in 587/86 with the fall of Jerusalem, the prophet promises that the Davidic dynasty

will be restored. The Lord will raise up a just shoot (*semah*). Thus, the dynasty will last (though this is not explicitly said here as in 2 Sm. 7). Since the shoot is just, he will do what is right and just. Jerusalem, thus, will be safe and people dwell secure. People will live justly and receive the name "the Lord is our justice".

This prophecy was only partly fulfilled through the return from exile. The full fulfillment came in the person of Christ. He is the just shoot. Isaiah has a similar passage (Is. 11:1) which we see on the second Sunday of Advent, year A: "A shoot (*hoter*) shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud (*neser*) shall blossom". Such texts and their explanations by the Fathers have inspired our old Christmas song: "A rose sprang up unheeded, a fresh and tender shoot. As prophets long had pleaded, the rose from Jesse's root."

Thus, the first reading is directing our thoughts already toward Christ's coming at Christmas, not toward his Parousia.

SECOND READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 3:12-4:2

The first letter to the Thessalonians is the first written document of the New Testament (51-52 A.D.) Paul had moved on from Thessalonica to Corinth. Silas and Timothy came to Corinth later and brought good news. There were no greater difficulties in the community of the Thessalonians, they remained faithful to God and Paul. Yet, there were some shadows. Paul refers gently to "those things that are wanting to your faith" (3:10), which he wants to remedy, and he warns them against the heathen vices of unchastity and dishonesty (4:3ff). They are also disturbed about the loss of their dead relatives in the faith (4:13ff). Since Paul cannot go to them right away, he writes a letter.

In Part I (2:1-3:13) which is historical-apologetical, the apostle speaks about his relations to the community during the time he was with them and now since he left, which were and are basically good. He has only one desire: to return. Part II (4:1-5:23) which is dogmatical-moral, Paul gives (1) individual instructions to chastity, charity and work (4:1-12) and (2) explains that the Parousia will come and will be witnessed by all, also by those who are dead now. The time is unknown. Thus, we must be prepared (4:13-5:11). (3) Various exhortations to the community follow (5:12-22) and (4) Paul prays for them for the grace of perseverance.

Today's second reading is taken from the end of Part I (3:12-13) and the beginning of Part II (4:1-2). In the first half of the reading, Paul expresses his desire to return to Thessalonica and wishes his Thessalonians an increase in love so that they may become blameless and holy at the Parousia of Christ. The second half of the pericope begins the exhortations of the second half of the Letter. The apostle is pleased that his Christians conduct themselves in a way pleasing to God as they learned from Paul. And they shall follow his instructions.. They shall grow in holiness (4:3) (This verse is not anymore in today's pericope).

The essence is thus: The Lord is coming for the Parousia. Be prepared by growing in holiness.

READING OF THE GOOD NEWS: LUKE 21:25-28.34-36

In the year C the current gospel reading is taken from Luke. Since today's gospel theme is the Parousia, this pericope of Luke is chosen. It follows Mk. 13 (eschatological discourse), but it deviates from Mark more than usual.

Lk. 21:25-28 speaks about Christ's Parousia and the signs that go ahead. Lk. 21:34-36 gives the admonition to be prepared for the Parousia by watching and praying. The part in-between (Lk. 21:29-33), telling us that the Parousia will come soon, is omitted, since we heard it in the parallel version of Mk. 13:28-32 on the thirty-third Sunday of year B.

1. The Parousia and the signs going ahead (Lk. 21:25-28) are described with the usual apocalyptic features as we also see in Mk. 13:24-25 and Mt. 24:29. But Luke omits that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven. He just says: "There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars." But instead, Luke stresses the psychological effect on people, caused by these signs and especially the roaring of the sea and the astral signs. Lk. 21:25b-26a are proper to Luke. People are really frightened, they faint with fear and with uncertainty of what is coming.

According to Jewish belief, the sea is a reservoir of evil bound by God at creation (Ps. 65:17; Job 28:8-11; Rev. 4:6; 13:1). But now before the Parousia, this order dissolves so that men die of fright.

"The powers (*dynameis*) in the heavens will be shaken." Who are these powers (*dynameis*)? And how are they shaken? Walter Grundamann in his article "*dynamai, dynamis*" in Gerhard Kittell (ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. II, p. 307 explains them as demonic powers which are cosmic at the same time, which according to Jewish oriental outlook are permitted by God to preside over the destinies of the Gentile nations, but are already conquered in principle by Christ's resurrection and will now be completely subjected (shaken = subjected) when Christ appears for his Parousia (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:20f; 1 Petr. 3:22). — But it seems preferable to translate the sentence as meaning: The astral order will be shaken, disturbed. In the line before, the order in the sea is disturbed, now the astral order goes to pieces. And that causes such distress, fainting and fear among people. The text says: "Men faint with fear... for (in Greek: *gar* = because) the powers of the heavens will be shaken." If the meaning would be: "the demonic powers will be subjected" nobody would have to faint. Furthermore, this quotation goes back to Is. 34:4, taken from the Small Apocalypse (Is. 34-35). Here the prophet describes the final judgment over Edom and the Messianic salvation. The description runs: "The mountains shall run with their (Edom's) blood, and the hills shall rot (the RSV translates "The host of heaven shall rot away" but the NAB follows Ziegler's suggestion changing the Hebrew *seba* (host) to *gebaot* (hills); "the hills shall rot"). And the skies shall roll up like a book, and all their host shall wither, as leaves fall from the vine, like the leaves falling from the fig tree." The Hebrew *sebaot* = hosts is the Greek *dynameis* = powers.

The picture then is clear: Before the Parousia the order in the sea and in the heaven will be for a short time disturbed and dissolved and that causes great anxiety and fear among people so that many die.

Then comes the Son of Man himself for his Parousia on cloud (notice the singular, in Dan. 7:13 in the plural: clouds) which recalls the cloud in the transfiguration (Lk. 9:34) and ascension (Acts 1:9), as well as the cloud in the wilderness (Ex. 14:19; 34:5). When all these things begin to happen (the different signs mentioned before), our redemption (*apolutrosis*) (an expression only used here in the gospel), but a favorite expression with St. Paul) is at hand.

HOMILY

THE LORD IS COMING FOR THE PAROUSIA WATCH AND PRAY!

1. According to the belief of the Stoics, history is circular. Every 3,000 years, the world is consumed by conflagration and starts all over again. History repeats itself. History goes nowhere. Men are tramping around on a kind of eternal treadmill.

That impression we may have at times also when we are overcome by the boredom of daily life and by the monotony of our work. And yet, the Bible tells us that history goes somewhere, the world history and our own personal life. God has created a *kairos*, a definite span of time for the world and for each of us. Of this *kairos* also, the gospel of today speaks in Lk. 21:36 in which we shall stay awake, as we will see.

The whole history of mankind leads to the Parousia of Christ, and our personal goal shall be that we will be there, that we can stand secure before the Son of Man, in his company together with all the elect. The Parousia is the climax of history and of our own personal life. To realize that history tends toward this goal, that all happenings have a meaning, even hardships, wars, persecutions, uncertainties in the world and in our personal life is consolation and call for responsibility at the same time. There is no reason for despair.

2. When hardships are greatest, when the darkness is blackest, the Lord is closest. Midnight is the beginning of the day. Shortly before the Lord comes for his Parousia the distress will be greatest. We know that Luke uses picture language in 21:25-28 which we do not have to take literally. The signs in the sun, moon and stars, which Mark and Matthew describe as "the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven" could fit any great disaster. And similarly, the roaring of the sea and the powers of heaven being shaken, i.e. the dissolution of the order in the universe have been verified to an extent several times. But once it will be the final and last time. All this distress shall give us courage. It is the sureness that the Lord is around the corner. This is equally true for our personal life: When our body does not do it any more, when we feel some changes in our system, as for instance in the case of

cancer, we know: the Lord is near. And we shall look up because our redemption is near at hand. Our life goes somewhere, goes toward the Lord.

3. Since the Parousia is close (and in God's eyes even a hundred years is a short time, but who actually knows how long or how short the span of world history and of our own personal life will be) we shall be prepared.

a. We shall *keep watch on ourselves* (*prosechete*) (21:34). *We shall take heed.*

(1) That means we shall have a certain distrust of ourselves and situations in which we are placed so that nobody can pull the wool over our ears. We shall not be credulous, but be on our guard. Thus, Christ told his disciples to be on guard against false prophets (Mt. 7:15), to be on guard against people who would deliver them to the court (Mt. 10:17), not to be infected by the falsehood (yeast) of the Pharisees (Mt. 16:6. 11.12, par.).

(2) *Prosechein* = to watch means in the New Testament however, also to be very attentive to something. When Philip preaches in Samaria, people give heed to what he is saying (Acts 8:6). They are even more attentive to Philip than they were to Simon Magnus and are baptized (Acts 8:12). It is the first zeal and fervor of a Christian.

(3) And that first fervor and zeal we must keep till the Parousia. Then nothing can happen to us. The Seer wrote his Apocalypse. And in this Book of Revelation he sends seven letters to his favorite communities in Asia Minor. Some he praises, some he has to blame. He has to blame his Ephesians: "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance... But I have against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember from what you have fallen (Rev. 2:3-5)". And similarly, he writes to his Christians in Landicea: "I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. (Rev. 3:15-16)."

We must keep our first fervor and zeal. Then we take heed and we cannot be overtaken by the sudden Parousia.

b. We must not become bloated with indulgence and drunkenness, we must not eat and drink too much. Probably this advice seems to be directed to a minority. And yet, there is a danger for all of us that we spend too much of our time

just on questions of our material support. And somebody may eat and drink too much because he has worries which he tries to quench. But the result is that he thinks of hardly anything else. And the coming of the Lord at the Parousia and at the end of his life is far from his mind.

c. We must not be weighed down by the cares of this life, by worldly cares. We must not worry. Otherwise, there is no room for thinking of God, no thought free for the coming of our Lord. We must care for our family and provide a living for them. But the above sentence would be better and more clearly translated with "your hearts must not be weighed down by the anxieties (worries) of this life." Care we must, but we must not be anxious, we must not worry, for that proves that we have no confidence in God our Father who takes care of the lilies of the fields, the birds of the air and therefore much more of us, his beloved children (Mt. 6:28-32). And thus, Jesus tells his disciples in the Sermon on the Mountain repeatedly not to worry, and here the same word *merimma* = the worry and *marimnaō* = to worry is used as here in Lk. 21:34 (Mt. 6:25.27.28.31.34).

d. We must watch (*agrypneite*), otherwise, the Day of the Lord will close in on us like a trap snatches a bird. This is a rare word in the New Testament. It occurs here and in the parallel report in Mk. 13:33. Paul mentions such night watches among the hardship he endured for the Lord (2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27) and which pulled down God's grace on his apostolate, kept him alert and made him strong in weakness. We all know from experience that such watches at night mean a special effort and make us alert.

e. *We must pray.* In the above text and in Eph. 6:18 this keeping watch is combined with prayer. After all, that is what we usually do during such night watches. But certainly the prayer shall not be restricted to such a time. It is typical for Luke, the evangelist of prayer, that he mentions prayer as the last ingredient for being alert and ready for the Parousia. We shall pray all our *kairos*, our allotted span of time of life. After all, to be ready when the Lord comes is a grace which only God can give us. And for this grace we must pray.

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Dilecto Filio LUCIO QUIAMBAO, Vicario Generali in dioecesi Legazpiensi, electo Episcopo titulo Nabalensi atque Auxiliari ipsius pastoris Legazpiensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Plane videntes quali et quanta operositate opus sit, ut frequentiora nunc negotia pastoralia congruenter et opportune necnon communis utilitatis gratia expediantur, persuasum Nobis habemus audiendas esse preces non sine iusta causa a probato Episcopo Legazpiensi nuper Nobis ad Auxiliarem sibi Episcopum impetrandum adhibitam, Quapropter de consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium, qui Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praesunt, quod ratum habemus, deque plenitudine potestatis Nostrae Apostolicae te Dilecte Fili, non praeditum peritia tantum sed usu etiam exercitatum, ad Episcopatu, Efferimus Eclesiaeque NABALENSIS titulo insignitum simul Auxiliarem memorato Praesuli Legazpiensi assignamus, iura guidem tibi facientes officiaque imponentes Auxiliarium propria ipsisque praescripta Litteris "Eclesiae Sanctae" Motu Proprio die Vi Mensis Augusti anno MCMLXVI editis. Necesse tamen est, antquam ad statutas liturgicas normas episcopalem accipias ordinationem, ut, teste catholico tistite, professionem fidee nuncupes et fidelitatem tum Nobis copalem accipias ordinationem, ut, teste catholico sacrorum Antistite, professionem fidee nuncupes et fidelitatem tum Nobis tum Successoribus Nostris rite iures. Quibus ubivis peractis, tuum praeterea erit quas tibi adhibueris iuris iurandi formulas, sueto more subnotatas impressoque sigillo obsignatas, cito ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis transmittere. Extremum autem est quod te dilecte fili hortemur ut, prorsus tibi conseius huius gravioris muneris tui pari honore geminati, pro tuo ingenio id exerceas per alacrem operam eum tuo ipsius Episcopo consociatam, "salva semper unitate dioecesani regiminis necnon Episcopi dioecesani auctoritate" (Chr. Dom., 25). Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die tertio et vicesimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo secundo, Pontificatus Notri quarto.

AUGUSTINUS CARD. CASAROLI
A Publicis Eccl. Negotiis

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Venerabili Fratri RUBEN PROFUGO, hactenus Episcopo titulo Buduanensi atque Auxiliari dioecesis Lucenensis, eiusdem ipsius Ecclesiae Episcopo contituto, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Supremi Apostotatus officium ex quo univ-ersum dominicum gregem pascimus a Nobis exigit ut, si quaedam Ecclesia suo Pastore sit destituta, eidem omni sollicitu dine provideamus. Qua re, Venerabili Fratre Josepho T. Sanchez ad archidioecesim Novae Segobiae translato cum cathedralis Ecclesia Lucenensis vacaret, censuimus eam tibi posse guber nandam committi qui haud parvum rerum pastoralium usum es adeptus cum istius communitatis utilitati hucusque sedule ministraveris. De consilio igitur Venerabilis Fratris Nostri, S.R.E. Cardinalis Praefecti Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, Apostolica Nostra Nostra potestate usi te, vinculo solutum Sedis titulo Buduanensis, ad cathedralem Ecclesiam LUCENENSEM transferimus eique Episcopum ac Pastorem praeficimus, eunctis datis iuribus congruisque impositis obligatio nibus. Ab iteranda autem fidei catholicae professione te eximimus, contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus; iusiurandum tamen fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros dabis, teste quovis rectae fidei Episcopo, formulamque adhibitam ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes, usitato more signatam sigittoque impressam. Mandamus insuper ut hae Litterae Nostrae clero et populo in cathedralli dioecesis tuae templo publice legantur die aliquo festo de praeepto; quos dilectos Nobis filios monemus ut te debita reverentia colant tisque uissis volentes pareanti. Denique omnipotentem Deum suppliciter deprecamur ut suis muneribus te providus ditet quo aptius episcopale gravissimum sane munus valeas in Domino implere. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum die quinto decimo mensis Maii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo secundo, Pontificatus Nostri quarto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
A Publicis Eccl. Negotiis