

# **BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO deFILIPINAS**

**THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN**

**CIVIL STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESE**

**Atty. Sabino Padilla**

**THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW**

**Florencio Testera. O.P.**

**PRIEST CO-WORKERS OF MOTHER TERESA**

**Joseph Langford, O.M.V.**

**ON GENERAL ABSOLUTION**

**Excelso Garcia, O.P.**

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THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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## EDITORIAL

### THE PAST AND THE FUTURE OF CANON LAW

For over two decades now, Canon law has been relegated in seminary courses to a position which made it a close second to Greek and Hebrew. There were even seminaries which totally scratched from the curriculum the prescribed class on Institutions of Canon Law.

This was most unfortunate because no organization, not even the Church or a seminary, can function in this world without a set of norms that delineate duties and protect rights. While church law cannot divorce itself from its theological and pastoral basis and objectives, the law itself must be accepted as a necessary structure for the proper functioning of the Church toward its ultimate goal, the salvation of souls.

The Church has constantly issued directives on the teaching of Canon Law in all ecclesiastical institutions of learning in the most emphatic language. To wit, "no major seminary or scholasticate maybe without professorship of Canon Law"; and "The teaching of church law must be ranked with the necessary disciplines."

This being the case, why then was Canon Law left in the lurch even by some of those who were under the obligation to promote its study and to look after its implementation? Was it because the old *sacred* canons have become socially irrelevant? Or was it due, as alleged in some quarters, to a brand of juridicism and formalism that left the law with neither heart nor reason to exist?

"We often find today," says Paul VI, "an appeal to liberty against law, any law whatever. And the gospel is often invoked to support this. It is true that the gospel reminds us of the pre-eminent liberty of the spirit. Jesus did preach against Pharisaical legalism in behalf of the love and liberty of the children of God. But the same Jesus who preached love and proclaimed the interior life and freedom, laid down *practical and moral obligations binding his followers to faithful observance*. He willed "... authority provided with fixed powers, in the service of man." "Freedom and authority are not opposing terms, but rather values that compliment each other, their

mutual cooperation promotes the growth of the community and, at the same time, the capacities for initiative and enrichment of the individual members."

In a society that finds it more and more difficult to accept any limitation upon even the grossest perversions of freedom, one has valid reason to fear that the newly promulgated Code of Canon Law, like the *sacred* canons of old, may again become a sort of whipping boy covering up for all sorts of social and human shortcomings. Questions such as the following are frequently raised with no little amount of concern: Will the new Code be readily accepted by the christian, the clergyman . . . as an instrument of truth and justice, order and charity? Or will it become another stumbling block in our pilgrimage on earth?

At the moment, any guess could be as good as the other. Whatever the answer may be, the acceptance of the New Code must be premised on both the quality of the new law and the attitude of the people who receive it.

A law need not be popular to be good, but it must be at least acceptable and relevant to the people. A law drafted without the basis of acceptance is dead before its birth. Likewise, the worst thing that can happen to any legal system is to become socially irrelevant.

Canon Law, if it is to be effective, must treasure the traditions in which the Church was established and has flourished through the centuries. But it must also be flexible enough to develop and grow, to meet the new challenges and changing circumstances in which the Church finds itself. As Paul VI puts it, "a good law must provide the balance between rights and duties, between liberty and responsibility, between the dignity of the individual and the requirements of the common good."

The non-acceptance of the new law by some sectors and individuals within the Church would be an unfortunate possibility. But the worst reaction may come from the catholic who, cherishing the free-wheeling days of the past, may refuse to accept the new law on this pretext: "If the law is not already dead, it will die, since it is mortal. Law is for the mediocre; the good have no need for it, the bad have no fear of it."

Truly, the law will be as good as the people who receive it and live it. The new Code will remain dead letter if not applied by persons of integrity, honesty and zeal.

F. Testera, O.P.

## FEATURES

### CIVIL LAW STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESE — INCOME TAX AND LABOR PROBLEMS —

By

**Atty. Sabino Padilla**

I wish to discuss with you three items. I shall discuss, first of all, the civil law structure of the diocese; second, the tax structure of the diocese and; finally, some common labor law problems of the diocese.

#### 1. CIVIL LAW STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESE

Let me start with the civil law structure of the diocese. When I speak of the civil law structure, I want it understood at the very outset, that the diocese as a moral person in Canon Law, exists independently of the civil law. The diocese as a moral person is a fact, it is a reality. There is the bishop, there are his priests, there are the People of God in a particular territory which has been erected into a diocese. Even if the government were to refuse to recognize this fact or reality, it would still be there.

However, dioceses in the Philippines have found it convenient for civil law purposes to erect certain civil law structures to carry out their activities. So, we have civil law structures in the diocese. We have the corporation sole, we have the various instrumentalities of the diocese in the form of corporations aggregate and we have, finally, the individuals, the reverend parish priests and, sometimes, laymen assisting the bishops in the activities of the diocese. I will focus briefly on each of these structures and draw out certain lessons which Manila has learned over the years.

As all of you know, every diocese in the Philippines is incorporated as a corporation sole. Now religious corporations in the Philippines are of two classes: (1) the corporation sole and (2) the corporation aggregate. The bishop invariably incorporates himself as a corporation sole. What does this

mean? This means simply that he files with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) a document, the articles of incorporation, where he states that he is the bishop of a certain locality, that he desires to incorporate himself as a corporation sole; that his act of incorporating himself as a corporation sole is not contrary to the rules of the Catholic Church, and that he is, therefore, proceeding to do so. After that document is filed with the SEC," he becomes a corporation sole. This concept is a little confusing, because one of the essential elements of a corporation is that it has indefinite or perpetual existence and we know that the bishop does not live that long. Actually, all it means is that when the bishop incorporates himself, the diocese acquires a juridical personality separate from the bishop. Hence, when the bishop dies or retires and the Holy Father appoints his successor, his successor simply files with the SEC his letter of appointment and from the moment this letter of appointment is filed with the SEC, that bishop becomes the incumbent of the corporation sole.

The structure of the corporation sole is a very simple one because, as the name implies, it is a corporation consisting of one and only one member. Therefore, from this very concept, there follow the following propositions:

1. Since he is the only member of the corporation and cannot conceivably defraud himself he does not need a board of directors or a board of trustees to approve his acts;
2. He does not have to call an annual meeting of members because he is the only member;
3. His signature, his act, is the act of the corporation.

Therefore, for purposes of the civil law, when a diocese alienates properties, the signature of the bishop as the incumbent of the corporation sole is sufficient, his act is the act of the corporation sole. When the bishop alienates properties, there is no need for a board resolution authorizing the bishop because he has no board of directors. In canon law, however, there are certain restrictions on his actions, for example, the need of securing approval of the Holy See in certain matters. But for civil law purposes his signature binds for the corporation.

That is the bishop as corporation sole and within the corporation are the so-called religious and secular properties of

the diocese as, for example, churches, "conventos", cemeteries, all of which are owned by the diocese and should, therefore, be placed in the name of the diocese.

It is very important to keep in mind the distinction between the bishop, as an individual, and the bishop as a corporation sole. Because there could arise some problems from the disregard of this distinction.

In Manila, and in most dioceses, whenever church properties are acquired the titles to these properties are always in the name of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, or the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cotabato, never in the name of Jaime Cardinal Sin, or Archbishop Philip Smith. The reason is obvious. If it were in the name of the bishop as an individual, then upon his death it is conceivable, as has happened in Lipa, that some relative would say: "Such and such properties are owned by my brother, the late bishop, and therefore, upon his death, I inherited them." To avoid confusion, and to avoid the long and painful litigation that would follow, it is always very important, that treasurers of the dioceses see to it that the properties of the diocese are placed in the name of the corporation sole never in the name of the individual incumbent bishop. Other than the foregoing problem, I see not too many other problems in relation to the corporation sole. The real problems, at least in Manila and in some nearby dioceses, have arisen in relation to other structures which the diocese very often finds necessary to set-up in carrying out its activities and its apostolates. I refer to the different corporations aggregate, for example, parochial schools.

When a diocese sets-up a parochial school, it can adopt one of two alternatives:

1. The diocese could directly erect, and maintain the parochial school, in which case, it will be a school directly owned by the diocese; or
2. The diocese may ask the parish priests and some lay people to incorporate, i.e., to form a corporation that will run the parochial school.

In Manila, the system calls for a parish priest and some lay people to get together and form a corporation that would set-up and operate a parochial school. This is where most of the problems arise. To get a better view of the problems and the pre-



cautions that should be taken to avoid these problems, let me analyze briefly the structure of corporation aggregate.

/A corporate aggregate consists of membex-s, usually five, who form a corporation and who elect the trustees who will form the board of trustees. The Board, in turn, elects the officers of the corporation. So, a parochial school would start usually with a document signed by the parish priest, and four lay people in his parish where it is stated that they have come together to form a parochial school, that the name of the parochial school is St. Gabriel Academy, that it will exist for a term of 50 years, for the purpose of providing Catholic education for the young in the parish. Once that is filed in the SEC, the school becomes a separate corporation and becomes an independent juridical person. This is where the danger lies. Once incorporated it has a juridical personality separate from the diocese, and exists as a juridical person independent of the diocese. Therefore it is conceivable that the corporation could become, what we lawyers often call, "a lost command" or a "break-away satellite."

Very often this problem arises after several years from incorporation, when the school will have grown to something substantial. The oekonomus may be surprised to receive one day, a letter from ia lawyer stating:

Dear Fr.—, I represent the following people who are the brothers and sisters of the late Fr. so and so, the former parish priest of this town. As you know Fr. so and so, founded this parochial school and it has grown into something substantial. Since I represent the heirs of this priest, I should like to offer to your bishop, the school for a price of one million pesos.

Now, you would be surprised and say "but the school belongs to the diocese!" Many times the cause of the problem is really traceable to the failure to take into account the fact that a non-stock corporation aggregate, has a juridical personality which unless properly structured and tied to the diocese, can become a "break-away satellite" or a "lost command." Why? Because a corporation, a non-tock corporation, is controlled by its members, who elect the trustees, and who, in turn, elect the officers of the corporation. So, technically the five incorporators, meaning the parish priest and the 4 lay people in his parish, can very well tell this bishop or the Father oekonomus, "You have no business looking into the books of our corporation. You have

nothing to do with us." Yet we all know, that parochial schools or hospitals, orphanages, even if separately incorporated are supposed to be instrumentalities of the diocese.

How do We insure that they remain instrumentalities of the diocese?

Manila, from its bitter experiences in the past, has devised certain methods of control over this corporation.

First, by declaring in the articles of incorporation, that this corporation is an instrumentality of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila. This declaration becomes the basis of the succeeding control devices that are placed in the articles of incorporation.

Since it is an instrumentality of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, it is also advisable or necessary to provide that the Archbishop of Manila, and the Auxiliary Bishops are ex-officio members of the corporation.

Now, what is the reason for this control device? This is actually necessary to insure, not only that the Archbishop will continue to control the corporation, but that the parish priest, who is there in the front line will always have control of the corporation, on behalf of his bishop. Why do I say this? Legally speaking, that parish priest could be out-voted, by the four lay incorporators who usually also become the first trustees of the corporation. Assuming a worst possible scenario, these four people could get together and say, "we don't like this parish priest, let us get full control now of the corporation." They could proceed to the election of trustees and eliminate the parish priest as trustee whereupon it becomes a corporation completely run by these lay people. The poor bishop and poor parish priest will be left out in the cold. If there were provisions, on the other hand, as in the case of Manila, that the Archbishop of Manila and all the Auxiliary Bishops are ex-officio members, of the corporation then, in case of a show-down between the parish priest and four lay people, who have decided to defy him, the parish priest walks into the meeting of the members with his vote and nine other additional votes, and can tell the four people in front of him, "very well, let us put all these matters to a vote. Each of you has one vote making a total of four votes. I have one vote, but I carry with me the proxies of the Archbishop of Manila and his eight auxiliary bishops so

I have ten votes. So gentlemen, let us now take a vote. The realization alone on the part of the others that this parish priest is coming in with ten votes could stop any possible rebellion or any possibility of a "break-away satellite."

The third device that should be inserted in the articles is a statement that membership in the corporation is non-proprietary and no member has any interest in the property or income of the corporation. Why is that necessary? This is necessary, because in the absence of such a statement in the articles, the members of a private corporation naturally have an interest in the assets of the corporation; and yet, as you all know, the parochial school is not and was never meant to be the private property of the parish priest, much less the private property of the lay people he has gathered to help him in forming that corporation. A provision to that effect in the articles of incorporation will prevent the occurrence of cases where the relatives of a deceased parish priest would ask the Archbishop, as has happened in Manila, for one million pesos or half a million to surrender the interests of the late parish priest which they claim to have inherited.

Finally, to round out the picture, there should also be a proviso in the article of incorporation which states that in case of dissolution of the corporation, all its assets, after payment of whatever liabilities, will go to the diocese.

This sums up what I have to say of the corporate aggregates as an instrumentality of the diocese. In these times of uncertainty one can never tell about the future of parochial schools and other Catholic institutions of learning vis-a-vis the State. So it is only a matter of prudence, and foresight to include in the articles of these instrumentalities all these safeguards.

Once such structures are sufficiently "arranged so that they cannot become "break-away satellites" or "lost commands", treasurers and bishops of dioceses, can become reasonably certain that such instrumentalities will always remain instrumentalities of the diocese.

Now let me touch another matter which can become a source of problems in a diocese. I am referring to the matter on contractual relations between the diocese and the religious

congregations that have canonical permission to reside in the diocese. Very often the diocese invites religious congregations of men and women to help the diocese in its various apostolates. One classic example is when the bishop invites one congregation to set-up and run a parochial school. In the early years of the school's existence, there is not much of a problem, but after fifty years there could arise one. When a school has grown, for instance, into a university, the oeconomus either of the diocese or of the congregation, will ask the question: Who owns the school? They then go back to the archives and find out that, the school was incorporated, say, in 1912 and that the incorporators were, for example. Archbishop Jeremiah Harty and four RVM Sisters. The question now is: Is the school owned by the congregation or by the diocese? From the answer to this question would follow certain consequences: if it is a school of the congregation all the income naturally goes to the congregation and it is only proper that control remain vested in the congregation, subject to the jurisdiction of the ordinary under canon law. On the other hand, if it is a school of the diocese and the sisters are only administering the school for the bishop, then all the income of the school belongs to the diocese and all its policies are to be decided by the bishop, either directly or through his Board of Trustees.

Problems such as these have arisen in certain areas in the Visayas after the oeconomia of the religious congregation or the oeconomus of the bishop have sought clarification. To avoid confusion it is always advisable that a contract be drawn up between the diocese and the religious congregation.

Here in Manila, we have different types of contracts^ In one type the Archbishop of Manila states in black and white that the school is a parochial school of the Archbishop of Manila; that the Archbishop entrusts the administration of this school to this congregation; that this congregation accepts the administration of the school. The contract also stipulates the provisions on the budget and on the compensation of the congregation for administering the school. Regarding the budgetary aspects, the contract may leave the financial-matter all to the congregation, in effect saying: you administer it and any excess is yours as well as any deficit. But many religious congregation do not like that type of contract.

They would rather say: "Yes, Your Eminence, we will administer the school, for you, we will submit a yearly budget,

and we will be under a board of trustees, whose members will be selected by you. But we will be on a salary basis", which means in effect, that any deficit is the responsibility of the Archbishop.

Now, whatever type of contract is drawn, it is important to clarify, at the very outset, whether the school belongs to the diocese or to the religious congregation. If it is decided that the school belongs to the congregation, provisions should be made on how diocesan properties being used by the school should be administered. Usually, the bishop would offer free use of his lands to the congregation so that the congregation could set up the physical plant and facilities of the school. Again there should be a contract stating in black and white the period of the free use, the terms under which the congregation can use the plant, the provisions for reversion of the land to the diocese in the event the congregation ceases to use it for its apostolate of education.

## 2. THE TAX STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESE

At one time or another some priests of a diocese seek clarification as to whether they are to file their income tax returns. Or, perhaps bishops themselves may have been recipients of some letter of authority from the BIR, authorizing a BIR examiner to examine the income tax returns, or book of accounts of the diocese. So it is important to know the position of the diocese vis-a-vis the income tax.

The diocese as corporation sole is a separate juridical entity, as mentioned earlier, and consequently it has also a separate tax personality. The basic rule is this: the diocese, the corporation sole, is exempted from tax. However, it is taxable on its so called secular income. What does this mean? This means that the *colecta* at mass, the stipend for masses or the *derechos de estola*, etc. while they may enter the books of the parish, the *libro de cargo y data*, are not subject to income tax. Therefore, the BIR has no business asking you about these. The answer to a BIR agent who asks how much is the *colecta* at mass, how much is charged for baptisms or weddings or funerals is: this is religious income and under the law this is none of your concern.

The diocese is taxable only on its secular income: rents, dividends, interests. Payment of tax on dividends and interest

is no longer a problem now because dividends are subjected to a 10% final withholding and so are interest earnings. So, the diocese does not even have to include these in the returns of the diocese. This leaves only rentals and other forms of secular income to be included in the returns. If the diocese has a commercial building and derives rental income from it, that rental has to be reported in the income tax return of the diocese. If it has other activities for profit, then, income from those activities must also be reported in the income tax returns. There are, however, certain gray areas.

Section 27(e) of the Tax Code says: "The following organizations shall not be taxed under this title, in respect to income received by them as such: a corporation or association organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, athletic or cultural purposes or for the rehabilitation of veterans, no part of the net income of which inures to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual." At the bottom of section 27, there is this reservation: "Notwithstanding the provision in the preceeding paragraph, the income of whatever kind and character of the foregoing organizations, from any of their properties real or personal or from any of their activities conducted for profit regardless of the disposition made of such income shall be subject to the tax imposed under this code."

In Manila, the BIR has tried to tax the income from cemeteries. One BIR examiner came up with a novel idea, saying: 'the tax code says, that the income from properties, real or personal, shall be subject to tax. La Loma cemetery is a real property because it is a land; the Archdiocese of Manila derives income because he collects a fee of P2.00 per niche. All of these income is from real property. Why is not the Archbishop of Manila reporting this in its income, tax return?' The answer to this is: although it is an income from real property it is also income from activity, an activity which is not conducted for profit. Canon Law provides that the Ordinary of the place should set up a cemetery for the faithful. The operations of the cemetery are also provided in canon law. Such operations are activities which are not conducted for profit. The income therefore is exempt from tax. The BIR finally conceded the point.

It may also happen that you have a small store selling religious articles in your parish churches or conventos. And you may be asked: "Father why are you selling these pamphlets,

rosaries, religious images? Are you paying percentage tax? Are you filing income tax returns? The answer to this is: "this is also a religious activity and therefore, not subject to tax." So, for the diocese the tax situation is relatively clear. Religious income remains exempt, whereas secular income is taxable. There are just few gray areas.

The big problem comes, however, from the fact that the present Tax Code says that even if the diocese or a religious corporation is exempt it must file an information return. This information return is a very critical thing. My advice to all religious congregations and institutions is: do not file it. Why? In the information return the BIR wants to know what your exempt items are. They want to know how much is the *collecta* from mass. They want to know the stipends from baptisms, weddings, and funerals. To further coerce religious institutions, the BIR examiner may read that unless the corporation files that information return, and gets a certificate of exemption from the commissioner, the corporation remains taxable. The answer to this is that there is a Supreme Court decision, *Sinco vs. Collector of Internal Revenue* (100 Phil. 127) which says: the exemption is granted by law and the failure of a religious institution to get that certificate of exemption or to file that information return does not destroy the exemption.

The other way to avoid this problem of having to file an information return where the diocese has literally to bare its guts to the BIR, is for the diocese to file not an information return as an exempt institution, but an ordinary corporate income tax return. When the diocese files an ordinary income tax return, it need not file anymore an information return on its religious income. In which case it may even be advisable for the diocese to create secular income just to go through the motion of filing a return. Dividend income is no longer included in the return, and so also is the interest income since they are subject to final withholding tax. What the diocese can very well do is to charge one of the parochial schools a rental income for the use of the property of the diocese, a rental income, say, of P100.00 a month. Let that be reported in the return of the diocese. It receives from that parochial school a P100.00 a month, a total of P1,200.00 a year. For that, it is filing a return and paying an income tax of 25%. If the BIR man comes and say, "Father I notice this diocese has not filed any information return", the answer is: "We filed an or-

dinary income tax return and have paid the tax." If he asks, "how about your religious income," the answer is: "it is none of your business. This is the secular income of the diocese, we have paid the tax and reported it. If you believe that this is inaccurate go ahead and examine it."

For most of the dioceses, I think that is the only solution to the present regulation.

What about the individual religious? The parish priest? When he receives his "*derechos de estola*", the "*collecta*", does this represent income for him? Again some BIR examiner may come and quote to you Section 40 of the Income Tax Regulation which declares as income — "marriage fees, baptismal offerings, sum paid for saying masses for the dead, and other contributions received by a clergyman, evangelist or religious worker for services rendered." The question of whether the above-mentioned income of priests are subject to tax was the subject of a lengthy litigation in the Archdiocese of Manila. Let me give you a brief background on this. Many years ago during the tenure of Cardinal Santos, Ateneo de Manila had the practice of including the Jesuit professors in the payroll of Ateneo and since they were included in the payroll, naturally their salaries were subjected to withholding tax and SSS. Until one day, Fr. Karasig said: "Look! Under my vow of poverty this item of F500.00 which appears in the payroll and for which I sign every month does not really go to me. So why should I be filing an income tax return and paying income tax?" So they raised the question with the BIR and the BIR ruled that Fr. Karasig was subject to income tax as shown by the payroll. Now if a regular priest, despite his vow of poverty, would be subject to income tax on that kind of income, it stood to reason that a secular priest who, as they say does not take the vow of poverty, but is forced to practice it, would with all the more reason be subject to income tax. We had to re-litigate the issue all over again. The BIR was focusing on the so-called Sunday collections, mass stipends and the *derechos de estola*. They felt that with the ruling on the case of Fr. Karasig, the door was now open to subject the parish priests, especially the secular parish priests, to full taxation. There was even talk of stationing BIR agent in every big parish, and even of how parish priests could be required to put up a cash register, registered with and sealed by the BIR so that every time he receives P5.00 for a baptism, he had to enter it in the cash register which would then automatically record it.



The first step we took was to show to the BIR that, under the vow of poverty, citing canon law, a member of a religious congregation cannot claim this income as his because he has to turn it over to his superior. In other words, the religious is merely an agent of his -congregation. When he says mass and receives a stipend, he does not receive it as his own, but turns it over to his superior and therefore it is an income of the congregation. Now, since a religious congregation has a separate personality and, under the tax code, a religious congregation is exempt from income tax in its income; as such, therefore that stipend" which the religious receives is not taxable. Our argument, in the case of the secular priest, ran this way: the secular priest, when he receives stipend for baptism, wedding and funerals, does so, not in his own name but in the name of the bishop. What he retains for himself represents what the bishop gives to him as his "*decoroso sustento*" as prescribed in Canon Law. Therefore, the analogy is this: the secular priest is an agent of the bishop, the corporation sole, just as the religious is an agent of the congregation. The corporation sole is a religious organization and exempt from income tax on its religious income; therefore, such stipends are not subject to tax.

### 3. LABOR PROBLEMS

What about the SSS? Is a priest supposed to be covered by the SSS? The answer is a tentative one: if he is an employee, definitely he must be registered. He must pay his share, and whoever is his employer must also pay his share, his premium of the SSS. Many years ago, Cardinal Santos met his priests, and they unanimously decided they did not want to be covered by the SSS. So they took their stand, which ultimately was sustained by the SSS; the secular priest is not an employee of the bishop; he is a self-employed person. But then came the amendment to the SSS. Many priests of the Archdiocese of Manila received telegrams to register, because they are self-employed. To make matters worse, there arose in the diocese of Sorsogon a case where Fr. Vicente Romano sued the SSS and Bishop Arcilla on the claim that he was an employee of the bishop. To clarify matters once and for all, the Archbishop of Manila requested a categorical ruling from the Social Security Commission on whether parish priests should register with SSS as self-employed persons and the Commission answered: "No, they need not register."

I believe all dioceses "should take this stand, that priests need not register with the SSS either as so-called self-employed persons or alleged employees of their bishop. In the meantime, the Social Security Commission finally decided the case of Fr. Vicente Romano of Sorsogon. The Commission ruled that the relationship between the bishop and his secular priests is a peculiar one under canon law and really cannot be considered as one of employer and employee. (Please see Appendices E, F, G for some BIR Rulings on the Subject of Tax on Religious income, and other related topics — Ed.)

In the case of a priest working as a parish priest, it is clear that the "*decoroso sustento*" given by the bishop does not represent income to him; he is not self-employed, neither is he an employee of his bishop. If the secular priest is working in a seminary as a teacher, rector, prefect of discipline, and he is included in the payroll, definitely he is covered by the SSS and his income is subject to withholding tax. But there is another option. In the case of priests assigned in the seminary, I would not include them in the payroll, but I would provide separate allowance for them for serving the seminary, and this allowance would then be the "*decoroso sustento*" of his bishop.

In a diocese the bishop usually has a staff of lay people working under him; these lay people are regular employee and that means they are subject to SSS, Medicare, Minimum Wage Law and all the presidential decrees on emergency living allowances because they are like any other employee of an industrial or commercial enterprise. In the case of a priest working as secretary to the bishop or treasurer of the diocese, I would maintain that he is not an employee of his bishop, but receives an allowance for his support and maintenance.

A parish priest also has his household staff; over and above that, he may also have clerks in the parish. This is a gray area. One who serves as a cook, as a houseboy or as a driver — these are all "domestics". Therefore, they are not ordinary and regular employees. Consequently, they are not covered by SSS, their compensation is not subject to withholding tax, they are not entitled to the minimum wage law and emergency living allowance. But as domestics they have certain rights. In Metro Manila the minimum cash wage is P90.00, in the provinces P70-P60. In addition they are entitled to free meals, free lodging in the residence of their employers and when they get

sick, their hospitalization and medical expenses are all chargeable to their employer; if they die, the burial expenses are also chargeable to their employer.

In the parish with parish clerks, a distinction must be drawn. If the parish clerk reports everyday, works eight hours, does nothing except clerical work for the parish, such as making entries in the canonical books, preparing the papers for baptisms, weddings and funerals, then he is a regular and permanent employee covered by SSS, Medicare, subject to withholding tax, entitled to minimum wage law and all emergency allowance. If, however, he goes there as volunteer and reports on Sundays or for four hours on weekdays just to help the parish and the parish priest gives him P400 as a gratuity for his services, there is no employer-employee relationship. But if that parish clerk goes there regularly, works eight hours, and depends upon that work as his source of livelihood, he should be treated as a regular and permanent employee. What about the sacristan, who serves at mass, doubles as clerk, cooks also, cleans the convent and the church—in other words is an all-around-man? If he lives with the priest he could be considered as a domestic. Another solution is that which some religious congregations have adopted as regards the *manang* who washes and cooks for the sisters and at the same time works in the school canteen and cleans the school. In this case the "*manang*" is partly domestic and partly a regular employee. I advice the congregation to enter into a clear contract with this *manang* where she is appointed as a regular, permanent *part time* employee of the school for four hours; the rest of the time, she is a domestic. This means that she is given the minimum wage and allowances under the law of a regular employee, but since she is only part-time, that is to say, she works as such only for four hours a day, she would get one-half of what a regular employee gets.

Catechists are treated sometimes as employee of the diocese, as other times as those of the parish or some institutions within the diocese. What is important in these cases is:

(1) to determine who is the employer of the catechists; and

(2) to determine what are the terms and conditions of employment of the catechists.

Who is the employer? If it is the diocese that hires the catechist even if the catechist is assigned in particular parish, even if it is the parish that pays the salary and other benefits, it is the diocese that is the employer. Therefore, the diocese must report this catechist to the SSS and BIR.

Usually it is the parishes that employ catechists. But in those cases, since the parish, under the civil law does not have a separate juridical personality, the bishop may find himself a respondent in a labor case, because of a catechists who is hired by a parish priest. To avoid these situations I have always suggested that the hiring be done either by the parish priest himself as an individual or by the president of the parish council as an individual. In any case, the terms and conditions of employment must be clearly spelled out in writing. When this problem came out in the Archdiocese of Manila, the biggest item of concern from the financial side was this: for a certain year, the parish priest may be sure that the parish can defray the salary of the catechist, but since this salary very often depends upon parish income or donations from certain parishioners, there is no certainty that they will be forthcoming in the coming years. We submitted a query to the Ministry of Labor. We asked whether it was possible, in the light of these uncertainties for a parish priest or a president of a parish council to hire a catechist for a definite period of one year, renewable every year. This question came up, because under the Labor Code, an employee cannot be on probation for more than six months; if he continues working after six months he becomes a permanent employee. We explained to the Ministry of Labor the peculiar character of the service called and the uncertainty of the parish being able to continually fund the salaries of these catechists. The Ministry of Labor said that in this particular instance, it would allow a year-to-year hiring of catechists. It is clear, however, that it is not the diocese that is hiring the catechists. It is either the parish priest or the president of the parish council hiring him for one year. And of course, the terms and conditions of employment must satisfy the Minimum Wage Law and all the presidential decrees on allowances and even the 13th month pay.

# THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW

By

Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P.

The promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law by John Paul II last January 25, 1983, was a truly historic event and a vibrant manifestation of the renewal initiated by Vatican II. This new Code is the first revision of the Code of Canon Law which has governed the social activities of the Church and regulated the religious practices of its members since 1915.

*When did the Church start the revision of its laws?*

In early 1959, John XXIII called for the revision of church laws at the same time that he announced his intention to summon an ecumenical council. The announcement of the projected revision of the Code of Canon Law, though less dramatic than the convocation of an ecumenical council, set quickly in motion the liberalizing forces which led to a reappraisal of the role of law in the church, and eventually to a reorientation of canonical thought. The actual work of revision, however, did not start till 1965 and has just been completed after seventeen years in the making.

*Was there any need for the Church to change its Code of laws ?*

The 1917 Code, though not the perfect Code one could have dreamed of, by and large, was a technically sound codification of laws, the clearest symbol of unity within the Church. Moreover, it contained built-in provisions for future changes in the legal system, such as the abrogation of laws and their replacement with new, socially relevant ones; the adoption of new decrees and norms; the acknowledgement of the legal force of customary usage . . .

*Which were the real causes, that prompted the Church to revise its laws?*

The revision of the 1917 Code was called for not so much due to its own flaws and imperfections, but rather by the deep

ideological and sociological changes that had taken place in the Church and in the world at large for over forty years.

The years that preceded the start of the actual revision in 1965 were years of contestation and dissent. Indeed, those were turbulent times when many a "freedom-loving" person stood in defiance of the duly constituted authority and invoked liberty against any law whatever appealing even to the gospel in support of his stance. Such revolutionary attitude created an atmosphere of confusion and disorder in the Church that left its legal system in disarray. Ever since, the Code of Canon Law was no longer taken seriously enough.

To meet the challenges of the times and the needs of its members, the Church had issued volumes of legal enactments that were already in force but needed to be embodied in the official Code. Moreover, church law had to be attuned to the pastoral thrust mandated in conciliar decrees.

Thus by the end of Vatican II in 1965, a new codification of church laws was a matter both of necessity and of urgency.

*What were the criteria followed in drafting the new Code?*

The criteria applied in the formulation of the new legislation were approved by the First Synod of Bishops in 1967. These can be summarized as follows:

i. Since the new Code had to determine, protect and enforce the rights and duties of the faithful, its text and norms needed to be juridical in nature. This means that the Code was not supposed to be a textbook of theology, spirituality or biblical exegesis.

ii. Church institutions and norms were to serve the religious life of the community and to foster pastoral care; therefore, the new legislation was to be imbued with charity, human understanding and prudent equity.

iii. Faculties heretofore granted to bishops and religious superiors by way of privilege, had to be embodied into the new text.

iv. Centralization of power at the highest level had to be minimized, decision-making being thus allowed at the most appropriate level through the application of the principle of subsidiarity.

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v. The rights of persons had to be clearly defined and effectively protected to avoid arbitrariness in the use of power. For this purpose, a system of recourse to higher authorities or administrative tribunals had to be devised.

vi. The principle of territorial jurisdiction in the Church had to be maintained, allowing, in special cases, the establishment of personal, national... jurisdictions.

vii. Penal legislation was to be completely revised by reducing, when possible, automatic penalties.

*What is the main thrust in the new legislation?*

The main thrust in the new codification is the end-result of the doctrinal and pastoral reforms brought about by Vatican II. The vision of the Church as the "people of God", the "community of believers" with a mission to live and to proclaim the gospel, replaced the old concept of the Church as "a perfect Society" hierarchically structured. Administrative and legislative functions remain the concern of the hierarchy, but just as a service to the religious life of the community.

*Does the new Code reflect the thinking of the universal Church?*

The making of the Code took approximately seventeen years and, as statistics shows, nearly two hundred members of the hierarchy were directly involved in the project with over one thousand consultants from all nations, assisting them in the task of revision which took some six thousand three hundred seventy five hours of study work at the committee level. The work took that long because of the procedure adopted which called for as much consultation as possible.

The Code as approved can be rightly said to reflect the thinking of the universal Church. Indeed, the various drafts of the law were made available to all bishops, religious superiors, faculties, universities, institutes of canon law . . . and were scrutinized and, at times even subjected to a rigid criticism by theologians, canonists and lay experts. As a result of this worldwide consultation significant changes were introduced in the final text improving it considerably.

*What is the arrangement of the new Code?*

The new Code is divided into seven books instead of the previous five, and consists of 1,725 canons or articles as against the 2,414 in the old Code.

Book I deals with General Norms or Sources of Law, and provides general notions, principles of interpretation and the various means whereby laws are promulgated or may be dispensed. The status of physical persons as well as the organization and management of juridic persons winds up the first part of the Code.

Book II deals with the People of God and starts by enumerating the rights and duties of the faithful and provides general principles on the hierarchy of the Church. Then it goes on to deal with local churches, priests, religious and lay people.

The next two books refer to the teaching and sanctifying functions of the Church. Thus, Book III covers the Church's Magisterium establishing the right and duty of the Church to preach and to organize and maintain teaching institutions. The rules regarding the sacraments and worship are found in Book IV.

Book V is concerned with the temporal goods or patrimony of the Church. Book VI deals with Penal Law, while the final section, Book VII, treats the protection of rights in the Church through tribunals and administrative procedures.

*What are the general characteristics of the new Code?*

Though the new Code brings no sweeping changes in Church doctrine and discipline, many fresh and positive features can be found in the new legal system. In general, the new law is more liberal in spirit, far more pastoral in tone, and definitely more ecumenical than the former. The universality of Church law is maintained, but its applications remain open to the various options as demanded by particular needs of local churches and regions.

*Which are the powers now given to local churches and bishops?*

Many matters that used to be referred to Rome are now left to the decision of the episcopal conferences of the nation or region. Councils of bishops may determine, for instance, the



age for a valid marriage; the number of holidays of which attendance at Mass is obligatory; the penitential days and practices for the country; the rules governing mixed marriages and many others.

Local bishops can now dispense from a general law of the Church unless the Pope has specifically reserved to himself such power. They are to establish, among others, the valid reason for a priest or nun to join political parties or unions in exceptional cases.

Local churches will have to draft a code of particular laws as a supplement to the universal law of the Church.

*Are lay people, especially women, given due prominence in the Code?*

From now on, lay persons can be more involved in Church affairs. The government of the Church shall no longer be the prerogative of the clergy. Lay persons can sit in the various governing bodies and councils at all levels. They can serve at marriage tribunals; perform various liturgical functions such as reading at Mass, distributing Communion . . . In special cases, and with permission from the local bishop, they can preside at weddings and funerals. They are to be properly informed about the use and management of offerings made by them to the Church.

The role of women in Church affairs is vastly expanded. With the exception of sacred orders from which they are still excluded, women are put on an even footing with men. They, too, can serve in marriage tribunals, Church functions, diocesan and parochial boards or councils and many others.

*Are automatic penalties reduced in number as it has been ordained by conciliar decrees?*

The new Code is definitely more pastoral and less punitive. Persuasion rather than fear is the name of the game. Grave offenses warranting automatic excommunication — the Church's supreme penalty — are reduced from thirty seven to seven, namely, renouncing one's faith through heresy and causing schism; desecration of the Eucharist; abortion; physical violence against the Pope; the priest's violation of the seal of confession; the consecration of a bishop without papal mandate; and the abuse by a priest of the power of absolution.

Catholics who become members or assume a position of leadership in anti-church organizations, like masonry and communism no longer face automatic excommunication, though they may still be subjected to other penalties. The ban on cremation is dropped, though preference is still given to burial.

*WJuit is new in the law about marriage and marriage annulments?*

Marriage is now defined as a "community of love and life" for the procreation of children and the perfection of the spouses. Remarriage after civil divorce is still prohibited. All prohibiting impediments are dropped in the new Code. The impediment of consanguinity extends only to the first cousins. The impediment of affinity is limited to the direct line, the widower given a chance to marry his sister-in-law and vice versa. Priests and deacons can be given general delegation to assist at marriages.

Procedures for the declaration of marriage annulments are updated. The Code embodies practices already in use and puts an end to all experimental programs on the matter. It is possible in certain cases to have a tribunal of only one instead of three judges. Lay persons can serve in the tribunals.

The old grounds for declaration of nullity are neither watered down nor substantially altered, but immaturity and psychological impairments or disorders are now recognized and widely used by Church courts as bases for the declaration.

*Can the faithful confess now their sins directly to God?*

The traditional practice of individual confession is retained. General absolution, however, is permitted in danger of death and in cases of grave necessity when the lack or scarcity of confessors will deprive the penitents from the reception of the sacrament without their fault. The obligation to confess all grievous sins afterwards is maintained.

Priests approved by their bishop or superior to hear confessions can do so worldwide unless their faculties have been revoked. The faithful, consciously guilty of mortal sin, must make their confession at least once a year.

*When will the new Code start to be binding or to be in force?*

Church law is not considered binding on its faithful in general unless it has been officially promulgated or made public by the competent authority. The new Code, although already promulgated, will become effective only on November 27, 1983, and thus all Roman Catholics have ten months to study it in detail before it becomes binding.

*Will the new Code influence contemporary life so as to bring about order and stability in the Church as the former Code did?*

Ecclesiastical laws are not ends in themselves. They are means by which the blessings God entrusts to the Church may actually reach the faithful in a regular, orderly manner. Consequently, it should not be expected of the new Code to provide final answers to today's problems. In a world characterized by abrupt changes it would not be surprising to suffer from some lack of stability. The law will be as good as the people who receive it and live it. It will remain dead letter if not applied by persons of integrity, honesty and zeal. Catholics will do well to take the new law in all earnest and with a sense of responsibility, while keeping the heart open to every genuine action of the Holy Spirit. For it is the Spirit alone who gives life, the letter by itself does not.

## THE FACULTY OF CANON LAW

of the  
University of Santo Tomas  
cordially invites  
all Parish Priests  
to a

### SEMINAR

on

## THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW: AN UPDATE

May 23-28, 1983  
8:00 a.m. — 12:00 noon

## TWENTIETH WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*(The message of John Paul II for the twentieth World Day of Prayer for Vocations, on Sunday, 2k April 1983, published in L'Osservatore Romano, 5 April 1983.)*

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate,  
Dear Sons and Daughters of the whole world,

"I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acta 13:47).

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me" (Jn. 10:27).

1. Thus we read in the liturgical readings of the Fourth Sunday after Easter, on which we celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. This is the Word of God, which is proclaimed to us that we may raise our minds to great thoughts, in the light of our Easter faith.

The word of God reveals to us a mystery which has been manifested in the life of humanity. A decisive event has taken place *The Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, has offered himself* for the salvation of the world. From that moment a new history has begun, and the Church of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is called to bring this proclamation of salvation to all peoples, to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is a demanding mission, entrusted to the humble persons of the *Apostles, their successors and fellow workers, taken from every nation, century after century*, with the promise that no earthly power will be able to interrupt it.

The mystery of this invincible continuity is illumined by the presence of the Lord Jesus, who, though living in his immortal glory, is ever near to us: "Lo I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20). He is with us, he knows us, he lets us hear his voice, he calls us, he guides us, not just in order to offer his salvation to each one of us, but also to save others through us.

Among his many calls we can distinguish those calls to a more immediate collaboration in his own mission: the ordained ministries, the consecrated life, the missionary life. These are a privilege which, in reality, corresponds to a limitless measure of love and sacrifice in the total dedication of self to God and the Church. How can we worthily thank the Lord for the great trust that he put in us?

2. For me it has always been a source of joy to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and I wish to unite myself in a special way with this year's celebration, which is the twentieth. In fact twenty years have gone by since the dear and venerated Pope Paul VI had the inspiration to call the whole Church, by means of a special "Day", to meditate and pray for vocations specially consecrated to the cause of the Gospel. Many happy things, and less happy ones, have happened in these twenty years.

There has been the successful conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, which devoted so much attention to a detailed study of the priestly, religious and missionary vocation and mission, in the living light of the word of God and of Christian Tradition. The Council has left us the legacy of a wealth of teaching, which all believers have the right and the duty to know exactly, also for the purpose of making clearer choices for their personal lives.

During the course of these years some Churches have suffered, not only because of external persecutions, but also from internal difficulties, whereby considerable sufferings have been caused to the Church precisely by those who ought to have offered her the most comfort.

But the Lord has also given us the consolation of seeing in many parts of the Church the beginnings of a new situation, for there is an ever-increasing number of those following his call. For this comforting reawakening and renewed generosity we thank the Lord, who has heard the prayers of his Church.

3. These last twenty years have been a period full of spiritual and pastoral experience with regard to ecclesial vocations. My predecessor, Paul VI, and I myself, in every circumstance and especially in these annual Messages, have wished to emphasize various important points, and I would like to summarize them here, even though they are already clear in your minds:

— *The word of God* and vocations. Vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life exist in the Church and for the Church in accordance with God's plan, which in his love he has willed to reveal to us. Therefore they exist for a specific mission of their own, which is not to be confused with any other purely human ideal, however noble. May the Lord Jesus grant us the grace to know, to believe, to accept, through his word, these calls, which belong to the mystery of his merciful love.

— *Prayer* and vocations. The Church is a gift of God for the salvation of humanity. Therefore vocations to the total service of the Church are also a special gift of God. For this reason we ask this gift from him alone, for he alone can give it. We ask for it with our hearts open to the world, looking to the good of all humanity. Remember that the Lord Jesus has invited us to pray for vocations, precisely because his merciful heart saw the world's suffering: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. *Then he said* to his disciples, 'the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest'" (Mt. 9:36-38).

— *Witness* and vocations. You are familiar with these words of the Council: "The duty of fostering vocations" to the priesthood—and this holds for every consecrated vocation — "falls on the whole Christian community, and they should discharge it principally by living full Christian lives" (*Optatam Totius*, 2). The Lord Jesus had spoken of the "good soil" which "brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Mt. 18:8). Where there is faith, prayer, love, apostolate, Christian living, there the gifts of God abound. Brothers and sons and daughters, let us reflect upon our grave responsibility.

— *A personal call* and vocations. God calls whom he wishes out of the free initiative of his love. But he also wishes to call through us. This is how the Lord Jesus acted. It was Andrew who brought to him his brother Peter. Jesus called Philip, but it was Philip who called Nathanael (cf. Jn. 1:35 ff.). One should not fear to suggest directly to young or not so young persons the call of the Lord. It is an act of esteem and trust. It can be a moment of light and grace.

4. And so I invite you to join me in my prayer:

Lord Jesus, in this Holy Year in which we relive the event and the mystery of your redeeming Sacrifice for the salvation of humanity, hear our plea:

— through your Spirit, renew your Church, that she may be enabled to offer the world in ever greater measure the fruits of your Redemption;

— through your Spirit, strengthen in their holy resolves those who have dedicated their lives to your Church: in the priesthood, the diaconate, the religious life the missionary institutes, the other forms of consecrated life; you who have called them to your service, make them perfect co-workers in your work of salvation;

— through your Spirit, increase the calls to your service: you read human hearts, and you know that many are ready to follow you and work for you; give to many young and not so young people the generosity needed for accepting your call, give them the strength needed for accepting the sacrifices that this entails, give them the joy of carrying the cross that goes with their choice, as you were the first to carry it, in the certainty of the Resurrection.

We pray to you, Lord Jesus, together with your holy Mother Mary, who was near you in the hour of your redeeming Sacrifice; we pray to you through her intercession, that many among us, also today, may have the courage and the humility, the fidelity and the love to answer "Yes", just as she answered when she was called to collaborate with you in your mission of universal salvation. Amen.

I entrust this prayer to the mercy of God, that he may accept it and grant it. Our confidence in this matter grows greater by reason of the Holy Year, which we are celebrating as the memorial of the Redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus. From him I implore the abundance of grace, and I am happy to impart my Apostolic Blessing to all of you, venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, to the Priests, to men and women Religious and to all the People of God, and in a special way to those who are being trained in Seminaries and Religious Institutes.

From the Vatican. 2 February 1983, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple at Jerusalem, in the fifth year of my Pontificate.

## PRIEST CO-WORKERS OF MOTHER TERESA

The *Priest Co-workers of Mother Teresa* is an international movement born of the desire expressed by priests of various countries, both diocesan and religious, to attempt to live the gospel more fully and faithfully, in greater simplicity and poverty of spirit, within the context of their own ministry and priestly vocation, by sharing spiritually in the charism and spirit given by God to the universal Church through Mother Teresa.

### *Purpose*

The aim of the movement is, in the words of Mother Teresa, to "satisfy Christ's thirst" for the love of His children, and to satisfy the thirst of God's children for the love of Christ — \*a thirst expressed in both physical and spiritual poverty.

The corollary purpose of the movement is to awaken in the priest a renewed and deepened realization, appreciation, and living of that greatest of gifts the Lord has given him: a share in His own Priesthood.

This deepening will lead to an ever growing, conscious, and operative sense of the priest's identification with Christ, in whose name and person he exists and acts. As St. Paul reminds Timothy, the priest is ever in need of "stirring into flame" the grace that is within him by the laying on of hands in ordination.

To this end, in a spirit of self-dedication in love and service to Christ and His Church, member priests will bind themselves to the movement by a private act of "oblation" to be renewed each year on Holy Thursday, as will be explained further on.

### *Gift of Adoptive Sharing*

In order to realize and live more deeply the universal nature of his priesthood, and to aid in bringing to the poor — the poor of whatever sort — the good news that "God so loved the world as to send His only Son" who remains among us in a special way through the Priesthood, each *Priest Co-worker* offers to enter into the inter-sharing of the Mystical



Body by offering that which is specifically his: his share in the Eucharistic life, intercessory power, and profound mediatory mission of Christ's Priesthood.

Member priests, though united in spirit with the Missionaries of Charity all over the world, will each be assigned one specific community and the suffering poor they serve; such as the "Homes for the dying," orphanages, leprosaria, etc. . . . places where the Passion of the abandoned and broken Christ which the priest offers daily in the Eucharist is most visibly relived and "made flesh with the Mystical Body."

The priest who "adopts" a particular community and the poor and suffering they serve will in turn be adopted by them, each giving their own gift to the mutual enrichment and unity of God's family in a universal exchange of charity. Each member priest would also be given one of the "Sick and Suffering Co-workers" who would offer their cross and sufferings for him and his ministry, each becoming a source of new life and strength for the other.

In this way, even those priests who would never have the opportunity of working directly in the missions, or with the poorest of God's poor, will be able to do so spiritually; and the community and suffering poor they adopt, though of themselves unable to share fully in Christ's Priesthood, will have someone who shares in it for them, offering Jesus to the Father for them daily in the Eucharist.

This spiritual bond of sharing is really a bringing together of the one Body of Christ: Christ present in the Eucharist, and Christ present in the poor and suffering.

This adoptive sharing would in itself be a sign and testimony of the great love of Christ the High Priest for the poor, the lowly, and the suffering; and of His perennial oneness with them ("I was hungry, I was sick..."). This gift of sharing can awaken in the heart of the priest Christ's own compassion and sensitivity to the needs of His children, needs that are manifested in all their various forms of poverty. He would allow the Lord to use him, His "other self", to channel that love which is God's very life into the hearts of so many far and near who hunger for Him, even unknowingly, in so many ways.

The Eucharist and the Priesthood are perhaps Jesus' two greatest gifts, and it is *the Priest Co-workers'* fervent hope and

desire that through them, He might be able to share these two *great* gifts in a special way with those who also share His poverty and His cross.

### *The Eucharist*

The central purpose of the priesthood and the foundation of being *Co-workers* is the Eucharist, "from which the priesthood derives and for which it exists," the sacrament of unity which is "charity revealed in the fullest degree" and through which "we came only to know love, we ourselves begin to love" (John Paul II).

If the Eucharistic worship is authentic it must, in the words of the Holy Father, "make priests grow in awareness of the dignity of each person . . . : They must also become particularly sensitive to all human suffering and misery." For it is the same Body, the same Christ; as He Himself said in *Matthew's gospel* "Whatever you have done to one of the least of My brethren... you have done to Me."

Through the Eucharist, offered and lived in this universal manner, the priest enters consciously into Jesus' own prayer, the prayer of Him who "ever lives to intercede for us." He shares as well in Jesus' victimhood as priest by taking into his heart, and when possible sharing directly, the cross and sufferings of those for whom he intercedes. As for Christ, so for the priest, the Eucharistic mystery is "the source and summit" of priestly life and represents all that the *Priest Co-worker* is to be: a living Christ in total Priesthood.

### *Missionary Spirit*

While the *Priest Co-workers* may be a gift of Christ to His poor and suffering, it is also His gift to the many priests who, feeling an inward call, even in the midst of their many duties, in some way give to the Lord *more* of their lives, to give Him more deeply of themselves, to fill the spiritual void so often felt as a result of the administrative demands of their ministry; and to open the vast riches of their priestly mission of intercession and "Christ-bearing" beyond the confines of their daily routine.

This gift of sharing and mutual adoption could open an entirely new dimension in the life of the priest; for there is

something deep in the heart of every priest that longs to bring to the Lord many more than those he is able to touch directly. All priests are missionaries by the very nature of their priesthood. They all hear Jesus' words echoing in their ears and their hearts: "Go out into the whole world and preach the gospel." They can all say of themselves that they have been "anointed to bring glad tidings to the poor," the poor of every place and of every sort, in their parishes and communities firstly and most importantly, and even to the ends of the earth.

### *Personal Ministry*

Rather than remove or distract the priest from the needs of his own parishioners, one of the first and most important effects of this deepened sense of the magnitude and universality of his priesthood and his gift of adoptive sharing as a *Co-worker* would be to instill in him an increasing sensitivity to the needs, the concerns, and the sufferings of those closest to him, those within his own parish and community.

This adoptive sharing in the sufferings of those most obviously abandoned and most keenly suffering in the Homes for the dying, etc., can initiate within the priest a new way of seeing, an ever growing ability to perceive the needs of those under his own charge whose hunger is of another sort, whose abandonment less obvious, whose pain more hidden, whose need of Christ's love may be less visible but equally real.

### *The "Poorest of the Poor"*

As Jesus emptied Himself to share and enrich man's poverty, the priest too, in his priestly ministry must seek to share and enrich the poverty of people. All priests are poor themselves, each carrying a great treasure 'in vessels of clay'. And so the poorest of the poor are not solely the materially poor; as Mother Teresa would say, Calcutta is everywhere, for wherever priests are there Christ continues among them His hidden Passion, and it is there that they are called to recognize, love, and serve Him.

Therefore the poorest of the poor are: each member of one's own community, the parish or people entrusted to the priest's care, each fellow *Priest Co-worker* (by virtue of his own priestly self-emptying in union with Christ as well as his gift of "oblation"), and all those who are:

*Hungry:* Not only for food, but especially for the Word of God.

*Thirsty:* Not only for drink, but for the "living waters"; thirsty for God, for His truth, peace, love, and joy.

*Naked:* Not only for clothing, but for their dignity as God's children.

*Homeless:* Not only for material shelter, but most especially for the shelter of an understanding heart that covers, that loves.

*Sick, crippled, dying:* Not only physically, but spiritually.

Towards those who are materially poor as well, the *Priest Co-worker* will show a special loving concern and joyfully availability to render them, wholehearted and free pastoral service whenever there be need, without asking or accepting anything in return, neither money nor gratitude, for the gratitude must rather be ours in having been allowed to serve.

This spirit of joyful availability to the Lord will allow Him to live through the priest His own compassion and mercy. This extension of His saving mercy is lived in a special way by the priest's zeal and availability in urging people to approach the Savior in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### *Spirit and Life*

In living the spirit of the movement, member priests seek to grow in the simplicity, humility, charity, joy and freedom of the gospel. Their life is to be an extension of the life of Christ whose word they speak and whose image they bear. For they are not only to bring Christ to a world steeped in its myriad forms of poverty, they are called to *be* Christ for them . . . and this they can only do to the extent that they are identified with him in heart, in mind, in spirit, and in life.

The movement seeks to inculcate in the priest an increased appreciation for the Eucharist as both the great means of carrying out his role as mediator and intercessor, and as a *way of life*. Priests tend too easily to celebrate the Eucharist, but not to live it, not to allow themselves to enter more fully and consciously into that "living of the Eucharistic mystery that is made manifest in our priestly life and ministry" (John Paul II).

The life of the *priest Co-worker* is to derive, then, from the Eucharist and the priestly virtues it signifies: identification with Christ, entering into His prayer and worship of the Father, sharing His intercession and zeal for the sanctification of the People of God, the joyful sharing of His cross in their life and ministry, humility of heart and poverty of spirit in union with His own "pouring out of self," undivided love in purity of heart, charity that loves "even to the end," and unity as symbolized by the many grains which make up the one loaf. In prayerful adoration and contemplation of the Eucharist, therefore, the priest will daily draw ever deeper from the very source of his priesthood.

The *Priest Co-workers'* identification with the Lord will find particular expression in personal prayer, seeking His presence in the tabernacle of their hearts and creating the silence and inner solitude that will allow them to be with Him not only in moments of prayer, but throughout the demands and distractions of daily ministry.

Their prayer will be nurtured in a special way by the Word of God with which they must be permeated; and their constant living in the presence of the Lord will enable them to see His face in all persons, events and places, opening themselves in total availability to Him in any form He may come.

As Mother Teresa emphasized, union with Christ in prayer leads to faith, faith to loving trust, trust to surrender, surrender to genuine love, love to service, and service to joy: a renewed joy in the priesthood that is the hallmark of the grateful living of God's gift to priests and of priests to Him.

### *Poverty of Spirit*

As Jesus "emptied Himself" to share man's poverty, so the *Priest Co-worker* will come to feel the need to share in his own person and life the poverty of his adopted people, and the hidden inner poverty of those within his own parish and community; to "carry one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Interiorly, he will feel the need to live Jesus' gentleness and meekness, to find inner freedom of detachment from ambition and possessions both material and spiritual, casting all his cares on the Lord and trusting in Him alone.

Exteriorly, he will gradually feel the need to simplify his life, to truly live the gospel more fully and radically, to take on the sufferings of his people and his adoptive family in his own voluntary acts of abnegation and in the joyful acceptance of the crosses sent him by the Lord in his daily life ministry. This growth in voluntary poverty and simplicity of life springs both out of a spirit of intercession and out of a sense of solidarity with the suffering family he has adopted and who has adopted him. For what father can allow himself to live overly comfortably and without sacrifice while his own family suffer hunger, want, and abandonment? Within the Mystical Body all, are in the words of St. Paul "members each of one another."

As Christ who came not to do His own will but that of the Father, and who was obedient "even unto death on a cross", the *Priest Co-worker* will seek to live a life of complete dependence on the Father in Christ, under the prompting and aid of the Holy Spirit. This spirit of obedient surrender will manifest itself in fidelity to Christ's Church and its magisterium, to the person of the Vicar of Christ, as well as to the inspirations of Jesus' Spirit living within them and the daily manifestations of the Father's will in persons and events.

### *Our Lady*

The *Priest Co-workers* place themselves under the special patronage of Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of priests. They ask her to share with them her poverty of spirit, her humility, her purity of heart, her prayerfulness and intimacy with the Lord, her desire to give always and only Jesus rather than self, and a share in the undivided love with which she herself loved Him.

By entering into the mysteries of Christ's priestly life with her in the prayerful meditation of the rosary, they continue to stay "united in prayer with Mary the mother of Jesus," the Mother of all those He continues to call "disciples" from the cross of His continued Passion.

In living the gospel as she did and in allowing her to become someone real in their lives, she will truly become for them the "Cause of our joy", and they, through their ministry and priestly life, the cause of her joy.

*Act of Oblation*

As Jesus' act of coming into the world to assume our humanity, and thus becoming Priest and mediator of God's life and love, was an act of oblation, of "kenosis", of self-emptying; so the *Priest Co-worker* in imitation and in union with Christ binds himself to the movement and to his adoptive family by an act of "oblation". This act of oblation is a personal, free gift of one's adherence to the *Priest Co-workers* and to the spirit of the movement.

Jesus' act of kenosis, of self-emptying oblation formed the foundation of His Priestly relation both to the Father and to mankind; from Bethlehem to Calvary, and to His exaltation at the Father's right hand. In this same spirit the Priest Co-worker makes and lives his own oblation "through Him, with Him, and in Him." Just as this spirit and life of oblation was the core of Jesus' Priesthood, so too, the act of oblation forms the essence of the *Priest Co-workers'* life and spirit.

His oblation is made and lived in the name, and for the sake of all the Church, but in particular for the community with its suffering poor to whom he had been given in mutual adoption, as well as for all those within his parish or community, or those in any way under his pastoral care.

The act of oblation will be renewed each year on Holy Thursday in a formula of the individual priest's own choosing.

*Membership and Organization*

Membership is open to any priest upon petition to the regional link. He will be encouraged to first pray, study, and attempt to live the spirit of the movement before requesting membership. Upon making his oblation of adherence to the movement, he will be assigned an adoptive community. Those studying for the priesthood may join as full members, but will not receive an adoptive assignment until ordination. The movement is affiliated with the Missionaries of Charity, and members are bound to the movement in a strictly spiritual and non-judicial manner.

*The Priest Co-workers* will be organized at the regional, national, and international level. A priest desiring information or requesting membership will correspond with the regional link, who will in turn forward his name to the international

link. He will then be informed of the community he has been given in adoption, with whom he will be encouraged to correspond twice a year so as to be more than merely a name to each other. He will also be informed of the *Suffering Co-worker* who has been given him, and he will receive a small cross as a sign of his membership.

Bulletins will be sent to members regularly, and those who live near other members will be encouraged to meet for prayer and fraternity. Retreats and days of recollection in keeping with the spirit of the movement will be organized when and where possible.

There is to be no raising or handling of funds. As Peter told the cripple, our gift is "neither silver nor gold, but what we have we will give," the compassion and power of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, His love for the last, the least, and the lost, and His desire to "bring all things into one in Him" that as the final fruit of His and our priesthood "God may be all in all..."

### *Conclusion*

The movement of *Priest Co-workers*, this adoptive sharing, this desire to live the poverty of spirit, the simplicity, zeal, and joyful loving service of the gospel; though something personal in the heart of each priest, something small and silent and seen only by the Lord, can with His blessing and Our Lady's guidance and protection, truly become "something beautiful for God..."

International Link:

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## LITURGY

# KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING/

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

1. *There are two modes of kneeling/standing during the Eucharistic Prayer. According to one, the people kneel after the Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy), but stand after the consecration. According to the other, the people kneel after the Sanctus until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, i.e., until the Amen before the Our Father. Which one is correct?*

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states: "The conference of bishops may adapt the actions and postures described in the Order of the Roman Mass to the usage of the people, but these adaptations must correspond to the character and meaning of each part of the celebration" (n. 21). In view of this regulation the Philippine Bishops' Conference stated in their meeting of January 1970 that the people "should kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer, from immediately after the 'Sanctus' until the 'Per ipsum, etc' inclusive." There was no other regulation coming from our bishops' conference since that time in this matter. This is, consequently, the officially approved mode in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Appendix to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal for the dioceses of the United States of America, no. 21 of the General Instruction has been so adapted "that the people kneel beginning after the singing or recitation of the Sanctus until after the Amen of the eucharistic prayer, that is, before the Lord's Prayer."

2. *What is the proper way to wear the stole: upon the chasuble or wider it?*

*In San Carlos Seminary, they wear the small stoles under the chasuble.*

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the stole is to be worn under the chasuble (n. 299). The

<sup>1</sup> *The Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines* (= LIBP) 5 (1970) p.B. Unfortunately, this text has been changed to read "until the beginning of the doxology" in LIBP 12 (1977) 144 (n. 59) and in the *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas* (= BEF) 54 (1980) 39. No justification for this change could be found.

modern, ample vestment, approved by Rome for the Philippines, covering the whole body, needs no alb underneath, and the stole — usually a wider one — is worn on top of it.<sup>2</sup>

3. *How many readings from Sacred Scripture are to be proclaimed on Sundays and holydays of obligation?*

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, "it is strongly recommended that the three readings be used, but for pastoral reasons and by decree of the Conference of Bishops, the use of two readings is allowed in some places. In such a case, the choice between the first two readings should be based on the norms in the lectionary and the desire to lead the people to a deeper knowledge of scripture and never simply because of the brevity and simplicity of the reading" (n. 318). In their meeting in summer 1969, the Philippine Bishops' Conference decreed that "where pastoral reasons so demand, only two readings instead of three may be taken on Sundays, solemnities, and feasts which have three readings."<sup>3</sup>

What are the "norms in the lectionary" referred to in the above text? "The choice between the two first readings is to be made in such a way as to safeguard the Church's intent to instruct the faithful more completely in the mystery of salvation. Thus, unless the contrary is indicated in the text of the lectionary, the reading to be chosen as the first reading is the one that is closer to the theme of the gospel (*quae magis harmonice componitur cum Evangelio*), or, in accord with the intent just mentioned, that is more helpful toward a coherent catechesis over an extended period, or that preserves the semicontinuous reading of some biblical book."<sup>4</sup> The priest should choose one or the other of the readings in a systematic way over a series of Sundays so that he may set up a coherent plan for catechesis. It is not right to read indiscriminately on one Sunday from the Old Testament, on another from the letter of an apostle, without any orderly plan for subsequent texts.

4. *May the Creed be dropped on Sundays and holydays of obligation?*

The Creed is to be said or sung on all Sundays and holydays of obligation; it may never be dropped on these days. In their meeting in January 1969, the Bishops of the Philippines

<sup>2</sup>LIBP 8 (1973) 55-56. =BEP 54 (1980) 52.

<sup>3</sup>LIBP 4 (1969) 61. 12 (1977) 143 (n. 52). =BEF 54 (1980) 39.

\* *Lectionary for Mass*. Second Editio Typica (1981) n. 79.

permitted the substitution of the Apostles' Creed for the Nicene Creed on the condition that the local Ordinary allows it and the Nicene Creed be used, at least, occasionally.

5. *Is it necessary to ring the bells during the elevation of the consecration?*

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal "a little before the consecration, the minister (server) may ring a bell as a signal to the people. According to local custom, he also rings at each elevation" (n. 109). These signs of the bell seem to have been customary in the Philippines. They may be given, but they are not obligatory.

6. *Can a sick auxiliary minister of holy communion keep the Blessed Sacrament in his home, when no one else is available in the place to give him holy communion and the place is too far from the pariah?*

According to the old Canon Law of 1917, nobody may keep the Blessed Sacrament in his house, except for pastoral needs and with the permission of the diocesan bishop. The same prescription has been retained in the reformed Canon Law (1983), where it is now found as Canon 935.

7. *In case of great need, can a priest delegate lay people to help him in the distribution of holy communion?*

In such a situation, the priest may delegate a lay person (man or woman). Unfortunately, the rite is not yet found in the English Sacramentary. It was only published in the second typical edition of the Missale Romanum (1975). One finds it also in the Tagalog *Aklat ng Pagmimisa sa Roma* of 1981 (p. 935), where, however *pansamantalang* renders in a rather free manner the Latin expression *ad actum*, i.e., for a single occasion. For the sake of information, here is an English translation\* of the Latin text:

1. "A person who, in the case of real necessity, is authorized to distribute holy communion on a single occasion, should normally be commissioned in the following rite."
2. "During the breaking of the bread and the commingling, the person who is to distribute holy communion comes

\* The translation is taken from the *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (Canada) Vol. 11, No. 66, Nov-Dec. 1978, p. 306.

to the altar and stands before the celebrant. After the "Lamb of God" the priest blesses him/her with these words:

Today you are to distribute  
the body and blood of Christ  
to your brothers and sisters.  
May the Lord bless f you, N. — K. Amen.

3. "When the priest has himself received holy communion in the usual way, he gives communion to the minister of the eucharist. Then he gives him/her the paten or other vessel with the hosts. They then go to give communion to the people."

This concession has been given so as to remove any need that the people come and get the host directly from the ciborium (self-service). Also when there is to be communion under both kinds, an auxiliary minister may be delegated in the manner described above. It is unbecoming that people dip the host in the consecrated wine and communicate themselves.

8. *Priests were confused last January 16, the feast of the Santo Nino. They asked which readings they should have taken for Mass. One set of readings was indicated in tfe Ordo for the Philipirines, and another one in the Tagalog Leksionario, published in 1981,<sup>6</sup> the only one available so far in an ambo-edition. Which one of the two references is correct?*

It seems that the *Leksionario* did not take notice of the development of the feast of the Santo Nino in the Philippines from 1971 up to the present. In 1971, the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines placed the feast of the Santo Nino in the national calendar. Aware of the fact that there was no Mass nor Office of the Santo Nino available, the bishops decided to take — for the time being — the Mass and the former Office of the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. This temporary measure found also expression in the title of the feast, viz., "Holy Name of Jesus (Santo Nino)." Though the bishops had wanted to have this feast celebrated on the third Sunday in January, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship transferred it to the third Sunday in ordinary time, usually the fourth Sunday of the month. Also the readings for the Mass of that day were those of the Holy Name of Jesus.

" *Lckuwvario. Sa mga Araw vg Lirtggo at Sa tngu l<iiii>titiuig Anno. lka-2 Linggc ng Taon. Santo Nino, pp. 142-154.*

Soon, however, it was felt that this solution did not meet the expectations of our people. They wanted to celebrate the Santo Nino, that is to say, the mysteries of the childhood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In view of this the Bishops' Conference found it necessary to change the name of the celebration. From 1975 on it was simply called "Feast of the Santo Nino." But this change called also for appropriate liturgical texts for both the Mass and the Office.

The late Archbishop Mariano Madriaga, the former Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, had presented the Bishops' Conference with a draft of the Office for the feast of the "Holy Name of Jesus (Santo Nino)." The text had to undergo a revision by the National Liturgical Commission. Even in the revised form, this Office shows still strong references to the former celebration of the Holy Name of Jesus. In view of the new title of the feast, some changes had to be made, especially by selecting a patristic reading from the writings of St. Leo the Great on the holy childhood of the Lord, and by adding the new prayer of the day. A completely new Mass with proper readings found also — together with the Office — the approval of the Conference of Filipino Bishops, and was subsequently sent on to Rome for confirmation. On October 20, 1978, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments confirmed these liturgical texts (Prot. n. CD 1068/78).

In its issue of September-October 1979, the *Liturgical Information Bulletin of the Philippines* announced (p. 139) that the official liturgical texts for the feast of the Santo Nino were available from Catholic Trade, Inc., Manila. They became obligatory in January 1980.<sup>7</sup>

According to these new texts, the first reading for the Mass of the Santo Nino is for each year (A, B, C) Is. 9:1-6, also used as first reading in the midnight Mass on Christmas. It is followed by the responsorial psalm, taken from Ps. 98(97) :1.2-3ab. 3cd-4.5-6 with the response "All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God," which is taken from the Mass on Christmas day.

The apostolic reading has been taken from the Mass for the second Sunday after Christmas, a Mass which is always

<sup>7</sup> On the history of the feast of the Santo Nino in the Philippines see: LIBP 12 (1977) 148 (n. 81), 158 (n. 132), and 161 (n. 149). — H. J. Graf, "The Feast of the Santo Nino in the Philippines," BEF 53 (1979) 144-151. = BEF 54 (1980) 34.

omitted in the Philippines, due to the fact that we celebrate on that Sunday the solemnity of the Lord's Epiphany. It is Eph. 1:3-6. 15-18 for the years A, B, and C.

The verse accompanying the Alleluia in preparation for the gospel of the day is taken from the feast of the Lord's Baptism (A) : "The Word of God became man and lived among us. He enabled those who accepted him to become the children of God," a combination of Jn. 1:14a. 12a.

For the gospel, proper readings have been provided for each year: Mt. 18:1-5. 10 for year A, Mk. 10:13-16 for year B, and Lk. 2:41-52 for year C. From the foregoing it appears that the Ordo for the Philippines gave the correct information as to the proper readings for the Mass on the feast of the Santo Nino.

## HISTORY

### VI. DOMINICAN TOWNS IN BATAAN

By

Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P.

#### 5. BALANGA

##### *Founding.*

The Provincial Chapter of 1714 accepted the town of Balanga as the fifth Dominican ministry in Bataan, separating it from Abucay, with St. Joseph as its patron Saint.<sup>1</sup> But since that year 1714 it remained as a "visita" or dependency of Abucay until the Chapters of 1720 and 1737 gave it a Vicar of its own. Finally the Chapter of 1739 formally raised it to the status of "Vicaria." Father Agustin Esquivel was assigned by the Chapter of 1720 as its first Vicar.-

##### *Location.*

Balanga is bounded on the north by Abucay at half a mile distance; on the south by Pilar, with which it has the Talisay river in between as their common boundary; on the east by the Manila Bay, and on the west by the jurisdictional grounds of Morong and Bagac.<sup>2</sup>

##### *Balanga, capital of Bataan, and a prosperous town.*

I  
Due to its strategic location, its beautiful plains and its wealth in natural resources, Balanga had deserved to be chosen later to become the capital of the province of Bataan and the residence of the Provincial Governor. Its municipal hall (*casa real*) was one of the best in the Philippines in 1900. Besides. Balanga was the main trade center of Bataan, where the

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Capitulum Provincialium . . .*, Manila, 1874, Vol. II, pp. 81, 123, 238, 247; OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> FERRANDO, *Estado*, fol. 14.

<sup>3</sup> OCIO, *Op. fit.*, p. 57.

"mestizas" of Malabon periodically went to sell the Balanguenos goods and articles for their basic needs and also for their comfortable living, in exchange for which they carried back to Malabon the sugar and indigo, which the countryside of Balanga so abundantly produced.<sup>4</sup>

*The works of three Vicars during the second half of the 19th century*

Its first Vicars had provided Balanga with a stone convent and church.<sup>5</sup> But Father Benito Rivas, one of the most zealous and efficient Pastors at a later date, found the church walls quite low, and so raised them higher. Father Vicente Fernandez, another praiseworthy priest, covered the whole structure with a galvanized iron roof, and, moreover, decorated and beautified its interior.

To Father Fernandez Balanga owes a large cemetery enclosed within a stone fence, with its rows of niches in the inside of the walls; the solid and artistic chapel of Barrio Puerto Rivas, and a school building of mortar and stone walls, covered with a corrugated iron roof.<sup>6</sup>

But the magnificent market place, of mortared walls and galvanized iron roof, within the area of the town plaza, was due to the efforts of Father Benito Rivas, who also obtained from the Spanish authorities, free of charge, the licences to raise fish corrals in behalf of the Barrio of Puerto Rivas, named after him for being its founder.<sup>7</sup> He also promoted some home industries as sources of substantial incomes for the townsfolk.<sup>8</sup>

\**Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> When in 1768 the Dominicans were required to turn their ministries of Bataan over to the secular clergy, the church was described in the *Inventory* as a structure made of bricks and roofed with tiles, with a five-story tower which housed three bells, with a weather cock on top. The retablo behind the main altar was ornamented with thirteen niches and bas-reliefs, each of the niches containing an image of a Saint, and the reliefs representing mysteries of our Religion (Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Bataan", Vol. I, Doc. 24, fol. 245).

<sup>6</sup> When Father Vicente Fernandez, the last Dominican Parish Priests of Balanga, left the town in June of 1898, he was actually busy in the construction of another cemetery (*Libertas*, Ano II, Sabado 24 de marzo, 1900, No. 212).

<sup>7</sup> "Balanga" (Bataan), in *Libertas*, Ano II, Manila, Sabado, 24 de marzo de 1900, No. 212.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*



*The Vicars of Balanga display their zeal in promoting Elementary Education.*

The zeal, activity and vigilance displayed by the Dominican Fathers in Balanga brought about a high enrolment of children of both sexes in the two primary schools then existing in the town — a yearly average of 479 boys and 321 girls, let alone many children who were tutored by private teachers, and those of distant barrios, who in one year were as many as 325 boys and 236 girls." So in this matter of schools we may apply to Balanga what *Libertas* said about the schools of Abuaya:

"The school attendance in the primary schools in this province has attracted strongly the attention of outside visitors, and this was the result of the tireless zeal and insistence ever shown by its Pastors in implementing the directives of the *Junta Superior de Instruccion* of Manila, and consequently very rare is the native in Bataan who does not know how to read and write, or who is not conversant with the principles of the Christian religion, or who is not acquainted with the four basic operations of Arithmetic; and, although many do not know how to speak Spanish, all understand it."<sup>10</sup>

#### *Statistics.*

Here are the data about the population of Balanga through the years:

1751.....1,194 souls<sup>11</sup>

1765.....2,774 souls<sup>12</sup>

1818.....1,608 souls<sup>13</sup>

#### • *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Libertas*, Afio II, No. 181, miercoles, 14 de febrero de 1900.

<sup>11</sup> Informe al Rey nuestro Senor. Ano de 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelanea", Vol. III, Fol. 48.

<sup>12</sup> "Fr. Diego Garrido, del Sagrado Orden de Predicadores, Vicario y Ministro de doctrina de este pueblo de Balanga, provincia de Bataan, certifico en la fecha que puedo y debo que, habiendo hecho exacta averiguacion de las almas en dicho pueblo, halle existir las siguientes, etc. (Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Bataan", Vol. II, Doc. 4, a, Fol. 56. Dated January 29, 1765.

•8 BUCETA y BRAVO, Vol. II, p. 357.

1848.....	7,442 souls <sup>14</sup>
1898.....	9,345 souls «

*The Dominicans leave Balanga.*

On May 28, 1898, as we have previously stated, the Lieutenant of the Civil Guard, Seiior Jaen, made an incursion into Puerto Rivas at the head of his men, in order to arrest some ringleaders suspected of planning an insurrection against Spain. However, he had to retreat quickly to the town proper in view of the stiff resistance that he met.

In the evening of that fateful day practically all able-bodied men of Balanga were up in arms and the forty Spanish soldiers who, under the command of Lieutenant-Coronel Baquero, garrisoned it, found themselves besieged in the convent, in the municipal building and in the Army and Civil Guard quarters.

Finally, seeing himself surrounded by veritable swarms of insurgents, many well armed with Spanish and American rifles, Baquero saw fit to surrender himself and his forces on May 31; and on June 5, Father Vicente Fernandez, who had been Parish Priest of the town of Balanga for the past eighteen years, together with his Assistant Father Gerardo Ramiro, boarded in Puerto Rivas a boat bound for Cavite, where they joined a number of other priests who, like themselves, had equally fallen into captivity.<sup>16</sup>

## 6. LLANA HERMOSA

*Its beginnings.*

Liana Hermosa (which literally means beautiful plain), or Hermosa, as it is called at present, is situated on a truly beautiful plain. Its slow progress, however, through the years did not fulfill the hopes of those who helped erect it into a town independent from Orani.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Revista Catolica*, Vol. XVI, enero de 1850, p. 467.

<sup>15</sup> OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, p. 57. The reason why the growth of population was not always on the rise, as in this case of Balanga, were: the formation of new towns, the emigration and the epidemics. Balanga lost close to one thousand inhabitants in 1801 due to the creation of the town of Pilar. However, there must have been other reasons to explain satisfactorily its lack of growth in population at the turn of the 19th century.

<sup>17</sup> OCIO, *Monumento Dominicano*, p. 57.

i«HERRERO, *Nuestra Prision*, pp. 77-88.

It is bounded on the north by Dinalupihan,<sup>18</sup> on the east by the Orani river, on the west by the far-off Zambales mountain ranges, and on the south by the town of Orani, from which it is more than a league distant.

The Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Rosary officially accepted it in its Provincial Chapter of 1757, and Father Diego Zorita was assigned as its first Vicar.<sup>19</sup>

In the past its townspeople were poor due to the fact that the best lands in the town belonged to absentee owners from other towns. Thus, although its population was never large, the Father in charge had plenty of work, because of the presence in the town of many outsiders who flocked there during certain seasons of the year to cultivate their fields and harvest their crops.<sup>20</sup>

*A Provincial Chapter is held in Hermosa.*

In 1763 the Dominicans held in Hermosa their Provincial Chapter, which was one of the very few Chapters ever held outside of Manila, and the Vicar of Orani, Father Pedro Ire, was elected Provincial thereat. This exceptional event came about due to the presence in Manila of the British, who considered the Dominicans living outside of the City as enemies, inasmuch as they had openly taken sides with Anda and contributed with their exhortations to keep their flocks, especially in Bataan, loyal to the cause of Spain.<sup>21</sup>

*Hermosa goes over to the Secular Clergy.*

According to an old *Inventory*, it was Father Vicente Garcia who turned over to the secular clergy in the person of *Bachiller* Jose de Leon, on June 26, 1768, the buildings, sacred

<sup>18</sup> In the 19th century Dinalupihan was spiritually administered by a secular priest who bore the title of "Capellan de la Mitra", because at the same time he was temporal administrator of the "Hacienda de Dinalupihan", which belonged to the Archdiocese of Manila (Cfr. Vicente Fernandez, O.P., Provincia de Bataan; Liana Hermosa, MS in APSR, Vol. I, Doc. 15, Fol. 73r). — According to the document of foundation of Liana Hermosa, a copy of which was formerly kept in the parochial archives, the barrio of Baruga, which today belongs to Lubao, was formerly a part of Hermosa. Cfr. Vicente Fernandez, *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Acta Capitolorum Provincialium* . . . , Manilae, Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1877, Vol. II, p. 393.

<sup>20</sup> FERRANDO, Estado, Fol. 14v.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Fol. 14v.

ornaments and vessels, furniture and parochial books (of Baptisms, Marriages, Burials and of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary), besides some domestic animals, a few sacks of rice, fifteen bundles of tobacco, and a few pieces of land belonging to the church.<sup>22</sup>

But fifty five years later it was returned to, and accepted again by the Provincial Chapter of 1833, together with the other ministries of Bataan that had been transferred to the secular clergy in 1768.<sup>23</sup>

### *The church.*

"The *Partido de Bataai*\*" says Father Fonseca, "was already a veritable garden when it was secularized. All its towns, except Liana Hermosa, which was just recently founded then, had their churches and convents of stone and brick, covered with tiled roofs. The people as a rule were submissive, sober and faithful to their Christian duties."<sup>24</sup>

To this Father Vicente Fernandez adds in his lengthy *Report*: "The church built by the Dominicans in Hennosa was of stone, forty six *varas* (yards) long by ten wide, with a regular transept. It was built, however, on weak foundations and without a well-defined plan, and as a result it became the source of subsequent expenses. To these errors another was added in 1869 when, for lack of personnel, a secular priest who was placed in charge of a Parish, shortened the nave which was indeed disproportionately long in comparison to its width, and he built a new facade, thick and excessively heavy. This eventually sank somewhat, dragging with it the side walls and producing, as a result, some cracks in them."<sup>25</sup>

The retables of its three altars had formerly belonged to the church of San Gabriel Hospital which had been demolished

22FOI. 256.

<sup>23</sup> "Acceptamus . . . domos S. P.N. de Abucay . . . , Sanctae Catherinae de Samal, S. Michaelis de Oriong, Btae. Mariae Virginis de Orani, S. Josephi de Balanga, S. Petri Martyris de Llana-Hermosa; quae omnes vi Regiae Schedules, supra memoratae, nostrae spirituali curae iterum committuntur, cum actu vacaverint" (Acta Capitulum Provinciale . . . , Vol. III, p. 111).

2\* FONSECA JOAQUIN, O.P., *Historia de los PP. Dominicos* . . . , Imprenta y Estereotipia de M. Rivadeneyra, Madrid, 1871, Vol. V, p. 528.

25 FERNANDEZ, VICENTE, O.P., *Llava-Hermosa*, MS in APSR, Section "Bataan", Vol. I, Doc. 15, Fol. 74.

about the year 1879. They were of excellent quality, although greatly deteriorated with the passing of the years. The convent which was small had its ground floor of stone and the upper story of wood, with a roof of nipa shingles.

*The reasons for the slow growth of Hermosa.*

We have previously stated that Hermosa did not stand up to the hopes pinned on it by its founders. About this fate Father Vicente Fernandez said in his *Report*: "A fact may readily call the attention of anyone who has some knowledge and familiarity about this town, and this is the little progress that has been noticed in a century after its founding, though it had all the resources and means required for it to grow more than any other town of this province—the extension and fertility of its lands, the wealth of its mountains and the facility afforded by its rivers for the extraction and transportation of its timber. The reason behind this fact is the ill-treatment by the inhabitants of this town towards outsiders and immigrants, who, being more submissive and timid, bore the brunt of the communal burdens such as the repair of roads, the watch over prisoners, the *bantay* service, until in exasperation they gave up everything and returned to their own towns. Another reason was the unsatisfactory peace and order situation, as during the five years that I have been here, six murders have been committed of an unusual cruelty and passionate rage."<sup>26</sup>

*Two native Dominicans?*

Among the Dominican Priests who ministered in Hermosa, two are worthy of special mention, because they were natives. "*Eran indios*," we are told in the *Description of Hermosa* by Father Zacarias Lizarraga. They were Fathers Domingo del Rosario and Jose de Santa Teresa. But about the former Father Ocio remarks in his *Compendio* that he was a Chinese mestizo. Yet about the latter the Report says: "*Este Padre era indio*." Therefore, Father Jose de Santa Teresa must be considered a pure native until the contrary is proven, and with a high degree of probability he was the only Filipino native, of pure Malayan blood, who became a Dominican priest during the Spanish regime.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> FERNANDEZ, *loc. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup> Parroquia de S. Pedro Martir de Llanahermosa, MS in APSR, Section "Bataan," Vol. I, Doc. 16, Fol. 61v and 62.

*Population statistics.*

1818.....	716 souls <sup>28</sup>
1848.....	2,390 souls <sup>29</sup>
1877.....	2,800 souls <sup>30</sup>
1898.....	2,691 souls <sup>31</sup>

Father Fernandez said in his *Report*: "According to the Census of 1877, the town of Llana-Hermosa had of 2,800 inhabitants, 772 *tributos* (tribute-payers), living either in the town proper or in more than twelve barrios. There are, besides, within the jurisdictional mountains of this town from eighty to one hundred Negritos or Aetas who are submissive and peaceful under their own officials, similar to those of the town, although such depend on one of the latter, called *Comisario*, whose task is to settle their misunderstandings and to listen to their grievances whenever these arise between them and the Christians."<sup>32</sup>

*Educational and some other miscellaneous improvements at the close of the 19th century.*

To the daily *Libertas* we owe the following interesting information about Hermosa: "The Municipal Hall and the spacious school buildings for both sexes were raised from their very foundations in the year 1893, almost entirely at the expense of the then Parish Priest, Father Saturnino Gomez, a Dominican Religious. They are the best in the province. To the zeal of this Religious, so tireless in introducing new improvements and modern techniques for the benefit of the inhabitants, Hermosa also owes the public lighting system, which even today it enjoys."<sup>33,1</sup>

Father Saturnino also covered the church with a galvanized iron roof. Father Toribio Ardanza, the last Dominican Parish Priest of Hermosa, when forced to leave by the Philippine Revolution, was busy in constructing a stone fence of the cemetery, which was begun by his predecessor, Father David Varas.<sup>34</sup>

2« BUCETA y BRAVO, *loc. cit.*

3» Revista Catolica, *loc. cit.*

4» FERNANDEZ, *loc. cit.*, Fol. 73v.

5» OCIO, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

6» *Loc. cit.*, Fol. 73.

7» Ano II, No. 178, sabado 10 de febrero de 1900.

8\* OCIO, *loc. cit.*

## 7. PILAR

*Founding.*

Under the advocacy of Our Lady "*del Pilar*" this town was erected on May 10, 1801, as a ministry independent from Balanga. It was formed out of the barrios of Santa Rosa, Balibago and Panilao, all situated between Orion and the Talisay River, which separates it from Balanga, its mother town.

Its erection as a separate town took place when Balanga was under the pastoral care of the secular clergy; and some of the inhabitants of the said barrios put up such a stiff resistance to their being separated from Balanga that they preferred to migrate elsewhere. However, they were compelled to return to their homes by the "*Superior Gobierno*." Their resistance, on the other hand, was not groundless, because the little extension of the new town's area did not augur a bright agricultural future.<sup>35</sup>

*Construction of the Church.*

The Provincial Chapter of 1833 accepted Pilar as a ministry of the Dominican Order, and appointed Father Jesualdo Ma. Mifiano as its Pastor.<sup>M</sup> This Father planned to build a magnificent church, far beyond the financial means of the town, and actually started laying the foundations. However, he could not accomplish much due to the shortness of his stay in Pilar. He stayed for one year only. His immediate successors likewise did little in behalf of the church, either for their likewise short stints in Pilar, or for other reasons. Experience indeed has abundantly proven that not all parish priests were endowed with the initiative and resourcefulness and endurance needed for the building of a church.<sup>37</sup>

Then in 1851 Father Jose Diego was assigned to Pilar, and through his thirteen-year term he finished the first story of the church and raised the walls up to the second row of windows. Besides, not without overcoming a number of obstacles, he built a cemetery to the north of the town and within

<sup>35</sup> OCIO, *op. tit.*, p. 58.

<sup>36</sup> *Acta Capitulum Provinciale* . . . , Vol. III, pp. 135, 141.

<sup>37</sup> SAN JUAN, O.P., FERMIN DE, *Convento del Pilar, Respuesta al Cuestionario de N. P. Provincial en 4 de agosto de 1888* (MS in APSR, Section "Bataan," Vol. I, Doc. 19, Fols. 64-65).

sight of the convent.<sup>38</sup> Father Francisco Govea, who succeeded him in 1864, continued the work on the walls, but it was to be the privilege of his successor, Father Perfecto del Valle (1874-1879) to finish them. Finally, Father Miguel Vazquez (1882-1885) placed the roof on the Church.<sup>39</sup>

Father Fermin de San Julian was appointed Parish Priest of Pilar on September of 1885, and worked in the beautification of the interior of the church. He also opened a road two meters in width and two kilometers in length from the town to the barrio of Uaua. There had been a road to Uaua by the Fide of the sea, opened by Father Vasquez, but fenced only with bamboo, which gone, the road became unusable. Father San Julian also built another road leading to the cemetery, and through his influence and good offices a big new bridge was built within the town proper over the river.

Amidst such temporal concerns he did not neglect his pastoral duties, and thus introduced in Pilar the Third Order of St. Dominic, in the same wise that his distant predecessor, Father Ignacio Gonzalez, had established the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary.<sup>40</sup>

At this juncture the reader may wish to know why it took so long to finish the church of Pilar. The answer given by history is clear and precise, namely, that, let alone the limited means of the town, the inhabitants and their leaders, Spaniards and natives alike, often proved uncooperative. The Spanish Alcalde Mayor of Bataan did not always take the necessary measures to compel the townspeople to work, and these did the work sluggishly until they found an opportunity to give it up altogether.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> OCIO, *Compendio de la Reseha* . . . , p. 774.

<sup>39</sup> SAN JULIAN, *he. eit.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> The existing regulation at this time (midnineteenth century) about the collaboration of the townspeople in the construction of the church was the following: "The townspeople shall contribute to it with their personal labour and, perhaps, with their money, and this after a mere insinuation of the provincial authorities" (Cfr. GAINZA, FRANCISCO, O.P., *Consultas e Informes*, MSS in AUST, "Folletos", Vol. 108, Fol. 115). "The funds of the *Sanctorum* were also used, which in 1852 amounted to about three to four thousand pesos for ten churches and their parochial houses" (*ibid.*, Fol. 117). "The work of reconstruction was resumed in August of 1852, the year of the earthquakes. Materials began to be gathered, but the people reported for work sluggishly, and the Alcalde Mayor, notified by the Gobernadorcillo, did not seem to be very interested in enforcing punctuality among the labourers. In the end, all failed to report for work" (*Ibid.*, Fol. 116v).



While the construction of the church was going on through the years, the liturgical services were being held in the old *camarin* (a barn-like structure) which the Dominican Fathers had inherited from the secular clergy at the time of their take-over. This, throughout the years, they had to improve and occasionally repair when damaged by earthquakes or typhoons.

#### *Statistics.*

Though some of the inhabitants of Pilar did not augur for it a brilliant future due to the smallness of its area, however, in rhatther of human resources or population it did grow proportionately at the fast pace of the other more prosperous towns, as can be seen in the following figures:

1818.....	899 souls <sup>4</sup> -
1848.....	3,134 souls"
1898.....	4,050 souls <sup>41</sup>

#### *Pilar- through the initial stage of the Philippine Revolution.*

The insurrection of the people of Pilar against Spain took place on May 29, 1898. In the early hours of the morning, swarms of insurgents, backed by the Aetas from the nearby mountains whom they had convinced or forced to join the Revolution, staged an assault on the convent where ten Spanish soldiers led by a Corporal put up for a short time a gallant resistance. However, since the upper story was of wood, it soon caught fire from the incendiary arrows shot by the Negritos.

At this point the beseiged, heeding the exhortation of the Parish Priest, Father Francisco Garcia, decided to seek refuge in the church. There, weakened by hunger and thirst and harassed by the constant shooting from the neighboring houses, they resisted until the next day in the morning, when they surrendered upon the urging of the townspeople. It was in the church where a fanatic wounded Father Garcia in the nose and

<sup>42</sup> BUCETA y BRAVO, *op. tit.*, p. 357.

<sup>43</sup> *Revista Catdlica*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> OCIO, *Monumento*, p. 59.

left arm. On June 6 the Father and the remaining soldiers (two had died and four were gravely wounded) boarded a boat, on orders of Aguinaldo, for the port of Cavite.<sup>47</sup>

*The Dominicans return to Pilar.*

Paradoxically, of all the seven towns administered — and six of them founded — by the Dominicans in Bataan, only Pilar — the only one not founded by them — invited the Dominicans, after the Revolution, to come back and resume their pastoral ministry therein. It got its wish. However, this was not a general or corporative policy of the Province of the Holy Rosary, but a private affair (of course, with the blessings of the Superiors) between Father San Julian and the town of Pilar, between whom there was a deep mutual love. And he stayed there until June 1, 1931, the date of his death. The old folks of Pilar still revere his memory and speak of him with deep affection.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> HERRERO, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 64, 76, 92-104.

<sup>48</sup> Hero is the letter of petition, signed by the prominent people of Pilar: "Most Excellent and Most Illustrious Lord Archbishop of Manila: Most Illustrious Lord: We, the chiefs of Pilar, as Apostolic Roman Catholics that we are, in our behalf and in behalf of the town that we represent and which, as we see, is giving proofs of its gratitude and satisfaction, we give Your Excellency our heartfelt thanks for the two Dominican Fathers whom You have sent; and Your Excellency may express it (our gratitude) to the highest governing authority of the Islands, if such were the case. We kiss Your ring and wish Your Excellency a long life. Pilar (Bataan), June 15, 1901. Urbano Reyes, ex-Justice of the Peace and actual President. Eusebio Paguio, ex-cabeza and actual Vice-President. (Other signatures follow). It is an exact copy from the original." (Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Bataan", Vol. I, Doc. 20). The two Dominican Fathers not mentioned by their names in the letter were Frs. Fermin P. San Julian and Ulpiano Herrero. Father Herrero must have returned soon after to Manila, while Father San Julian stayed in Pilar (Cfr. *Catalogus Omnium Fratruum et Sororum* . . ., Manila. Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1901, p. 6.

# HOMILETICS

## FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE POPE'S VISIT AND THE BEATIFICATION OF LORENZO RUIZ

*(Homily delivered by the Most Rev. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Manila, during the Concelebrated Mass said on the occasion of the First Anniversary of the Pope's Visit and the Beatification of the Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz, held on Saturday, February 20, 1982 at 5:00 p.m., at the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Intramuros, Manila.)*

"The theme of my visit to this country is: To die for the faith is a gift to some; to live the faith is a call for all." ((Beatification Homily, # 5)

Your Eminence  
Your Excellency  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

By these words, Pope John Paul II, synthesized the central message of his visit. It has been a year now since he graced our shores with his inspiring presence. His principal reason for coming to visit us, as we all know, was to beatify Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino candidate for sainthood.

But, as we all know also, he did much more than that during his six-day visit. He went everywhere — to Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, Iloilo, Legaspi and Baguio. In Metro Manila, he was at the Luneta, in Malacanang, in the Cardinal's residence, at the Araneta Coliseum, at the University of Santo Tomas, in Tondo, Radio Veritas and at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

Everywhere the Supreme Pontiff went, he was met by unprecedentedly large crowds tumultuous and enthusiastic. Everywhere he went, his presence was like a benediction. He showed to everyone — particularly to little children — how much he loved his brothers and sisters. He was smiling and warm, generous and kind. Even when, because of his rigorous schedule, he was dropping with fatigue, he had one extra smile to give, one extra wave of the hand in greeting.

The people took to him their hearts. They echoed his motto — *Totus tuus* — and they felt, with a conviction born out of moral certitude, that Pope John Paul II had touched their lives, individually and collectively, and had thereby changed their lives by that single touch.

Today, one year after that momentous visit, we can ask the question: how did his presence among us really change us? Did we take to heart the message that he had for each one of us? Let us — even for a while — recall his words.

### HIS WORDS

To you, dear Philippines, what was the message of the Pope? His first message was directed to you, remember? *"Although small in size of land and population compared to some of its neighbors, the Philippine nation has undoubtedly a special role in the concert of nations, in order to consolidate peace and international understanding, and more particularly in maintaining stability in South East Asia, where it has a vital task."* (Malaeafiang, #3). Isn't it too high a goal for so small a nation? *"The Filipino"*, the Pope assured us, *"will always draw the strength and inspiration that they need to carry out this task from their noble heritage — a heritage not only of Christian faith but also of the rich human and cultural values that are their own."* (ibid. #4). Philippines, how have you lived up his message to you?

There is yet another condition before our country, which is a christian country, must realize before playing her role in the concert of nations. What is this condition? *"That the leaders and the people of the Philippines"* said the Holy Father, *"fully realize their responsibility to construct an exemplary society and that they are willing to work together to achieve this end in a spirit of mutual respect and civic responsibility. It is the joint effort of all citizens that builds a truly sovereign nation, where not only the legitimate material interests of the citizens are promoted and protected, but also their spiritual aspirations and their culture."* (Malaeafiang #5). Leaders of our people, how have you lived up to this message?

The Church, for whom he is Christ's Vicar, is called upon to defend the human dignity of the poor and their hope for a human future. *"It is not a luxury"*, the Pope said to the residents of Tondo, *"nor is it a strategy of opportunism, nor a means for favor with the masses. It is her duty because it is God who wishes all human beings to live in accordance with the dignity that he bestowed on them"* (Tondo #6). My dear brothers in the ministry, what have we done with this message?

At the same time, the Holy Father warned against ideologies that preach only material values and incomplete develop-

ment, as well as against the way of violence, class struggle or hate. On the contrary, only love constructs a more just and more human world. Not even justice is enough, if it is not accompanied by charity. *"To construct a truly human society in the Philippines,"* the Holy Father exclaimed to the sugar industry — *"every man and woman must make a choice for justice and love, for solidarity and brotherhood against selfishness and hatred. Choose human dignity and a better future will be yours."* (Bacolod #8). My dear brothers and sisters, how did we choose?

In the reconstruction of that society built on justice and love, the young are called upon to play the key role. To them the Holy Father reserved one of his most significant teachings: During his encounter with the youth of the Philippines at UST, he said: *It is your right — or rather, it is your duty, to aim high. Your aspirations must be sublime; your ideals must be high. Dear young people, strive to build a character that is strong, rich and consistent, one that is free and responsible, sensitive to genuine values, a character that accepts the superiority of "being" over "having", one that perseveres in challenges and shuns escapism, facile compromise and heartless self-centered calculation.*" (UST #2). Youth of our native land, the flowers of our hope and dream, you responded to him with the intense outburst of ALL Yours — *Totus Tuus!* Did you aim high? Are your aspirations for this country sublime?

Your leaders, headed by His Eminence, Jaim Cardinal L. Sin, hope that you have been true to his challenge. On their part, to give flesh to the sentiments of the Holy Father in your regard, I am privileged to announce to you for and in behalf of the Archbishop of Manila, the establishment as of today of the Pope John Paul II Foundation, Inc. whose primary purpose is to provide scholarship grants to individual students who have distinguished themselves by their academic performance, industry and moral conduct. This is our share in responding with you, to the wish of our common Father, young people of the land.

But it is not only to the reconstruction of a better world that the Philippines, in the mind of John Paul II, is called upon by God; it is not even to this primarily. First and foremost the Holy Father meant to re-affirm the unique vocation of this nation towards the universal Church: its missionary responsibility. *"In reflecting on the Church in the Philippines,"* said the Holy Father to the Asian Bishops, *"the missionary*

*aspect emerges in various ways . . . You will hear other nations, especially your neighbors in Asia, calling you: "Come over . . . and help us! There is no doubt about it; the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News, to carry the light of Christ to the nations. It may be accomplished with personal sacrifices, and in spite of limited resources . . ."* (To the Bishops #6). My dear fellow bishops, today, one year after that message was given to us within the hallowed hall of Villa San Miguel, we hear yet even more urgent the voices of our asian neighbors calling: Come over... and help us." How many times did we answer not with — "yes, I wish to come", but: "Behold . . . I am here."

But this was also his call to other sectors in the Church, repeated, with almost monotonous frequency, with how each should prepare for it.

The *women religious* here will remember how, in rapt attention, they relished every word of the Pope's message to them. To you, dear sisters he left this message: *"To be able to show the young that consecrated love for Jesus can itself fulfill the deepest aspirations of the human person; this is a great mission of faith, and, dear Sisters, it is yours."* (Baclaran # 9).

To the *men religious* he was virile and precise in his message: *"As you seek new ways of furthering the Gospel and of promoting human values, I offer you my encouragement and the assurance of my prayers. At the same time I ask you to observe this guideline: that each apostolic endeavor should be in harmony with the teaching of the Church, with the apostolic purposes of your individual institutes, and with the original charism of your founders."* (To Men Religious #4).

To the *professionals* he said that they should use their skills and activities in the service of the less privileged: *"Jesus needs you to build His kingdom on earth. When things are going well never set yourselves off from society for the sake of making money, gain power, or acquiring more knowledge."* (Araneta # 4).

The *catechists*, here, I am sure glow with justifiable pride whenever you recall the almost palpable warmth and affection with which he gave you his message. You are *"those men and women so very dear to the Church and the Pope."* To each of you he left this legacy: *"You need to be faithful to Christ, to his Church and to man."*

Finally the moving appeal to the *priests* still rings to our ears: *"My brother priests, this missionary Church, this Eucharistic people, depends upon you for the authentic proclamation of the Good News. But if you are to be effective preachers of the word, you must be men of deep faith who are hearers and doers of the word as well . . . For this reason we must never cease examining carefully how we live our priestly lives, lest they become a countersign which disfigures the sacramental presence which the Lord intends us to be in and for his Church."* (Cebu #8).

My dear religious, priests, catechists and professionals, families: to all of us these stirring messages were given; where do we stand at this moment? Hearers only or Doers as well of the Papal call? Faithful signs or countersigns of God's Kingdom?

### CONCLUSION

My dear brothers and sisters: Pope John Paul II is no longer in our midst, but all of us can look back at those fateful six days with affection and nostalgia. In one way or another, all of us had a close encounter with him. Maybe, we got to him, close up, and we had a chance to touch his hand or to kiss his ring. To those among us who are less fortunate, perhaps the close encounter came in a phrase he said which touched us to the quick.

But, if his fateful Philippine visit is to change our lives — permanently and wonderfully — we must pay dutiful heed to the words he left with us, to the sum total of all the meaningful phrases he gave voice to while he was here.

"Speak, Lord, your servant listens." Let us listen to him, not just with our ears, but with our hearts as well.

# BIBLICAL NOTES AND BOMBJES

MAY - JULY 1983

By

Fr. Regino O. Cortes, O.P.

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

(May 1, 1983)

The liturgy of the 5th Sunday after Easter speaks of the spread of the Church through the apostolic work of Paul and Barnabas (first reading) ; John's vision of the new heavens and the new earth in the book of Revelation (second reading) ; and the parting words of Jesus during the last supper (Gospel reading). This Sunday, like the other Sundays after Easter, prepares for the feast of the Ascension.

### FIRST READING. ACTS 14:21-27.

The ending of the first apostolic travel of Paul and Barnabas is recounted in this passage of the Acts. We find them this time at Derbe, leaving Lystra after Paul was stoned there at the instigation of some Jews. Derbe is about 65 kms. south-east of Lystra which during the time of St. Paul belonged to the Roman Province of Galatia. There is in fact some commentators of the Bible who think that St. Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians to these communities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe and not to the native Galatians of the north.

There was no mention at Derbe of the hardships which the apostles encountered while they were at Iconium and Lystra. The response of the people to their preaching there of the Good News was very encouraging. After their stay at Derbe, they went back through the same route from which they came to strengthen these newly founded churches of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia, noting that the hardships they experienced were necessary for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

They afterwards appointed elders (presbyters), perhaps in imitation of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:30) to administer these churches. This was done in a liturgical service,



"with prayer and fasting." There was no mention of imposition of hands but based on previous practices like Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 6:2, we may infer that this was done. These elders or presbyters, also known as overseers (*episkopoi*) in Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7, were the predecessors of our priests and bishops which, during the time of St. Paul, were not yet clearly distinguished. It was only about fifty years later in the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch (Ephesians 6:1; Magnesians 2; 6:1; Trallians 1:1; Philadelphians 4.) that clear distinctions were made between *Episkopos* (presiding elder, our present bishop) and *Presbyteroi* (elders under the *episkopos*, our present priests).

## SECOND READING. REVELATION 21:1-5.

The Apocalypse or the book of Revelation has often been considered as a book of disasters, cataclysms, catastrophic events and other horrifying experiences. That is why in many languages "apocalyptic" became synonymous to "disasters," "cataclysms," or "calamities." This, however, is a popular misconception. *Apokalypsis* in Greek simply means "revelation" and this book does, indeed, contain both tragic and happy revelations. It is in fact a prophetic book and many expressions in the Apocalypse can only be understood by studying the Prophets. In our present text alone, the second reading in today's Mass, already 5 passages from the prophetic books are cited: Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Ezechiel 37:27; Isaiah 8:8; 25:8. As most prophetic books end with a consoling note, so also the Apocalypse has a happy ending.

Chapter 21 portrays to us the new heavens and the new earth at the end of time. The disappearance of the sea indicates the peace and tranquillity of this new order. The sea or the ocean had been linked by the ancients to the chaotic order because it is never calm and oftentimes violently disturbed because of its big waves. The sea was thought of to be the abode of monster named Rahab or Leviathan in Sacred Scripture, or Tiamat in Babylonian myths. God killed these monsters to bring order to creation (Isaiah 51:9; Psalm 74:13).

John saw the holy city coming down from heaven. It has then a divine origin. The letter to the Hebrews (11:10) "looks forward to a city founded, designed and built by God."

In a figurative sense, Zion is said in the Bible to be the bride of Yahweh (Isaiah 62:4), adorned in her bridal gown for the wedding (Isaiah 49:18; 61:10; Jeremiah 2:32). In the New Testament, the Church is the Bride and Christ is the Bridegroom (John 3:29; Apocalypse 22:17, aside from the present text).

Verse 5 is the only passage in the whole book of Revelation where God himself speaks. The time will come when all creation will become new.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. JOHN 13:31-35.

After the departure of Judas, the lengthy discourse of the Last Supper which will end in 17:26 begins. The first sentences of the discourse reminisce the two previous episodes: the departure of Judas of which Jesus will speak of his glorification and the washing of the feet of which he will speak of the new commandment.

Unwittingly, Judas would be realizing the plan of God leading Christ to his death which would be the prelude to his glory. The tense used of the verb "to glorify" is very noticeable. *Edoxasthe* is in the aorist passive and rightly translated as "has been glorified." This may be considered a "prophetic anticipation" by which a future fact or event which is certain and proximate is expressed. When Judas left to betray him his passion in fact started whose fulfillment until the resurrection is already seen here.

"God will in turn glorify him in himself": the aorist of v. 31 is now in the future, *doxasei*. Some manuscripts have *en auto*, "in him", which could mean that God will glorify the Son in his humanity. "In himself" (*en eauto*) means, according to the Jerusalem Bible, that the Father will take the Son of Man to himself in glory seated at his right hand. "Very soon," that is to say, in his resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Jesus calls his disciples "little children" (*teknia*), a term which is only found in this v. 33 of St. John's Gospel, but found 7 times in his first Letter. It is an endearing and affectionate term. He would be leaving them and as he told the Jews. (7:33-34; 8:21), where he was going they cannot come. But later

in v. 36 he told Peter: "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; you will follow me later." This means that the separation will only be temporary.

Then Jesus gave them a new commandment. The absence of the article means that there was no precedent commandment like this before. In 15:12 it has already the article referring to this new commandment. In Greek, here are two terms for new: *neos* which expresses what is recent, and *kainos* which could also have the meaning of "excellent," "sublime," "perfect." This commandment is new since the model and motivation is new: "as I have loved you." The love of Christ, then, for us is the standard of this new commandment of love. The former standard is to love one another as oneself.

In 1 John 3:14, our love for our brothers is the sign that "we have passed out of death and into life," and the sign of being true disciples of Christ. Tertullian testifies (*Apologia* 39) that pagans took notice and admired this fraternal love among Christians: "*Vide, inquit, ut invicem se diligant,*" "Observe, they (pagans) say, how they love one another."

## HOMILY

### THE NEW COMMANDMENT

The test for true discipleship of Christ is the love Christians have for each other motivated by the love of Christ for us. This is, indeed, a new commandment. New in the sense that the standard and the motive is new. New in the sense that it is the most excellent kind of love, taking the Greek *koine* with this specific meaning. The old measure of love was the love of oneself. It states: "love your neighbor as *yourself*." The new commandment affirms: "love one another as I have loved you." It is a new love, a most excellent love.

This new measure of love is the love Christ has for us. "A love than this no man has than to give his life for his friends." The measure of Christian love is to love without measure. It is a sacrificial love, to give one's life for the beloved. If we cannot give life in one offering as the martyrs did, we can give it piece by piece even in the 'daily hum-drum' of our earthly existence.

A mother gives it to her child offering precious sleepless nights; a wife gives it to her husband understanding his moods; a husband gives it to his wife spending his time in the office and not in beer-houses; children give it to their parents by their obedience; parents give it to their children by spending more time with them. These daily offerings of one's life is Christian love. It does not anymore say: "I love you as I love myself," but "I love you as Christ loves you."

If I love you as I love myself, I risk of having a selfish love, a one-way love, a jealous love. Many times I do not even know what this love of myself means. Does loving myself means to pamper myself with everything I desire and, therefore, to love according to this measure would be to pamper you with everything you desire? Or do I love myself when I assure for myself eternal happiness in God's kingdom whatever be the cost and, therefore, to love according to this measure would be to guide and lead you towards the eternal happiness whatever be the price?

But if I love you as Christ loves me, my standard of love becomes very clear. He died on the cross because of this love, he forgave his executioners because of this love, he has prepared for us a place in his kingdom because of this love.

The standard has been set. It is up for us now to meet the standard.

### **SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER** **(May 8, 1983)**

The sixth Sunday of Easter is the Sunday preceding the feast of the Ascension celebrated on the Thursday after this Sunday as the 40th day after the Resurrection. In some countries, however, like the Philippines, the feast of the Ascension is forwarded to the following Sunday to lessen the holidays of obligation on weekdays.

The promises made by our Lord to the Apostles during the Last Supper (Gospel Reading) concerning the Holy Spirit, Advocate of the Church, is now being realized as the Apostles and Elders of the Church met in Jerusalem to settle a most fundamental issue: the break with Judaism (First Reading). The Second Reading speaks to us about the heavenly City to which all of us are tending.

**FIRST READING. ACTS 15:1-29.**

This episode of the Council of the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem is one of the turning points in the Acts of the Apostles. This has been presented by some authors as the first ecumenical council of the Church. Although the nucleus of future ecumenical councils is certainly present, this gathering is usually not included in the list of ecumenical councils which historically starts with the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.).

The point of issue was whether pagans or gentiles converted to Christianity were obliged to keep the Mosaic Law and thus be circumcised as some Pharisees converted to Christianity were teaching: "unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be saved." There were here two groups of opinions since this was not clear in the doctrine of Christ. This is an example, then, of resolving a doctrine not clearly stated by our Lord and now presented for clarification to the Church authorities composed of the Apostles and Elders, the predecessors of our College of Bishops.

There is no mention in the Acts of any presiding officer. But it does mention that it was through the intervention of Peter that the issue was resolved "after a long discussion" (v. 7). Peter recounted the conversion and baptism of Cornelius, how he considered this event as an act of God. He said: "in fact, God who can read everyone's heart showed his approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us."

With this event, the nascent Church officially separated from the Jewish synagogue.

**SECOND READING. REVELATION 21:10-23.**

In contrast to chapter 17:3 where John was brought to the desert to see the harlot (symbolizing the unholy city), here he is brought to a high mountain to see the bride (the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city) descending from heaven. Then follows a description of the Holy City. This heavenly city is shining with the glory of God. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, God's glory shines in the face of Christ.

This heavenly city is shining with the glory of God just like in Isaiah 60:1-2. John looked for an earthly comparison

of this radiant city and compared it to a jewel called *yaspis* in Greek, translated by some as "jasper" a kind of jade, while the Jerusalem Bible, which I think is more accurate, as "crystal-clear diamond."

Taking its cue from Ezekiel 48:30-35, John mentions the twelve gates of the city named after the twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve foundation stones named after the twelve apostles thus expressing the continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The measurement of the heavenly city defies human imagination, thus, indicating its supra-terrestrial character. It is a perfect cube like the Debir or Holy of Holies of the Temple containing the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 6:19). The heavenly city has 12,000 stadia each in length, width and height. Since 1 stadium is about 185 meters, the dimension of the holy city would be 2,220,000 meters or 2,220 kilometers in length, the same measurement in width and height. Yet the height of the wall is only 144 cubits high, or about 70 meters.

The mention of precious stones at the gates and foundations of the city enhances the grandeur of the heavenly Jerusalem. There is no more Temple since God himself and the Lamb are the Temple. Note the equality between God and the Lamb. Neither will there be light since it will come from God and the Lamb.

#### **GOOD NEWS READING. JOHN 14:23-29.**

The following discourse, part of the Last Supper sermon, was a response to the question of Judas (Thaddaeus), specifically indicated "not the Iscariot." He is identified in Luke 6:16 as the "Son of James" which some commentators think should be read "brother of James." The question betrays the current Jewish expectation about the Messiah that he would manifest himself to the whole world like a triumphant conqueror of Jewish enemies. The response of Jesus to the question was rather indirect. The manifestation will be to those who love him and keep his word. Jesus cannot manifest himself to all because not all could fulfill the conditions of love and obedience to his word which he requires so that He and the Father would come.

Many things would be made clear to the Apostles and their disciples with the coming of the Advocate (*Parakletos*) or the Holy Spirit. He would *teach* them everything which pertains to salvation and *remind* them of those things already said by our Lord Jesus Christ.

To console furthermore the Apostles, Jesus gave them his own *peace*, totally different from the peace of the world (2 Thessalonians 3:16) : "May the Lord of peace himself give you peace all the time." This peace is internal to the person and does not preclude external oppressions and persecutions. But precisely because they possess the peace of Christ, the Apostles and the Christians would remain tranquil and calm in the face of persecutions.

The return of Christ as man to the Father should be a cause for rejoicing since it would mean Christ's glorification. Although as God (John 1:1) He and the Father are one (10:30), as man, the Father is greater than He (14:28).

## HOMILY

### CHRIST'S PROMISES BEFORE LEAVING HIS APOSTLES

"If anyone loves me he will keep my word."

The standard for loving Christ is to keep his word, to obey his commandments. Tyrants force their subjects out of fear to obey their commands, some do it for reward. Christ tells us to keep his word for love of Him. The reward is secondary.

What are his words? What are his commandments? What are his counsels? They are all embodied in the gospels, in his sermons, his parables, his sayings. They are expounded by the Magisterium of the Church, his Mystical Body of whom He is the head with the Holy Spirit as the soul.

"The Holy Spirit will teach and remind you everything."

Not everything, then, was taught by Christ. He has sent the Holy Spirit, His own Spirit to be with us until the end of time: "to teach us everything and remind us of all he has said to us." The Holy Spirit is alive in the Church. Christ planted

the seed of God's reign on earth, the Holy Spirit makes it grow territorially, doctrinally, numerically, in maturity of faith, in strength of hope, in depth of love, in holiness of life.

It was the Holy Spirit who sent the Apostles to spread the Good News of salvation to different parts of the world starting from Jerusalem. So they spread to Samaria, to Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, India, Egypt, reaching until Spain which was then known as the limit of the known world. It was the Spirit who impelled Peter to baptize the first pagan (Gentile) by the name of Cornelius including his household into Christianity without passing through the Jewish rituals. He was criticized for this by Jewish Christians but he answered that it was through the urgings of the Holy Spirit that he did it: "I had scarcely begun to speak when the Holy Spirit came down on them in the same way as it came on us at the beginning, but I remembered that the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' I realized then that God was giving them the identical thing he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; and who was I to stand in God's way?" (Acts 11:15-17).

It was the Holy Spirit who inspired the Apostles and Elders of the Church to gather at Jerusalem to resolve the question whether pagans or Gentiles baptized to Christianity "should be circumcized and instructed to keep the law of Moses," (Acts 15:5). After so much discussion "Peter stood up and addressed them" (v. 7) "My brothers," he said, "you know perfectly well that in early days God made his choice among you: the pagans were to learn the Good News from me and so become believers. In fact, who can read everyone's heart, showed his approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us... Remember, we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus." (7-11). This was the model of future Ecumenical or General Councils headed by the successors of Peter, the Popes of Rome.

It is the same Spirit who reminds the Church of everything which God and Christ have revealed. This is what we mean by divine tradition which is a rule of faith for the Church. This does not conflict in a way with Sacred Scripture since the very Spirit who inspired the writing of Sacred Scripture is the same Spirit who safeguards the authenticity and integrity of Divine Apostolic Tradition.

"My peace I give you."



The sharing of Christ's peace has become a part of the Mass. Christ's peace is different from the peace of the world. It is an inner tranquility in the midst of the world's conflicts. It is the calm in the deeper part of the ocean although turbulent and violent waves are raging on the surface. The peace of Christ can weather any storm, can face any problem, can brighten any sorrow with a smile. In the end the peace of Christ will flower into heavenly glory that will always remain forever and ever.

### **ASCENSION SUNDAY (May 15, 1983)**

Instead of celebrating Ascension on the Thursday after the sixth Sunday of Easter which is the fortieth day, it is celebrated this Sunday due to the lessening of the holidays of obligation on weekdays in the Philippines. The first reading from the first verses of the Acts of the Apostles, continuing the Gospel of Luke which was more or less summarized in the last verses, narrates the Ascension with additional details. The second reading is from the Letter to the Ephesians which is a prayer of St. Paul that the Ephesians would understand more the mysteries of God to strengthen their hope. The Gospel reading is St. Luke's version of the Ascension.

#### **FIRST READING. ACTS 1:1-11.**

We have in the first reading the first verses of the first Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles believed to be the sequel to the Gospel of St. Luke. The contents of the Gospel, according to the Evangelist, are the deeds and teachings of Jesus. Among his "deeds" are his miracles and his passion, death and resurrection. There is "no need to understand literally the word "everything" as if St. Luke gave a complete biography of our Lord which is impossible and could readily be seen if we compare his Gospel with that of St. John. Still it can be said that he narrated in a substantially complete form what he knew (from his sources and from St. Paul) concerning the deeds and teachings of Jesus.

The Gospel narrates various apparitions of the Risen Lord. The Acts completes these narrations in some essential points, the most significant of which is the note that the Risen Lord

appeared repeatedly to his Apostles during the 40 days preceding his ascension. This is not clear in the Gospel. In fact just by reading the Gospel it could give the impression that the ascension happened that very day of the Pasch. The Gospel passage of the appearance of the Lord to the eleven (Luke 24: 36-49) and the trip to the place of the ascension (24:50) are closely linked to each other. Perhaps even between the appearance narrative in Luke 24:36-43 and 44-49, a historical discontinuity may also be discerned.

The Acts has it recorded, then, that for "forty days Jesus continued to appear to the Apostles and tell them about the kingdom of God."

Luke did not mean to say that Jesus gave the Apostles exhaustive instructions about the organization of the Church. He leaves this to the Holy Spirit whom he would send after his ascension and would be in the Church as her soul until the end of time. Jesus, most probably, told them about the reason for his passion and death and the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Scriptures as well as their obligations and the mission to which he was sending them: the spread of the Gospel. To fulfill this mission, the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

The Apostles, even at the moment of Christ's ascension but before the coming of the Holy Spirit, thought that with the coming of the "Promise of the Father" (the Holy Spirit) the reign of God as a glorious renewal of the ancient kingdom of David, with the Messiah as king, for the benefit of the Jewish people would come. Jesus had to correct or more precisely, make this idea exact. The coming of the Holy Spirit would realize a part of this expectation, not, however, confined only to the Jews but to the whole of mankind. Nevertheless, the final establishment of the kingdom in the *parousia* is known only to the Father and not revealed to any man (Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). What is greatly important, however, is that the coming of the Holy Spirit would be linked more not to the final establishment of the kingdom (much less to the kingdom according to Jewish expectations) but to assist the Apostles as "witnesses of the Risen Lord."

## **SECOND READING. EPHESIANS 1:17-23.**

The passage is rich in doctrinal content about God and Christ in the context of Paul's prayer that the Ephesians would

understand more the mysteries of God a<sup>h</sup>d thus strengthen their hope. The flow of ideas may be plotted thus:

A. May God give you a spirit of wisdom (*sophia*) and perception (*apokah/pnis*) of what is revealed: to bring you to full knowledge of him.

B. May he enlighten your mind

1. so that you can see what hope his call holds for you,
2. what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit,
3. how infinitely great is the *power* that he has exercised for us believers. Seen from his power at work in Christ
  - (1) when he used to raise him from the dead
  - (2) make him sit at the right hand in heaven far above the choir? of angels
  - (3) made him, as the ruler of everything, head of the Church.

God is presented by Paul not in his abstract essence, but in his concrete actions towards us. The expression "Father of glory" is *hapax* or only found once in the New Testament which is here in v. 17. A parallel expression "God of glory" is found in Acts 7:2 and "Lord of glory" referring to Christ in 1 Corinthians 2:8. As "Father of glory" he has in him the fulness of glory which he diffuses to us. This glory is the object of praise in verses 6, 12, and 14 of this chapter.

The two genitives *sophia* ("wisdom") and *apokalypsis* (lit. "revelation"; JB: "perception of what is revealed") mutually compliment each other and signify an intimate and profound knowledge of God and his plan of salvation to which man by his own powers cannot attain.

To show the magnitude of Christian hope, St. Paul adds that all these great riches of goods are reserved to the Christian anchored on the "power of God" whose extraordinary efficacy can easily be seen in what was realized in Christ (verses 20-23).

The manifestation of God's power in Christ is given by Paul in 3 ways: (1) Christ's resurrection; (2) making Christ

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sit at his right hand above the angels. Here four choirs of angels are mentioned: Sovereignty, Authority, Powers or Virtues, Dominations. In Colossians 1:16 we have "Thrones"; Romans 8:38 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "Angels and Archangels"; Hebrews 9:5 and Isaiah 6:2, "Cherubim and Seraphim," These constitute the nine choirs of angels mentioned in our catechism books: (3) constituting Christ head of the Church.

Christ as the head of his body, the Church, is a pet idea in St. Paul (Romans 12: 4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:2). But what does it mean when he says that the Church is the *pleroma* of Christ?

*Pleroma* can have an active sense: that which completes or fills up a thing. Does the Church completes Christ? Some Fathers especially in the Greek church and some modern exegetes accepting this sense thinks that the Church completes Christ as members complete the head to form the whole body (Colossians 1:24). But *pleroma* can also be taken in the passive sense: that which is completed and *plcroumenou* is taken as a deponent or middle voice. The passage is then understood to mean that Christ fills or completes the Church (cf. Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:19). Christ who fills all creation is the fullness of the Church.

**GOOD NEWS READING. LUKE 24:46-53.**

Our Gospel pericope is the conclusion of the Gospel of St. Luke before passing on to his second book: the Acts of the Apostles. The connecting link is the Ascension narrative.

On this supposedly last appearance of the Risen Lord (in St. Luke's account in his Gospel), Jesus opened the minds of the Apostles as he did to the two disciples of Emmaus (v. 27) so that they would understand the Scriptures concerning **his** life, especially his passion, death and resurrection which the Apostles should preach in his name for the repentance and forgiveness of sins. The Apostles were witnesses of the fulfilment of the prophecies and they are now sent to give testimony of this fact to the whole world beginning from Jerusalem.

The Apostles were commissioned to be witnesses (v. 48), thus given a charge and a mission, of the salvation brought by Christ. They would be witnesses of the fulfilment of the prophecies, and they were destined to render testimony of this

fact to the whole world, transmitting this mission to their successors and to their successors' successors until the end of time. This verse is of great importance for the right understanding of what is "Good News," or the Gospel. It is not a myth or a product of human invention. It is based on a concrete historical fact. The Apostles saw these facts personally. They are, therefore, competent witnesses, to announce to the whole world as "apostles" (those who are sent) the reality of redemption. Their preaching, then, becomes a message, a *kerygma* and not just a simple affirmation of opinions. These words of Jesus corresponds to the command in Matthew 28:19.

The Acts of the Apostles has shown how the Apostles fulfilled their mission of witnessing (1:8.22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:31).

In order to assist them in their task of witnessing, Jesus promised that he would send "the promise of the Father" (the Holy Spirit), also mentioned in the Old Testament (Joel 3:14). Thus they should not leave Jerusalem until the day when they would be invested from on high. This happened at Pentecost. St. Luke has shortened his narrative "here, not mentioning the apparitions in Galilee.

Jesus completed his work with this mission of the Apostles and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Now the work of the disciples begins. Their mission in the world was inaugurated.

## HOMILY

### THE APOSTLES WERE CONSTITUTED AS WITNESSES OF SALVATION AS CHRIST GOES UP TO HEAVEN

"You are witnesses to this."

The Apostles were the witnesses of Christ's life, his suffering, death and resurrection and his ascension to heaven. By his mandate and in his name "repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem" (v. 47). This the Apostles and their successors did. From Jerusalem the faith spread to Samaria, Antioch in

Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Gaul or France, India, Egypt, North Africa, the Americas, the Far East, Australia, and the whole world.

They were the witnesses of God's revelation in the Scriptures and through the Holy Spirit this witnessing is transmitted to the whole Church. Our faith then is ultimately based on the faith of the Apostles and since the Apostles transmitted this faith to the Church, the Church presently safeguards this faith free from any addition or subtraction or from any false interpretation of any man or any malicious spirit.

The Apostles and their successors sealed this witnessing with their own blood. St. Peter, the first Vicar of Christ on earth, was crucified upside down and on the very place where he was buried at the Vatican Hill, rose a magnificent cathedral, the greatest Church of Christendom called the St. Peter's Basilica. St. Paul was beheaded and a Basilica outside the walls of Rome also stands on the place where he was martyred. St. John did not die a martyr's death but he also suffered persecution: thrown, according to tradition, into a cauldron of boiling oil and exiled to an island called Patmos. St. Andrew, the brother of Peter, was also crucified, St. James, the brother of John, was ordered to be killed by the sword by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2); St. Bartholomew was skinned alive. Many others gave their lives for the faith.

"Jesus withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven."

The physical presence of Christ on earth ended with his ascension into heaven but his sacramental presence which is no less a real presence continues on earth until the end of time. Thus, we profess in our Catholic faith that Jesus as God is everywhere but as man he is in heaven according to his glorified body and in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist in the form of bread and wine.

Today's feast of the ascension confirms our hope that someday we will also be with the Lord. There is no need to ask in this space-age mentality whether heaven is above the earth or below the earth, whether it is inside our universe or outside our universe. Heaven is where God is, the object of our beatific vision, where we will see our Risen Lord in his glorified body, the Blessed Virgin also in her glorified body, with all the angels and the saints.

What must it be like to be in heaven? What must it be like to be liberated from the limitations of our present body, from sickness and pain, from boredom and weariness, from anxiety and emotional stress? What must it be like to experience immortality and the beatific vision?

**PENTECOST SUNDAY**  
**(May 22, 1983)**

The coming of the Holy Spirit promised by the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ finally happened during the Jewish feast of Pentecost (first reading). Since his coming, the Spirit has filled the Church and her members with graces and charisms (second reading). There was a giving of the Holy Spirit by our Lord to the Apostles before the Pentecost event for their function as ministers to forgive and retain sins (Gospel reading).

**FIRST READING. ACTS 2:1-11.**

The coming of the promised Paraclete or the Holy Spirit which the Risen Lord announced to his Apostles (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; John 15:20) took place during the solemn Jewish feast of Pentecost, celebrated on the seventh week or on the 50th day after the Pasch, hence the name *he Pentehoste*, "the fiftieth (day)." This name is found in 2 Machabees 12:32 and Tobit 2:1. It is also called the "feast of Weeks," in Hebrew *Shavu'oth*. In Exodus 23:16 it is called "the feast of the grain harvest"; in Numbers 28: 26: "the day of first fruits, the feast of Weeks." In the Holy Land the grain is sown during autumn around the month of September or October and ripens in Spring (March/April). Barley ripens first which is the one offered during the feast of Unleavened Bread or Azymes. The first wheat is offered on Pentecost. In the Old Testament, Pentecost was one of the 3 "feasts of pilgrimage" during which the Israelites go up to Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). This accounts for the numerous pilgrims in Jerusalem during this time.

This feast in later Judaism was linked to an event in Israelite history, that is, the giving of the Law to Moses at Mt. Sinai. This is not, however, realistic because according to Exodus 19, the Israelites only reached Sinai after 2 months and a

half after their departure from Egypt where they celebrated the first Passover: about 65 days later.

There is a problem whether the Holy Spirit came down on the 120 persons present during the election of Matthias, the successor of Judas (Acts 1:15 ff.), since this was the immediate narrative preceding the passage of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Literary analysis, however, can show a chronological discontinuity between 1:15-26 and 2:1 ff. that most probably the link of the narrative of the coming of the Holy Spirit should be with 1:14. The ones, therefore, to whom the Holy Spirit descended were the Apostles (including Matthias) several women including Mary the mother of Jesus, and those who were called the brothers of Jesus who were rather his cousins.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by sensible signs. A loud noise similar to a strong wind filled the house. Then tongues of fire which came to rest on the heads of each one of them. All these wonderful happenings were sensible signs of the communication of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. The word *hosei* ("as if," "similar to") is often used in relation to visions indicating the disproportion between the signs and the realities they signify.

Another phenomenon which until now has been the subject of different interpretations is the phenomenon of speaking "*heterais glossais*" by the Apostles (v. 4). *Heteros* could mean "different," "strange," "peculiar"; but it could also mean "foreign," hence the Jerusalem Bible translates the phrase: "to speak foreign languages." *Glossa*, of course, could mean "tongue" or "language." Thus, some authors consider this phenomenon among the Apostles different from the charismatic speaking in tongues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:2-19; Acts 10:46; 19:6. Some exegetes think, though, that in this Pentecostal gift of "foreign tongues" a miracle happened whereby the Apostles were enabled to speak foreign languages so that they were understood by the Jews from the Diaspora speaking different languages. In this way a great multitude of people of various origins, culture, character and tastes understood the Apostles who spoke in their mother tongue proclaiming the magnificence of God, that is to say, the salvation which God has accomplished in Jesus.



**SECOND READING. I CORINTHIANS 12:3-13.**

In these verses, St. Paul speaks of the different charisms (*charismata*) tracing their origin from the Holy Spirit. Although he attributes "ministries" to Christ (v. 5) and "operations" to the Father (v. 6), we note in v. 7 that he calls all the charisms indistinctly as *phanerosis tou pn<sup>u</sup>ματος*, manifestation of the Spirit), and in v. 11: "all are work of one and the same Spirit." Clearly, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit constitute one God with one principle of action which is the divine nature. The charisms, then, in reality proceed from the three divine Persons which Paul says in verses 4-6. However, in some particular way they can be attributed to the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of love and holiness.

Calling them "gifts", they are attributed by appropriation to the Holy Spirit: under the aspect of "ministries" or "services", they are attributed more to Christ; under the aspect of "operations", (Greek: *energēmata*) to the Father who is the origin of being and of power.

In verses 8-10 St. Paul has listed 9 charisms which can be grouped into 3:

- I — 1. discourse of wisdom: gift to penetrate the divine mysteries and explain them to the faithful.
2. discourse of knowledge: gift to know how to expose the elementary truths of Christianity (cf. Hebrew 6:1).
3. charism of faith. This is different from the general salvific faith which makes a man righteous in the eyes of God. The faith here means full and living confidence in God.

- II — 1. healing
2. miracles
3. prophecy

Healing is distinguished from miracles although it could be considered as a sort of miracle in as much as the latter has a wider field of application. Prophecy does not only mean "prediction of the future" but also "to speak in the name of God."

- III — 1. discernment of spirits: corresponds to a gift in order to determine whether the charismatic phenomenon proceeds from good and evil spirits.
2. gift of tongues
3. gift of interpretation of tongues which is the complement of the former.

Aside from being the origin of the charisms, the Holy Spirit distributes them to each individual according to his wishes for the usefulness (*sympheran*) of all. To illustrate this better, St. Paul makes use of the image of the body.

### **GOOD NEWS READING. JOHN 20:19-23.**

St. John narrates the apparition of the Risen Lord to the Apostles in the evening of that same day of his resurrection, Thomas not being in the group. The doors were closed since the Apostles were still afraid as a result of the preceding events. This was a very normal reaction. It also heightens the power of Jesus' resurrected body being able to penetrate matter. He appeared to them communicating his peace.

Jesus realized that this manner of appearing to them could make them believe that they were seeing a ghost. Luke 24:37 says: "they thought of having seen a spirit"; also in Mark 6:49. To dispel their doubts he showed to them the wounds of his crucifixion which proved the identity of the person who was nailed to the cross and the person whom they were now seeing (Luke 24:39). Seeing the Lord, of whose resurrection they already heard from Mary Magdalene, the Apostles were filled with great joy. They experienced the fulfilment of the promise made to them by Jesus during the Last Supper that their anguish would be changed into joy. Repeating the greeting of peace Jesus entrusted to them their mission using the same words which he used in the prayer of farewell during the Last Supper (John 17:18; 4:38). As he was sent by the Father, now he sends the Apostles of continuing the work given him by the Father: to proclaim divine truth and revelation to all men (18:37) and communicate the reality of salvation.

Then Jesus gave to the Apostles the Holy Spirit for the special office which they are going to perform: the forgiveness or retaining of sins. Thomas, although absent during this

commission of power, also receives the same faculty since it not given to the Apostles as individuals but as the Apostolic College to be communicated likewise to their successors. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit would come upon them as the Church for later on the same phenomenon would be repeated in Acts 2:38 and 10:44.

The Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit has considered these words of Jesus to his Apostles as institutive of the sacrament of reconciliation.

## HOMILY

### THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS THE WORLD

Since the time the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles at Pentecost time about 1950 years ago, the world has never been the same. The promises made by our Lord to the Apostles were fulfilled that he would send the Holy Spirit to be our Advocate (Paraclete), our Counselor, the Spirit of Truth who would teach us everything about God's kingdom and remind us of all things which Christ taught us. He is with us until the end of time. He is the soul of the Church. He effects the continuous renewal of the face of the earth.

Before the coming of the Holy Spirit the divine life in the world was inert; the quest for happiness was utterly impossible; the knowledge of truth was limited to what man could know by his natural powers; the will of man was slanted towards evil: love was stressed on the passion rather than on volition; peace was a passive state, fruit of inaction rather than an active state fruit of divine love. The Holy Spirit has changed and is changing all these.

Many are not aware of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the world but it is here. Just as many take for granted or are not even aware of the activity of the soul but they could not live without it.

Our quest of knowledge for divine things will not be complete without knowing the innermost realities, though necessarily imperfect, of the activities of the Holy Spirit. Physicists are on the constant search for the forces and energies

that make up beyond the physical sphere; but over and beyond the scope of the physical scientists and the reach of parapsychologists are supernatural realities which have been accessible to us through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

### TRINITY SUNDAY

(May 29, 1983)

Easter Season comes to an end with the celebration of Trinity Sunday. The Sundays of Ordinary Time resume after the feast of Corpus Christi again celebrated on the Sunday after Trinity Sunday instead of Thursday. The first reading from the Book of Proverbs speaks of Wisdom, an attribute of God, which is here personified, being present with God during creation. The second reading is a passage from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans which either concludes the section on the fact of justification or starts the next section on the process of sanctification. The Gospel reading is taken from the discourse of Jesus during the Last Supper, a passage where he mentions the Persons in the Trinity and hints of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

#### FIRST READING. PROVERBS 8:22-31.

The following verses form part of the second discourse of personified Wisdom (8:1-36). The first discourse is in 1:20-33.

Since Wisdom in Hebrew is in the feminine gender (*hoch-wta/i*), it is personified as a woman. She stands in prominent places, "on the hill-top, on the road, on the crossway" exhorting people to listen to her words.

The message of verses 22-31 is the origin of Wisdom and its part in creation. Its origin is from Yahweh. The Jerusalem Bible translates the Hebrew *Yahweh ganani* as "Yahweh created me." *Qanah* could in fact mean "he created." But it has also the meaning of "he acquired," "he possessed," hence the Vulgate *possedit me*. The translation "The Lord created me" was taken up by the Arians who interpreted this passage as referring to the *Logos* to argue for his created nature. Other authors translate the phrase "the Lord begot me" saving thus the eternal generation of Wisdom in the Godhead.

Wisdom is *re'shit dareko*, "the first born of his way." Some correct the last word into *derachaw* to make it "his ways" instead of "his way" which is in consonance with grammar. *Re'shit* connotes not only priority in time but also in excellence. Could it be that the *prototokos pases ktiseos* (first born of all creation") of Colossians 1:15, applied by St. Paul to Christ, was influenced by this passage on Wisdom in Proverbs?

Wisdom was before the created universe and was present at creation. Verse 30 says he was by the side of God during creation, his *'amon* (reading of the Hebrew Massoretic text), translated by the Jerusalem Bible as "master craftsman." By a slight change of vowel, Aquila a proselyte Jew who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek different from the Septuagint (about 150 A.D.) read it as *'amun* which means "pupil" (*tethenovmene*), thus a "child" playing in the presence of God and delighting him day after day. This translation seems to favor the context of this passage.

## SECOND READING. ROMANS 5:1-5.

Different opinions have to be recognized here on the literary structure of the first 8 chapters of the Letter to the Romans. These chapters are usually divided into two sections: the first part treats about "justification" and the second on "sanctification." The point of division, however, is differently given: (1) The first section ends in 5:21; (2) The second section begins from 5:1 to end in 8:39; (3) 5:1-11 is the conclusion of the first section; (4) The whole of chapter 5 is an entirely different unit. I follow the division of those who start a new section in ch. 5. The first verses of this chapter 1-11 seems to introduce what St. Paul would develop in detail in 5:12 — 8:39.

In the previous chapters, St. Paul's Intent was to present the fact of justification or righteousness with God, which is a gratuitous gift of God offered to all men without exception through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which he merited for us by his redemptive death on the cross. This is what St. Paul says in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter which we can consider as the transition verses.

Being "made righteous by faith" we achieve peace with God, the first fruit of this justification while before we were

"children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:7; Colossians 1:21). This righteousness we owe from our Lord Jesus Christ who was the one who made us to be accepted by God and has accomplished for us the access to this "grace" of justification in the hope of the "glory" of God.

In fact, in the beginning of his letter, St. Paul declared that he proposes to expound how the Gospel "is power of God for the salvation of those who believe" (1:16). This "salvation" is already initiated with the "justification" by which he has accomplished in us that peace or good relation with God. However, this justification is not yet complete and definitive. In the following four chapters (5:1 — 8:39) the Apostle will establish the union between these two: "justification" and final "salvation" (which is the same as "sanctifying grace" and "eternal glory," giving us a precious summary of Christian life.

#### **READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. JOHN 16:12-15.**

These verses are found in the context of the discourse? during the Last Supper in the manner of farewell and future promises. Our Lord has been telling the Apostles about the coming of the Paraclete or Advocate who would also have the role of Teacher (verses 12-15). Jesus has still many things to say to his Apostles but these would be too much for them. At the moment, in their particular situation, they are not yet capable of receiving everything. It could be asked here whether Jesus was referring to new truths not yet proclaimed or rather to an ulterior development of those which he had already communicated? The last interpretation seems to be more probable recalling what was said in 15:15: "I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father."

The Holy Spirit will, indeed, have the task of guiding the Apostles and their successors to the acquisition of total truth (John 14:26). This entails the understanding of the words and actions of Jesus, the whole sense of which was still beyond their grasp. The action of the Holy Spirit would result in i. deeper penetration of the totality of the work of redemption of Christ and its universal scope. The words of Jesus continue to live and operate in the preaching of the Church which grow and develop under the action of the Holy Spirit.

Definitely Jesus will say that what the Holy Spirit will tell the Apostles "will be taken from what is his" (v. 14). He will not be required to give a new revelation that would supersede what was given by Jesus. Neither could he give or add anything contrary to Christ's revelation. The word of Jesus would continue and remain alive in the preaching of the Church. As the work of Jesus realized the glorification of the Father, so in the same manner the work of the Holy Spirit would realize the glorification of Jesus.

Authors have noted that verses 14 and 15 of this passage give the clearest testimony in the New Testament concerning the unity of nature and the distinction of Persons in the Trinity and also the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

## **HOMILY**

### **THE TRINITY: THE MOST SUBLIME REALITY**

The most sublime reality which lies beyond the reach of any physical, para-psychological or even psychical sciences is the reality of the Holy Trinity: three Persons in one God. Here human knowledge totally fails. Our intellect simply has to squint at the awesome brightness of this mystery. The intellect says: "I do not understand." But the will impels the intellect: "Assent, it is God himself, the first Truth, who says so. God cannot deceive us."

The intellect reflects: "This is not the first time that this has happened to me. When I was in school many formulas in Physics were unintelligible to me. Some still are. But I did not question their validity for the simple reason that they were told to me by men whom I believe to be competent in their field. What more if the one who revealed this was God himself who knows all things and can never deceive nor be deceived."

There are three Persons in one God: the most Holy Trinity. Let the intellect try to grasp what it could which as a matter of fact could be too much, like our eyes looking straight at the sun. In this case the will has a greater advantage. It reaches out to the divine reality impelling the intellect to assent and activating itself to love.

As many other good things in life, many still do not realize or just take for granted the presence and operations of the Holy Trinity in the world and in our self. "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Those who realize the workings of the Trinity in us have no reasons anymore of being fascinated with fictitious personalities like Supermen, Wonderwomen, or superheroes of comics strips. The divinity is in us. We do not only acquire superpowers which still remain limited powers. We are given divine powers which are powers unlimited.

Everyday we have hundreds of opportunities to praise the Most Holy Trinity: saying the "doxology," or the "Glory Be"; making the sign of the cross and invoking the name of the Trinity; in the Mass when from the start to the finish we praise the Trinity. If we can just deepen our faith in the Trinity in these actions, we will not worry at all about our spiritual life because it will always be filled up with the fresh air of grace from the source of life itself.

**SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD  
JESUS CHRIST: CORPUS CHRISTI  
(June 5, 1983)**

Trinity Sunday is followed by the feast of Corpus Christi or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. After going up to the heights of the divinity we have to realize that we are still on earth. The mystery of the Trinity is balanced by the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. The first reading recalls the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, a mysterious figure in the Old Testament, who became the symbol of Christ's eternal priesthood different from the Levitical priesthood. The second reading is appropriately taken from the account of St. Paul of the institution of the Holy Eucharist and its continuous celebration until the second coming of Christ. The Gospel reading comes from St. Luke's version of the first multiplication of bread, an episode which can be found in all four Evangelists.

**FIRST READING: GENESIS 14:18-20.**

The meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, priest-king of Salem (understood by many as Jerusalem, though not for cer-



tain) happened, according to the account in Genesis 14, after Abraham rescued Lot from the 4 kings who destroyed the 5 cities south of the Dead Sea. The origin and literary unity of this chapter is much disputed. Some authors maintain that it is a very old narrative. Others analyzing vocabulary, found a mixture of archaic words and post-exilic terminologies. Some names were real like the names of the 4 kings. But others seem to have been invented like *Bela* (only found here in Gen. 14:2) which means "devoured," or "swallowed." Deuteronomy 29:22 mentions only 4 cities in pairs: Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, destroyed by Yahweh's anger while Zoar (former Bela' according to Gen. 14:2) was spared. Wisdom 10:6 mentions 5, perhaps adding Zoar (Bela'). This can give us a clue on the formation of tradition behind this narrative. This could be in between Deuteronomy 29:22 (exilic) and Wisdom 10:6 (first century B.C.).

The Melchizedek story has the indication of having been inserted in this narration of Abraham and the four kings especially since it breaks the continuity between v. 16 and v. 21. The justification of the insertion can be found in the blessing of Melchizedek: "Blessed be God most High for handing over your enemies to you."

The figure of Melchizedek whose name occurs only twice in the Old Testament: Gen. 14:18 and Psalm 110:4, became the symbol of the eternal priesthood of Christ, priest and king, different from the levitical priesthood (Hebrews 5:6; 7:21). The bread and wine he brought, although not exactly a sacrificial offering but a covenant meal, were taken to be images of the Holy Eucharist.

## SECOND READING. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-24.

Aside from the Synoptics who narrated the institution of the Eucharist: (Matthew 26: 26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22: 19-20), St. Paul also mentions this event on the occasion of his instructions to the Corinthians whom he heard were not conducting themselves properly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Some bring food but do not share them with their fellows (v. 21). Others get drunk during the celebration.

This account of St. Paul concerning the institution of the Eucharist is of great historical value since this was written

even before any account from the Synoptics. This letter was written with great probability in the Spring of 57. He says that he "has received this from the Lord" and is transmitting it to the Corinthians. It is to be noted that St. Paul's account is more in agreement with the account of St. Luke among the Synoptics repeating the phrase "do this in memorial of me" twice and a very important doctrinal addition in v. 25: "Every-time you eat this bread and drink from the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

### **READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 9:11-12.**

This is Luke's account of the first multiplication of bread parallel with Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6: 1-13. This miracle is remarkable since besides the passion, death and resurrection narratives, it is the only miraculous event mentioned by all four Evangelists. After this episode St. Luke who until here was following St. Mark's arrangement omitted Mark 6:45 — 8:26 and immediately proceeded to the profession of St. Peter (v. 18). This is called "the great omission." This is why the continuation of the multiplication story, the walking of Jesus over the water, found in the three other Evangelists is absent in Luke as well as the second multiplication of the bread narrated by Matthew 15: 32-39 and Mark 8:1-10.

According to Matthew and Mark, Jesus with the twelve crossed the Lake in a boat and went to "a lonely place," which Luke says was Bethsaida. There are, however, variants of this place in other manuscripts: some has "desert place of a city," "desert place," "city," or simply "town." John just says "to the other side of the sea of Galilee." This place was also accessible by foot just walking along the shore of the lake and so the people reached the place a little after the arrival of Jesus and the Apostles. John hinted the date of this miracle noting that there were grasses there which only happens in the spring time which was also the time when many pilgrims go to Jerusalem for the Pasch coinciding with what John said in 6:4. It is not far-fetched to suppose that many of them tarried for a while in Galilee to see and hear this wonder worker.

In the Synoptics the Apostles told Jesus to send away the people when evening was coming so they could buy food

since they didn't have any. Luke did not mention the 200 denarii of Mark and John. The people were told to sit in groups of 50, according to Luke; 50 and 100, according to Mark. This made counting easy and so the Apostles were able to calculate the number of the crowd to five thousand men.

The description of the miracle of the multiplication of the bread has been influenced by the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. Jesus took the five bread, raised his eyes to heaven, blest and broke them. The manner of giving the bread to the people was enunciated by Luke and Mark in the imperfect, *c.didou*: "he was giving" them, that is, the Apostles. This could be indicated of how the miracle took place: the bread and the fish were multiplied in the hands of Jesus and were distributing them to the disciples.

The greatness of the miracle is confirmed by the satisfaction of all the people and the number of scraps gathered! twelve basketsful.

## HOMILY

### **WE ACCLAIM CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

It has been a cause of wonder how our Lord can be present simultaneously in so many hosts in different places at the same time. Of course it would be easy to dispel this wonder just by saying that since Christ is God there is really no difficulty for him to accomplish this feat as long as it is not what philosophers call a "metaphysical impossibility," just like making a square circle or creating another perfect being. But being present in the Holy Eucharist, in his human nature, body and blood, in different places at the same time is not a metaphysical impossibility.

A comparison may be made using a modern invention as an example which can illustrate the seemingly multiple presence of an individual, without necessarily saying that the comparison would be perfect in all its aspects. Many are now familiar with television sets and the images they produce com-

ing from the television station. It can readily be observed that the more TV sets there are the more the images are multiplied. And the complete image does not depend on the size of the TV screen. A big screen contains the full image as well as a small screen. In the same way Christ's presence does not depend on the size of the host. He is fully present in a big host as well as in a small host.

Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist body and soul. This is another reality to which our human intelligence makes an assent and which our will voluntarily embraces. Is it not so foolish of us that in the presence of such a reality we still would look for other consolations in other areas and in other things? In the Eucharist we do not only listen to his words which for many people are already a source of happiness and joy but we receive Christ himself in our person, the Word made flesh who is the author himself of our being and eternal beatitude.

### **ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (May 12, 1983)**

Repentance and forgiveness are the dominant ideas in the first reading and Gospel reading in today's Mass. The first reading starts with Nathan the prophet's confrontation with David for committing adultery with Bathsheba. David repented and was forgiven. The Gospel reading on the other hand narrates the repentance and forgiveness of the sinful woman which happened in the house of a Pharisee in Galilee. The second reading speaks of St. Paul's doctrine on justification in his letter to the Galatians.

#### **FIRST READING. 2 SAMUEL 12:7-13.**

The text of the first reading taken from second Samuel forms part of a unique literary work in the Old Testament which starts from 2 Samuel 9-20 and continued in 1 Kings 1-2. This document is known as the "Succession Document" most probably written by a contemporary scribe in the palace of David who lived until Solomon's time. If this is the case, this document as we have it now in our Bible could be one of the oldest text written about the 10th century B.C.

Our present text is the concluding part of Nathan the prophet's confrontation with David after this king's sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the killing of her husband through David's instigation in war.

The parable of Nathan was simple and effective. As David was enraged at the injustice of the rich man taking the ewe of the poor man, the implication of the parable rung on his ears: "you are the man."

He had taken over the harem of Saul (v. 8) and became rich. Still he stole the wife of Uriah the Hittite. The prophetic punishment that "the sword will never be far from his House" was realized in the quarrel of Amnon and Absalom when the former raped Tamar the sister of Absalom and because of this Amnon was killed by the latter (2 Samuel 13:23 ff.), and the revolt itself of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:7 ff.). The vivid description in verses 11-12 concerning what Absalom did to his father's concubines is suspected not to be a part of Nathan's oracle but a later editorial edition or perhaps from the author himself of this "Succession Document" who was presumably an eye-witness of the event.

## **SECOND READING. GALATIANS 2:16-21.**

The text of the second reading taken from the Letter to the Galatians constitutes one of the few passages in St. Paul where we find a complete synthesis of his doctrine on justification. A similar passage is the one of Romans 3:21-26.

St. Paul starts by expounding his fundamental thesis (verses 15-16), first in a positive manner: all, Jews and Gentiles alike are justified by faith in Jesus Christ; then, in a negative form: not by obedience to the Law. "We" means the Apostles including Paul. They were Jews by birth and "not pagan sinners." They also hold that righteousness with God cannot be given by the works of the Law but faith in Christ. It should, however, be remarked that if St. Paul denies the justifying value of the works of the Law this does not mean that in the Old Testament the observance of the Law was not obligatory. Yet the justification of the Patriarchs and other just persons was not the fruit only of their works according to the Law but in virtue of the merits of Christ which were anticipated by means of faith in the divine promises of redemption (Romans 4:1-25).

As far as verses 17-18 are concerned it seems that the intention of St. Paul is to show the absurdity which would accrue if after having abandoned the Law having been made righteous by faith in Christ, they would go back again to the observance of that Law as if justification still depended on it. Moreover, it would be an insult to Christ who was the one who induced us to leave the Law and follow him when in fact what he was doing was to reduce us to the same level as the pagans or sinners (v. 17). Paul considers this equivalent to blasphemy that he puts the conclusion in an interrogative form rejecting with an energetic: *me genoito*, let. "it should not be" or "by no means."

Summing up all his anterior arguments and going to the root of the problem, St. Paul says that the attitude of the Judaizers is equivalent to "giving up the gift of God" (v. 21), that is to say, the loving work of redemption contra posed to the Law, achieved by Christ according to the plan of the Father. If it was by the Law that we have achieved our righteousness with God Christ would have died in vain since we could have been saved without him. This leads to an absurd conclusion and an insult to Christ which should give the Judaizers something to ponder about.

#### **READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 7:36 - 8:3.**

The episode in today's Gospel is only found in St. Luke and here Christ is again presented by the Evangelist of God's mercy and love as "friend of sinners."

Jesus was invited a number of times by Pharisees to eat in their house as we can read in Luke 11:37 and 14:1, perhaps out of curiosity for him who had attracted so many followers. Not all Pharisees were hostile to Jesus but then the host in this episode missed, as recalled in verses 44-46, to give him the usual signs of attention and cordiality proper to a guest.

The passage is not free from difficulties. Was this episode the same as that reported by St. Mark 14:3-9 — Matthew 26:6-15 concerning the anointing of Jesus by a certain woman in Bethany two days before the Pasch (Mark and Matthew) or six days before the Pasch (John 12:1)? St. John identified this woman of Bethany to be Mary the sister of Martha and

Lazarus but did not name the host of the banquet, Mark and Matthew identified the host as Simon the Leter (Mark), or simply Simon (Matthew), but they did not name the woman. The Lucan narrative on the other hand happened in Galilee with Simon as the name of the host. To compound the difficulty all these narratives of the woman who anointed Jesus were unified in the person of Mary Magdalene who happened to be named by Luke immediately after this narrative (8:2). Definitely there is confusion of personalities here and modern exegesis, abandoning the western tradition since St. Gregory the Great, distinguished the women: the sinful woman of Luke who remained unknown, the woman of Bethany (Mark and Matthew) identified by John as Mary the sister of Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene who was not involved at all in any anointing of Jesus but was well known because of her presence during the crucifixion and her role during the resurrection. The Eastern Church has maintained this distinction as a very attentive reading of the Gospels would clearly show.

Another difficulty relates to the application of the parable. Simon rightly answered the question of Jesus that he who had more debts remitted should love more. Thus the normal application in the Lucan story should be that the woman loved much because many sins were forgiven her and not the other way round that her sins were forgiven because she loved much. The particle *hoti* can be understood as "causal" (because) and the translation would be: "because (*hoti*) she loved much many sins were forgiven her." Or it could be understood as "consequential" ("it follows that," "consequently") : "many sins were forgiven her, consequently (*hoti*) she loved much." The Jerusalem Bible has in fact this sense: "I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love."

The application of the parable shows that the woman was already forgiven before she showed her love by anointing Jesus. Why did Jesus still say: "your sins are forgiven? This could have been due to the influence of Luke 5:20-21 as the last phrase could have been due to 8:48. These could have been literary lapses on the part of Luke because of certain phrases in identical episodes.

## HOMILY

### ALL SINS CAN BE FORGIVEN IN THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

"The one who was pardoned more will love more."

All sins can be forgiven.<sup>1</sup> Whatever be the magnitude, whatever be the number, all can be forgiven, only when the sinner humbles himself and ask for forgiveness from almighty God passing through the sacrament of reconciliation or by making an act of perfect love. The only sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin of not asking for forgiveness, hard-heartedness or impenitence. This is what our Lord meant by the sin against the Holy Spirit. How can one's sins be forgiven if he does not ask for forgiveness?

The penitent woman in the Gospel made a great act of love, repenting of her sins, even without speaking, silently shedding tears and her sins were forgiven.

But why still go to confession if by an act of perfect love all our sins are forgiven? God knows our psychology more than we do. He knows that considering the limitations of human beings very few can be sure of eliciting a perfect act of love that is why he willed that the formula of pardon be personally given in a sacrament we call the sacrament of reconciliation.

In our present condition, then, forgiveness of sins is normally given through the sacrament of reconciliation or also known, although less accurately, as the sacrament of penance. It is as if our Lord has placed a bridge by which to cross the river from the state of sinfulness to the state of grace. The surest way to cross the river would be to pass through this bridge. It is of course possible to cross it by swimming, but how certain can a person be who does so in reaching the other side?

### TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(June 19, 1983)

The confession of Peter on the messiahship of our Lord and the prediction of the passion in the reading of the Good News



is preceded by passages from Zechariah quoted in John 19:37 as applied to Christ: "they looked on him whom they pierced," (first reading). Christ's passion, in effect, was the cause of our incorporation with him, Paul's message in the second reading.

### FIRST READING. ZECHARIAH 12:10-11.

This verse in Zechariah 12:10 is considered a messianic text of the New Testament as in John 19:37 and Apocalypse 1:7. There, is however, a difficulty in the text. The Massoretic text, the LXX, Vulgate and other versions have "on me" instead of "on him." But since the one speaking is God the normal interpretation would be that God was the one pierced through. This is awkward in Old Testament thought. The LXX reads instead of *dagar*, "he pierced through" a verb from the root *ragad* meaning "he jumped with joy," which when joined to *tahat* "under" acquires the meaning of "insult," in Greek *katorcheomai*, "I jump over someone," or "I dance with joy over someone." Thus it could be translated according to the LXX: "They looked on me when they have insulted." There is here, of course, a correction in the reading of the text from *dagaru* (they pierced) to *ragadu* (they insulted).

However, the reading "on him" is also supported by many St. Paul means here a living and active faith actuated or in Hebrew manuscripts, texts from the Fathers of the Church and especially John 19:37 and Apocalypse 1:7, applying this text to Christ. Up to now the textual difficulty remains unresolved.

Following St. John's reading and the application of the text to Christ, we can understand the great lamentation in Jerusalem during that day when Christ was pierced with a lance. The lamentation is compared to the mourning of Hadad Rimmon, here either Hadad, the storm-god of the Canaanites, or Rimmon, the chief god of Syria (2 Kings 5:18) whose ritual death every year is celebrated with lamentations.

### SECOND READING. GALATIANS 3:26-29.

The central message of the pericope is our incorporation with Christ through faith (y. 26) and through baptism (v. 27).

formed by charity. It includes the desire for baptism since through the positive divine will one cannot enter the salvific plan of God without receiving the sacrament of baptism. Because of the inseparable nature of faith and baptism in justification and incorporation with Christ, St. Paul sometimes, attributes justification only to faith (Romans 3:28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8); sometimes only to baptism (Romans 6:3-11; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5); sometimes to both like here in our present passage and in Colossians 2:11-13.

The phrase "in Christ" in verse 2-6 does not mean the object of faith as when one say "I believe in God" or "I have faith in God." It has rather the same sense as the phrase in v. 27: "baptized in Christ." It means more as: "incorporated in Christ."

Some authors compare the expression "clothed in Christ" to some mystery religions where the members put on the vestments of their gods and, thereby, identify themselves with these gods. There is no need to go that far. This can also be found in the Old Testament as in Job 29:14; Isaiah 52:1. St. Paul employs this a number of times (1 Corinthians 15:53; Ephesians 4:24; 6:11; Colossians 3:10).

In Romans 6:3-11, St. Paul depicts the union of the Christian in Christ at the moment of baptism. You have been taught that when we were baptized *in Christ Jesus* we were baptized in his death... If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection," (Romans 6:3-5). Here in Galatians he goes further to say that those who are baptized and have faith are one in Christ Jesus. There is no more distinction of race, social standing or even sex.

Since Christ was the "heir of the promise" (Galatians 3:16) we also in union with Christ become the "heir of the promise" and, therefore, not subject to the law.

## READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 9:18-24.

In Luke the profession of Peter in the messiahship of Jesus followed at once the miracle of the multiplication of the bread. Almost two chapters were skipped by him following the order of the narratives in Mark (6:45 — 8:26). Luke omits Christ's travel to Phoenicia (Mark 7:24 — Matthew 15:21) and, there-

fore, no geographical indication was mentioned by him concerning this episode of Peter's confession which according to Matthew and Mark happened at Caesarea Philippi (the modern Banias, formerly, Pnias during Greek times in honor of the god Pan). Perhaps since Luke intends to localize all the episodes in Galilee until chapter 9:50 of his Gospel he deliberately left out the place indication.

Luke, as was his style, introduces this episode with Jesus <sup>\*\*\*</sup> at prayer as he would do many times in his Gospel: when Jesus was baptized (3:21); the election of the Apostles (6:12); when he taught his disciples to pray (11:1); the agony in the garden (22:41); even when he was hanging on the cross (23:46).

When Christ asked: "who do you say I am," Peter answered: "the Christ of God." In Mark the recorded answer of Peter was: "you are the Christ," while in Matthew: "you are the Christ, the Son of the living God." There is yet no indication here that Peter was confessing the divinity of Christ but that he was the realization of the expected Messiah — *Christos*: the Greek word of "anointed," the aramaic *meshiha*.

Jesus told them to keep silent about the matter lest the people would hail him as a triumphant king which was their expectation of the Messiah. This is the so-called "messianic secret." Instead of a triumphant Messiah he would rather be the suffering Messiah who would die and suffer in Jerusalem, but "on the third day" rise again. Luke and Matthew has "on the third day" which in Mark is "after three days." Moreover Luke omitted the rebuke to Peter which was conspicuous in Matthew and Mark.

Similarly those who want to follow Christ must also renounce himself and take up his cross (in Luke he adds "every day," absent in Matthew and Mark).

The reference to the cross here need not be anachronistic since the cross was a well known instrument of death during those times with the condemned made to carry it.

## HOMILY

**PETER SAID: "YOU ARE THE CHRIST OF GOD."  
CHRIST SAID: "THE SON OF MAN WILL SUFFER."**

"But you," he said, "who do you say I am?" It was Peter who spoke up: "the Christ of God."

After more than 1950 years of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection and his ascension into heaven, there are still many who are asking: "Who is Christ?" And we still receive so many answers. Some say he is a prophet or a great man, or Jesus Christ Superstar, or the "Omega Point," a revolutionary, a mere man and not God.

These answers are, pitifully, all mistaken or fall short of the truth. We still say and confess with St. Peter: you are the Christ of God (St. Luke's version), or better still: You are Christ the Son of the living God" (St. Matthew's version). Here we profess that he is not a mere man but consubstantial with God. He is God. He is the Word and the Word is God. This Word-God became flesh, took on our human nature and became man.

Christ cannot even be considered a great man or a good man if he were not God. He would be a deceiver because he acted and presented himself as God and the High Priest and the Sanhedrin would be right in condemning him as a blasphemer. But they erred in their condemnation because he was truly God and was confirmed when he resurrected from the dead.

"The son of man will suffer . . ."

It was Fulton Sheen who said that all men were born into the world to live, but the Messiah was born into the world to die. He was aware of this mission and he predicted his death three times in the Gospel. His first prediction of his passion came immediately after the confession of Peter and before the transfiguration, giving us the impression that these events were interconnected.

The Apostles were saddened when they heard that their hero would die. Peter who a few moments before confessed Christ's messiahship, complained about this turn of events but instead he received a rebuke from our Lord who called him "Satan," which means "one who objects" since he was objecting the will of God. Later on Peter with James and John would be privileged to see a most wonderful sight which would anticipate the resurrection. They would see the transfigured body of our Lord to assure them that even though he would suffer an ignominious death he would rise and conquer death. Thus, he showed us the true way to glory: the carrying of our cross daily."

**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**(June 26, 1983)**

The first reading in today's Mass narrates the flight of Elijah to the mountain of God, where Moses had also an encounter with God. There, the prophet was consoled of having also experienced God, his fear of Jezebel's persecution now being dispelled and being assured of the wicked queen's punishment by Jehu and a successor in his prophetic office in the person of Elisha. The second reading comes from the exhortatory or parenetic part of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians. The Gospel Reading tells of Christ's rejection by the Samaritans with three passages on vocation.

**FIRST READING. 1 KINGS 19:16-21.**

After the famous sacrificial contest at Mt. Carmel where Elijah defeated Baal's prophets and put them to the sword and because of this the drought ended (1 Kings 18:20-46), Elijah became the object of Jezebel's hatred and threatened to kill him (19:1-3). Elijah fled to Horeb (this is the mountain of God in the Elohist and Deuteronomic traditions; Sinai in the Yahwist and Priestly traditions). There he had a brief encounter with God like Moses in Exodus 33: 18-23. God manifested himself to Elijah not in a mighty wind, nor in an earthquake, nor in a fire, but in a gentle breeze. He is going to achieve his purpose in Israel not through great show of strength but through simple instruments like Elijah and others, whom Elijah will anoint. There were Hazael who would become king of Syria, Jehu who would be king of Israel and punish Jezebel. Then he would also anoint his successor in the prophetic office in the person of Elisha, son of Shaphat.

Verses 19-20 narrates the call of Elisha. He must be well-to-do to have twelve yoke of oxen. Throwing his cloak, a kind of official vestment of a prophet or at least of Elijah, over Elisha symbolized his call. It was so understood by Elisha although he was given a free choice by Elijah. Elisha answered the call without reservation killing his oxen and using the plow for roasting the oxen which signified his complete turn over to his new vocation.

**SECOND READING. GALATIANS 5:1-18.**

The exhortatory part of Paul's letter to the Galatians starts in this chapter as lessons drawn from the doctrinal points which

he has propounded especially the freedom of the Christian from the slavery of the law. In verse 1 *eleutheria* ("freedom" is taken as dative of purpose. The meaning, therefore, would be: "Christ freed us so that we would enjoy freedom." This idea is influenced by the liberation of slaves (Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:13-14).

The Galatians, therefore, should not submit *again* to slavery. Under paganism they were slaves of one master. If they allowed themselves to be circumcised they would be obliged to keep the whole law and be enslaved by the Law. Now they have to choose: freedom with faith in Christ or slavery under the Law.

The phrase *elpida dikaiosynes* lit. "hope of justice" in verse 5 is explained by taking "hope" in its concrete sense as "the thing hoped for" and "justice" as an epexegetic genitive, that is an apposition to the "thing hoped for." This can be translated: "led by the Spirit we await by faith the good hoped for which is justice (this is eschatological justice initiated here on earth but have its fulness in heaven). Others take "justice" as abstract for the concrete: the just, and take it as a subjective genitive: "we await the good hoped for by the just."

Against the doctrine taught by Judaizers St. Paul teaches the true way to achieve salvation: it is the way of faith which works through love (*pistic d'agapes energoumene*). Some authors take *energoumene* in its passive sense and translates: "faith actuated by love." In this way it is explained that love or charity is the form of faith. However, in biblical Greek it is usually taken as a deponent and, therefore, with an active sense. Hence the translation: "faith which works through love." or in the Jerusalem Bible: "... faith that makes its power felt through love." Still whether it is taken in a passive or active sense, the faith which is the condition for justification in St. Paul is not taken alone but always in relation to love.

In verses 10-13, St. Paul exhorts the Galatians how to make correct use of their acquired Christian freedom. They must always be guided by the Spirit which is the interior principle of their supernatural life and not anymore by an exterior principle which is the Law.

**READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 9:51-62.**

This starts another major section in the Gospel of St. Luke, the "Journey to Jerusalem Section." Here they left Galilee on their way to Jerusalem.

Again Luke leaves Mark and inserted a large section, almost 9 chapters, and takes up the arrangement of Mark only in 18:15. This section of Luke from 9:51 to 18:14 has been called "the Great Insertion" and suggested by some to have come from another source.

Still Luke is not consistent with his topographical indications. Already in 10:38 they were in Bethany only a few kilometers from Jerusalem, but in 13:22 they were still a long way off which in 17:11 were only "along the border between Samaria and Galilee."

Luke's intent seems to be more theological than geographical. The section is unified by the fact that the narratives were thought of to have happened before his solemn entrance to Jerusalem where according to 13:33 he must meet his death.

Just like the start of his Galilean ministry (4:14), when he was rejected in Nazareth, this section begins with the rejection of Jesus in Samaria. It was during this incident that the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, wanted to ask divine punishment for these Samaritans by means of a fire from heaven. That is why they were called "Bonaerges" or "Sons of Thunder," (Mark 3:17).

This Samaritan-rejection episode is followed by three short stories of vocation which shows how dedicated one should be in following Christ. The first of these are mentioned by Matthew in 8:18-22 during his early days of ministry in Galilee.

"Leave the dead to bury their dead" is interpreted to mean: "let those who are spiritually dead (that is those who do not accept Christ's words) bury the physically dead. "The following of Christ leads to life."

**HOMILY****GOODNESS REJECTED**

Goodness is not welcome by evil. Light cannot be appreciated by darkness. Sickness abhors the presence of health.

It is not surprising that when Goodness Incarnate was on earth to dispel evil he was not welcome. The Samaritans were no exceptions although occasionally some souls let themselves be open to the light like that Samaritan woman in the Gospel of St. John.

Human reactions to this situation of rejection is violent. The sons of Zebedee wanted lightning to come down from heaven and destroy those Samaritans. But the way of Goodness is different. It could be patient, it could wait, it could understand. The weeds should not be pulled out lest the wheat be pulled out too.

The Samaritans did not let Jesus and the Apostles pass their village because they were going to Jerusalem. They must have hated the Jews so much since they made no distinction between friendly Jews or not. Any Jew for that matter was their enemy.

Jesus would turn the tables down. Samaritans were also God's children. He would cure a Samaritan leper, he would convert a Samaritan woman, he would narrate the parable of the Good Samaritan. With these he would erase barriers between nations, race and culture. He would destroy hatred because of nationality or color. His was the first anti-apartheid movement in the world.

#### **FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

(July 3, 1983)

The first reading is taken from the last chapter of Isaiah speaking of the final age to come, a day which could be joyful for his chosen ones but terrible for the wicked. The second reading is also the final passage of the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians which was written by the hand of St. Paul himself and not by a secretary. We have in the Gospel reading the sending of the 70 or 72 disciples only found in St. Luke which, however, follows in literary structure the sending of the twelve.

#### **FIRST READING. ISAIAH 66:10:14.**

The two last chapters of Isaiah 65-66 speak of the eschatological age. An age of victory for Yaweh against his enemies, but a time for rejoicing for his chosen ones, the children of



Jerusalem. Eschatological ideas abound in these chapters but the unified message is expressed in 66:14: "To his servants Yahweh will reveal his hand, but to his enemies his fury." This is expanded in verses 22-24 of the same chapter: "For as the new heavens and the new earth I shall make will endure before me — it is Yahweh who speaks — so will your race and name endure... and on their way out, they will see the corpses of men who have rebelled against me ..."

But the children of Jerusalem will rejoice. This is the messianic Jerusalem. She is presented here as a mother nursing her young. Her prosperity comes from God who gives her all the graces of the messianic age embodied in the word *shalon* that is why Yahweh could say in verse 13 that "he will confront us like a son comforted by his mother." He is the source of the joys of the last age of his children.

## **SECOND READING. GALATIANS 6:14-18.**

The passage in the second reading is taken from the epilogue of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians which according to him is in "his own handwriting and in large letters" (v. 11). This proves that he employed a secretary to write this letter like the letter to the Romans (cf. Romans 16:22) which was written by Tertius (cf. also 1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:17).

For fear that their fellow Jews would persecute them, the Judaizers of Galatia had been advocating the circumcision of the pagan converts. This, for St. Paul is "to glory in the flesh." But the real glory for him is the cross of Christ which means the whole salvation brought by Christ.

Neither circumcision nor incircumcision matter now but the new creature. *Ktisis* is here taken in the passive sense as "creature" not "creation." This is the new supernatural existence to which we are born by our incorporation to Christ. Those who conform to this rule of life will receive "peace and mercy." These are messianic benefits which would accrue to "Israel of God." These are the descendants of Abraham and "heirs of the promise" (Galatians 3:29; Romans 9:6-8) in opposition to "Israel according to the flesh" (1 Corinthians 10:18).

Verse 17 reveals Paul's enraged spirit when he wrote the letter. It seems he was about to close when he again recalled to mind what the Judaizers were doing and their accusations against him that he was not a true Apostle. To prove his authentic apostleship he said that he bears the *stigmata* of Christ. These are not the wounds of Christ during his passion which some saints had but rather the scars of the sufferings which Paul himself underwent during his apostolic ministries.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 10:1-9.

There are two accounts in Luke in the sending of the disciples. First, the sending of the Twelve in 9:1-6 which is parallel with Mark 6:17-13 and the sending of the 70 or 72 in our present text (Luke 10:1-9).

Some authors think that this mission was the same mission of the Twelve during the time of Jesus since during the Last Supper as mentioned by St. Luke he tells of his sending them "without purse, or haversack or sandals" the same as in 10:4 rather than the passage in 9:3.

Most probably Luke took this account from a source which applied the same mission, originally to the Twelve, to a large group who in a way were the successors of the Twelve. The number of this group was fixed to 72 or 70 following Exodus 24:1 and Numbers 11:16.

Textual criticism is still not certain whether the original text has 70 or 72. Manuscript testimonies are balanced between the two. . The present writer favors 72 since it would have been easier to round off the number to 70 in parallelism with Exodus 24:1 and Numbers 11:16 than to make 72 out of a 70.

Verse 2 like in Matthew 9:38 serves as the introduction to the send-off. In St. Matthew it was definitely an introduction to the mission of the Twelve. Verse 3 which is a phrase also found in St. Matthew (10:16), but which, at the conclusion of the mission serves as a tradition to the persecution passage, is placed by Luke here at the beginning. This serves as a warning to the disciples that they would not always be welcome with open arms. Verse 4 with some modifications is substantially the same as 9:3.

They were told to salute no one on the road to stress the urgency of their mission. But when they enter a house they must salute it with "Peace to this house.". The word used in Hebrew for the usual greeting is *shalom* which in Luke is associated with salvation brought by Christ. "Son of peace" is a semitism for a man who is well disposed to accept peace or salvation. If there is no "son of peace" there, then, that peace will not have its effect, it will come back to the disciple as if it were not spoken at all.

The passage in verse 7: "the laborer deserves his wages," is cited in 1 Timothy 5:18 as scripture, which, for some, seems to indicate that St. Paul (if he wrote the Pastoral Epistles) accepted Luke as canonical Scripture. The conclusion, however is not certain.

With the sending of the disciples and their coming into the homes, first of the Chosen people, the "kingdom of God" was brought nearer to the Israelites.

## HOMILY

### THE HARVEST IS GREAT

After so many years of hoping that scientific and technological progress would give mankind that peace and joy which every man is aspiring for, many are now disappointed. Instead of peace, science and technology seem to have promoted more wars, terrorism and violence in our century than all the centuries combined. Instead of enduring joy, our age seems to have breed more frustrations and shattered dreams in the life of an individual, of a family, of a nation.

But there is always a bright side tp these dark times. Because of these disappointments and frustrations the real face of the once-thought-of saviors of mankind has emerged. They are not and cannot be the source of mankind's peace and joy. That is why many are still searching for this true source. Sooner or later they are going to find it as many have already done.

Jesus has willed that his kingdom which is the authentic source of peace and happiness for the individual, for the world, and for mankind should be preached by designated ministers,

especially chosen by him. These ministers and their successors after them have gone throughout the whole world starting from Jerusalem reaching the furthestmost bounds of the earth. But the harvest are still great and is becoming greater day after day. Millions of people are born into the world everyday. Millions who were redeemed by the blood of Christ and prospective heirs of the kingdom. These souls are waiting and hoping for their salvation. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to reap this bountiful harvest.

### **FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (July 10, 1983)**

' The great commandment is the dominant idea in the Gospel reading illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan. The first reading from the book of Deuteronomy expresses in ch. 30, v. 11 that the Law of the Lord is not beyond one's strength. What more the Law of Christ which is the Law of Love according to the measure of Christ's love. A very rich christological passage is given in the second reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

#### **FIRST READING. DEUTERONOMY 30:10-14.**

The passage of Deuteronomy which actually starts from 29:16 — 30:20 most probably dates from the exile (587-538 B.C.). This is reflected in 30:3-5 where it speaks of the "gathering of the scattered." "Had you wandered to the ends of the heavens, Yahweh your God would gather you even from there, would come there to reclaim you and bring you back to the land your father possessed ..."

Blessing and prosperity are promised to the Israelites if they obey the voice of Yahweh. These are his laws and commandments. "Obeying the voice of Yahweh," "keeping his commandments," "return to Yahweh your God" are all synonymous phrases. The Law (v. 11) and the Word (v. 14) are here taken as equivalent terms.

As expressed in verse 11, the Law of the Lord is not beyond one's strength. It was only because of the additions of other observances which Jesus called "human traditions" (Mark

7:8) that the observance of the Law became burdensome which led St. Peter to exclaim that neither "we nor our ancestors were strong enough to support" (Acts. 15:10). During the time of our Lord- there were 613 prescriptions of the Law which the Jews call the *Taryag Millim* (613-words). If we add the numbers corresponding to the Hebrew consonants in the resulting word TaRYaG we get 613. Thus: T (Tau) = 400; R (Resh) = 200; Y (Yod) = 10; G (Ghimel) = 3. .

Nevertheless, in Deuteronomy the Word of the Lord is not burdensome. "It is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (verse 14).

## SECOND READING. COLOSSIANS 1:15-20.

<sup>i</sup>  
The pericope, although shorty is one of the richest christological passages in the letters of St. Paul which tells Christ's relation with God, with creatures, and with the Church.

St. Paul has here expressions extremely fertile with meaning concerning Christ: "image of the invisible God," first born of all creatures," "first born among the dead," etc.

In relation to God, Christ is the image. Christ, in virtue of his eternal generation from the Father is the image who reflects the infinite perfection of the invisible God. In relation to creatures, Christ is the "first born of all creatures"; All things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible were created "in him, by him or through him and for him."

"First born" does not only mean priority in time but also pre-eminence in dignity. The expression "of all creatures," although strictly speaking can mean that the first born is included among the order of creatures, still it can also be excluded from this order as other phrases will show. Thus, if all things were created *in* him, through him and for him, he must be outside the realm of creation.

Verses 18 — 20 will speak about his status as redeemer. He is the head of the Church, the "principle and first born among the dead." It means that he was the first one who resurrected from the dead and others would follow.,

Christ's pre-eminence would ultimately depend on his Father who willed that all plenitude should dwell on him as the Christ.

### READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 10:25-37.

The parable of the Good Samaritan which is only found in Luke was Jesus' answer to a lawyer's question: "Who is my neighbor?"

The introductory passage to this parable has, in fact, parallel passages in Matthew (22:34-40) and Mark (12:28-31) with certain divergencies. The context in Matthew and Mark was part of Christ's dispute with different groups: against the Pharisees and Herodians concerning the payment of taxes (Mt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17); against the Sadducees on the resurrection of the dead (Mt. 22:23-33; Mk. 12:18-27). Immediately, this passage "on the greatest commandment" follows in Matthew and Mark (Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-31) with a Pharisee as the questioner in Matthew, and a Scribe in Mark. In Luke it was a lawyer (*nomikos*).

Still following a parallel arrangement Matthew and Mark follows this pericope with the passage on "Christ as Lord of David."

St. Luke has a similar arrangement of pericopes in chapter 20:20-44 as Matthew and Mark but with one exception: he omits the text of the "greatest commandment" in between the dispute against the Sadducees "on the resurrection" and the pericope on "Christ the Lord of David?" which he transferred to chapter 10:25 as introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The adversary in this case was a lawyer who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Our Lord responded with another question forcing the lawyer to answer his own question. Not dismayed by being placed in an awkward situation, he shot another question: "and who is my neighbor?" Jesus did not define the concept of a neighbor in his answer. He did not say: "all men are our neighbors," contrary to the Jewish concept that only their countrymen are their neighbors. In his parable he showed how the love towards one's neighbor should be understood.

There seems to be a certain incoherence in the final question of Jesus and the initial question of the lawyer. The lawyer's question was: "who should I love as my neighbor?" (v. 29); while after the parable Jesus queried: "who acted in the parable as a true neighbor?" The lawyer asked for the object of his love. Jesus answered indicating the subject and thus not directly answering the question

In fact the lawyer was asking for the limit of his love thinking that Christ would define his neighbor as his conationals. He was surprised to know that a Samaritan could become a neighbor of a Jew.

## HOMILY

### ANYBODY IN NEED IS OUR NEIGHBOR

The spirit of the Good Samaritan is fast declining. What is gaining ground is the spirit of the "cowardly priest" and the "cowardly Levite" of our Lord's parable. How many times do we see a neighbor in need and we turn our backs away? Some times we do it in the name of prudence which could be false prudence while the real reason is cowardice or lack of involvement.

We hear stories of how spectators just stand by while somebody was being robbed, mugged, molested or terrorized without even lifting a finger to help. The usual reason is that they fear for their life.

Yet many things could be done under this situation if really we are concerned with our neighbors. Not doing anything is a sign that we do not really love our neighbor. Were that person being robbed, mauled or mugged your son or your daughter or your *loved* one the situation would have been different. But this is precisely the point. Christ would have us love our neighbor as equal as, if not more than, the love we give to a son or a daughter or a loved one.

Anybody in need is our neighbor. Opportunists are not in need; fake beggars are not in need; swindlers are not in need. A neighbor in need is a neighbor indeed.

A rich man sometimes may be more in need than a materially poor man who in fact is contented and happy of what he has. That wealthy man may be in need of friends, in need of spiritual help, in need of consoling words. A poor man may be in need not exactly of dole-outs or financial assistance but of education, training and help to make them help themselves. In short to love one's neighbor is to help him live peacefully and happily as a child of God.

## V

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
(July 17, 1983)

"The Visit" would be the unifying idea between the first reading and the Gospel reading in today's Mass. The first reading recalls the visit of Yahweh mysteriously represented by three personages who brought the news of Isaac's birth. On the other hand, the Gospel reading narrates the visit of our Lord to the house of Martha and Mary of Bethany. The second reading continues the text from the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians of the previous Sunday speaking of how the Apostle fulfills his mission of preaching the Good News.

This chapter narrates the visit of Yahweh to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre. In the previous chapter, (17) his name was already changed from Abram to Abraham and his wife Sarai to Sarah. In the history of traditions, this is the Yahwist's account on the prediction of Isaac's birth, which was already done in chapter 17 but taken from another tradition, that of the Priestly source. In fact the name Isaac was taken from the reaction of Abraham (ch. 17:17) or Sarah (ch. 18:12 ff.) when they laughed after hearing the prediction of the divine visitors. Isaac is a play of the Hebrew word *yisMiag* = "he laughed."

There is a curious change of personages in this story: the interchange of three and one. Verse 1 speaks of Yahweh only, but in verse 2 they were three. "As soon as he saw *them* he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet *them*." Yet in v. 3 his address is in the singular: "My *lord*," he said, "I beg you (singular in Hebrew), if I find favor with you (also singular in Hebrew), kindly do not pass your (singular) servant by." In verse 9 it again shifts to the plural. "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him." But in v. 13 it is again Yahweh who speaks.



Some authors have seen here an image of the Trinity. Although this is not improbable since the Trinity is a reality in biblical revelation, we have also to take into account the mingling of traditions in this story.

## SECOND READING. COLOSSIANS 1:24-28.

In verse 23 of this same chapter, St. Paul affirms that he has been constituted minister of the Gospel. Now he speaks on how this mission would be fulfilled. For the sake of the Gospel he even considers suffering as a joy.

What does St. Paul mean when he says that "in my own body I do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church?" Does this mean that the passion of Christ was incomplete? Not at all.

Some authors following St. Thomas give the following explanation. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, must conform in every way possible to its head participating in his sufferings so that it could participate in his glory (Romans 8:17.-29). Christ, the head of the Mystical Body has already fulfilled his share but not all the members who must conform to the head according to the measure given to them by the Father. There is nothing incomplete in the sufferings on the part of the *personal Christ* but on the part of the *Mystical Christ* with regards to the members.

However, since the present context in this passage speaks of the preaching of the Gospel, some commentators, without rejecting the above explanation, interpret it in another way.

Certainly the act of redemption has been fulfilled in the passion and death of Christ. Still the spread of his Gospel is not complete. It has to be preached to the whole world and in this preaching the Apostles, who now take the place of Christ, must undergo sufferings and inconveniences for the sake of the Gospel. It is the sufferings which Christ would have undergone if he himself were the one preaching the Good News of privation.

## READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 10:38-42.

The episode with Martha and Mary has been applied in Christian spirituality to contrast two ways of life: one, the active life and the other, the contemplative life. This depends on the

translation of verse 42 of *ten agathen merida* as "the better part." Both are equally good but the one chosen by Mary was better. But if *agathe* is understood in the positive degree and not in the comparative degree then the whole sense changes and to look for a comparison of the active and contemplative life in this passage would become problematic. The meaning then would be that in this particular circumstance the part chosen by Mary was "the good one". The one of Martha was not. Could this be an echo of what Jesus would say in Luke 12:19-31: "But you must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry. It is the pagans of this world who set their hearts on these things. Your Father well knows you need them. No, set your hearts on his kingdom, and the other things will be given you as well."

The historical context still says that Jesus and his apostles were on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus then was not alone on this occasion which explains the solicitude and the anxiety of Martha (her name means "Lady," the feminine of the aramaic *mar*).

## HOMILY

### THE ONE THING NECESSARY

Only one thing is necessary. The others are either useful, superfluous or harmful. This one thing necessary is to listen to the Word of God and keep it.

Our affirmation is in consonance with the Greek original of what our Lord said to Martha: "only *one* thing is necessary and Mary has chosen the *good* part."

The other translation, "Mary has chosen the *better* part" seems to favor Martha that what she was doing was also necessary. But no, our Lord's words taken in its proper sense says that only one thing is necessary and that was chosen by Mary.

Other affirmations of our Lord, I believe, support our interpretation. When a woman praised him by saying: Blessed is the womb who bore you and the breasts that give you suck," he replied, "rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it." This does not diminish the dignity of the Blessed

Virgin Mary as Mother of Jesus, but the blessedness of being the Mother of Jesus follows from the blessedness of hearing the Word of God and obeying the Will of the Father. When Mary said her "fiat" she became the Mother of God.

During the time he was tempted by the devil in the desert who wanted him to change the stone into bread he replied: "not by bread alone does man live but from the Word that comes from the mouth of God." In the sermon on the mount he declared: "seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things will be given you besides."

But before anybody thinks that Jesus is teaching us not to work for our daily living he has another guess coming. Our Lord himself spent many years in manual work before his public ministry assisting St. Joseph in his carpentry shop. He was known as the son of a carpenter. St. Paul considers work as a service offered to God (Colossians 3:22—4:1; Ephesians 6:5-9). He himself practiced his work as a *skenopoios*, "maker of tent cloth" (not exactly tent-maker) from the famous cilician goats' hair to earn his living (Acts 18:3; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:9).

In the life of the Apostles and the early Christians, prayer and work are two inseparable things but all of these follow from hearing the Word of God *first* who taught us to pray and work according to his will.

### SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (July 24, 1983)

The first reading in today's Mass is the continuation of Yahweh's visit to Abraham but now to announce the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The idea which links it with the Gospel reading is the idea of prayer and continuous petition. Abraham pleaded with God for the salvation of the cities. His prayers would have been heard if the conditions on the part of the cities were met. Indeed in the Gospel Christ taught us to pray and pray unceasingly which he promised to be a most effective prayer. It is in this context that he taught his disciples the "Our Father." The second reading is also the continuation of the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians manifesting St. Paul's solicitude about the faith of the Colossians.

**FIRST READING. GENESIS 18:20-23.**

The continuation of the visit of Yahweh to Abraham which was a visit of salvation announcing the birth of Isaac was the visit to Sodom and Gomorrah which was a visit of doom announcing the destruction of the two cities which actually happened.

There is still the change of the number of personalities as in the previous verses. In v. 20 it was Yahweh who proposed to "go down and see whether or not they (the two cities) have clone all that is alleged in the outcry against them." Yet in v. 22 ff. only two messengers (angels in 19:1) left there while Yahweh kept conversing with Abraham.

In the ensuing conversation with Yahweh, Abraham's solicitude over the salvation of others was manifested. He acted as a mediator which was a very appropriate gesture of the chosen ancestor of the community of salvation in whom nations would be blessed (v. 18).

**SECOND READING. COLOSSIANS 2:12-14.**

The context in which the passage of the second reading is situated speaks of St. Paul's solicitude of the faith of the Colossians which for him is part of his obligation as minister of the Gospel which he affirmed in chapter 1.

Verses 12-14 express St. Paul's favorite theme of our incorporation in Christ through baptism and faith. These are two facets of the same reality. In baptism we die and are buried. By faith we rise in him.

Then follows a poetic description of how our Lord accomplished this from our past situation of being spiritually dead because of sin to our new life in him. He did this by "canceling every record of the debt that we had to pay; ... by nailing it to the cross." The Greek has *cheirographon tots dogmasin*, "record of debt written in decrees." The same word used for "decrees" in Ephesians 2:15 shows that these decrees refer to the Law. Debt was incurred with its penalties for breaking the Law. All these were cancelled when Christ was nailed to the cross.

**READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 11:1-13.**

The Gospel reading in today's Mass has 3 parts: St. Luke's version of the "Our Father" (1-4) ; the Parable of the Impor-tunate Friend (5-8) ; and Effective Prayer (9-13) These pas-sages are all united by the main idea of prayer.

St. Matthew places the Our Father in the context of the Sermon on the Mount (6:9-13) as contrast to the prayers of the pagans and pharisees. In St. Luke it was a response to the request of one of his disciples to teach them to pray.

Perhaps during the time of Luke there was no fixed formula-tion of the Our Father as yet that his version was shorter than that of Matthew. There are seven petitions in Matthew while only 5 are found in Luke. Luke does not have: "your will be done on earth as in heaven," and "save us from the evil one." St. Mark mentions one petition (11:25).

Luke in the introduction has only "Father" as Jesus usually addresses God (Lk. 10:21; 23:46) while in Matthew which corresponds more to the Jewish mentality we have "Our Father in heaven."

"May your name be held holy": Just like in Ezechiel 36:22-22 the sanctification of his name is the display of Yahweh's holiness before all mankind. God sanctifies his name by reveal-ing himself superior to all creatures, powerful, wise, faithful and good. This is shown especially by his work in Jesus his Son (John 12:28 ff.). The verbs are in the aorist expressing an eschatological moment, once and for all.

The same aorist form is used in the next phrase: "your kingdom come" referring again to the eschatological stage at the *parovaria*. Still the initial manifestation of the Kingdom of God is in the Church through which and in which Christ gathers together his people to whom it pleases the Father to give the Kingdom (Luke 12:32).

Instead of *dos* in Matthew, (aorist imperative of *didomi*, "I give"), St. Luke has *didov* (present imperative) and *semeron* (this day) instead of *katk' hemeran* (day after day). The present imperative connotes continuity.

The *epiousion* is not very clear despite so many studies made. The following senses are offered: a) substantial bread

necessary for existence; b) daily bread; c) bread for the next day, for the future. The Gospel to the Hebrews according to St. Jerome has *mahar* — tomorrow. We prefer the sense of (b) meaning bread sufficient for the day, or "daily bread." (cf. the *lehem hugi* = "my share of bread" in Proverbs 30:8.

The *opheilemata* (debts) in St. Matthew becomes *liamartias* (sins) in St. Luke with both verbs in the present tense taking into consideration most probably his Gentile readers.

The doctrine which the Parable of the Importunate or Persistent Friend illustrates is perseverance in prayer. The term used which would make the friend get up and what the other friend is asking for is *aruridia* which literally means "lack of shame" (*an-aidos*). The friend in need removes his shame to ask persistently until he receives.

The next passage of affective prayer which still has the idea of perseverance is between son and father. The verbs are all in the present imperative and connote continuous action: ask continuously, seek continuously, knock continuously.

## HOMILY

### PRAY UNCEASINGLY

Jesus taught us to pray and to ask our Father continuously our daily bread. There is a tagalog word for this which, I believe, can describe very well the way how Jesus wants us to pray. He wants us to be "makulit" with God. There is nothing wrong, then, of being "makulit" in our prayers. In fact we have to pray unceasingly. There is nothing wrong also in praying for our daily needs, what we call the "prayer of petition." What is most improper is to forget to give thanks to God (prayer of thanksgiving) even just for giving us our own existence, and to praise him (prayer of praise) for what he is and for what he has done. This prayer of praise is briefly but very well expressed in the Our Father: "hallowed be your name."

Jesus, hence, wants us to pray and pray as if all depends on him; but, as we said in last Sunday's homily, he wants us also to work as if everything depends on us.

There is no contradiction at all between these two affirmations. The reason is in our own situation as human beings raised to the level as children of God but still totally dependent on the Father for our own existence. We are still pilgrims on our way to our real home.

## **EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

**(July 31, 1983)**

The Parable of the Foolish Rich Man in the Gospel of Luke is paired with the passage in Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth (first reading) concerning the vanity or worthlessness of toil in this life since everything will end in death. It was worthless indeed for that foolish rich man to have hoarded wealth which he could not take with him to his grave. The second reading still follows the previous passages in the letter of Paul to the Colossians which have been the readings of the three preceding Sundays. Now he draws practical conclusions from the doctrinal points which he had laid down.

### **FIRST READING. ECCLESIASTES 1:2; 2:21-23.**

The Hebrew word *hebel* translated here as "vanity" is a keyword in the book of Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth. It is found about 35 times in this book. Its original meaning, however, is "vapor" or "breath" and this indicates something that is passing, transitory, and hence, worthless. The repetition suggests a superlative degree like "Song of Songs" which is translated "the greatest Song"; "Holy of Holies" = most Holy. Consequently "vanity of vanities" would be "most vain."

Qoheleth faces the grim reality of death and concludes that toil is "vanity"-: "for what does a man gain for all the toil and strain that he has undergone under the sun, when he must leave what is his own for someone who has not toiled for it?"

We are still in Old Testament territory. Only in the New Testament when revelation would be completed shall we be enlightened of God's plan for us and the true nature of work.

### **SECOND READING. COLOSSIANS 3:1-11.**

We have in chapter 3 of Colossians the start of the moral section in which St. Paul draws practical consequences from his

octrine on our union with Christ. Since in our present state, by baptism and faith, we have risen with Christ (this is our inchoative resurrection which will be perfected in the final resurrection) it is required of us that our life be conformed with the life of heaven and not that of earth.

The next verses are enumerations of vices which we have to avoid to mortify our flesh (verses 5-11) and the virtues we must practice, putting on the new man (12-17).

### **READING OF THE GOOD NEWS. LUKE 12:13-21.**

The Parable of the Foolish Rich Man is another parable found only in Luke just like the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. This was told on the occasion of his teaching to avoid avarice when a certain man asked him to arbitrate so that his brother would give him his inheritance. The gesture of the man was a recognition of Jesus as Rabbi since they were usually consulted on questions of that sort. Jesus, however, refused to involve himself on these matters which were alien to his mission.

The cupidity of riches is stupidity since "one's life is not made secure by what he owns" (v. 5). Death will come and all a man's riches will be worthless to save him from this hour.

## **HOMILY**

### **TRUE INSURANCE FOR THE FUTURE**

Memorial Park advertisers are very resourceful in presenting their object of sales to the public: a little plot of land for a person's final resting place. They even term it "an insurance for the future," "an investment that goes far beyond" and other similar slogans. Yet the goal of these advertisements is only a tomb where the lifeless body of an individual would be laid to rest. The only future here would be dust and bones and nothing more.

The true insurance for the future is in the kingdom of heaven; the true investment for eternal peace is to save in God's savings bank.



What should we save in the form of investments for the future. They are our good works, our concrete virtuous actions and not only our good intentions. Hell is paved with intentions.

Even faith which is understood only as an attitude of the mind is not enough. It has to be a living faith, a faith which acts through love. During the Last Judgment we are not going to be asked how intelligent we are, how many degrees do we have, how much money do we have in the bank, how popular we had been, how many times did we appear in the newspapers. We are going to be told what we did to our neighbors, whether we fed them, gave them water to drink, clothed them or visited them when they were imprisoned. These are all works of charity.

Now is the time to lay our treasures in heaven. We are still given this opportunity. Let us not lose it.

## CASES AND INQUIRIES

### ERROR ON QUALITY OF THE PERSON

*Fred and Berta knew each other since high school when they were classmates. After graduation Fred joined the U.S. Navy and was most of the time abroad. He came back from time to time and occasionally visited Berta. Fred eventually asked Berta to marry him. Berta, however, not knowing well his life, delayed to answer and asked him for more time to make up her mind. He insisted saying she knew him already. He assured her he was still a bachelor and there was nothing to fear. Finally Berta answered him favorably, so they got married last January 1. After marriage Fred has shown constant reluctance to behave as a true husband by making excuses to deny Berta the marital debt. So Berta became apprehensive and suspicious. Eventually she found out that her husband had been playing around and is afflicted with VD. Now she wants their marriage to be annulled by the ecclesiastical tribunal.*

*QUESTIONS: 1) Can this marriage be annulled by the ecclesiastical tribunal, as Berta wants?*

*2) Is the fact of Fred not revealing his past life and his sickness a valid ground to annul their marriage?*

*3) Is there any other probable ground for annulling this marriage?*

*4) Is it true that the new Codex provides for its annulment?*

*A Parish Priest*

At the outset I would dare to say that what perhaps our consultant Parish Priest wants to know is whether the marriage between Fred and Berta can be *declared null and void*, not whether it can be *annulled*. No ecclesiastical tribunal has ever annulled a single valid marriage. That is beyond the competence of any ecclesiastical tribunal. The only thing that the

ecclesiastical tribunal can do is to study and discuss cases submitted to it and declare whether such marriage are valid or invalid.

1. With the foregoing clarification, we answer to the first question of our consultant in the negative. The marriage between Fred and Berta, we presume, was celebrated validly and there is no circumstance which could render it null and void from the beginning. Thus, the ecclesiastical tribunal cannot declare it null and void.

2. The fact that Fred did not disclose his past life and his sickness to Berta does not constitute a valid ground to render their marriage null and void from its very celebration. Berta's error on his personal circumstances is not substantial. It does not refer to the person, but to a quality of the person, which makes it to be an 'accidental error. This accidental error of Berta does not affect the validity of her marriage with Fred. Canon 1083 of our present Codex dealing with this matter reads as follows:

- §1. Error regarding the person renders invalid the matrimony.
- §2. Error regarding a quality of the person, though it may give cause to the contract, makes the matrimony invalid only if the error on the quality redounds to error on the person.

Canon 1097 of the new Codex says:

- §1. Error on the person renders matrimony invalid.
- §2. Error on the quality of the person, though it may give cause to the contract, does not render matrimony invalid, unless this quality be intended directly and principally.

Basing, therefore, our answer on the 1917 Codex to which the marriage between Fred and Berta should conform (it was celebrated last January 1), we have to say that their marriage was perfectly valid. Consequently it cannot be declared null and void. Error which affected Berta is not substantial, but only accidental.

3. However, as pointed out in the case, Fred has refused constantly to give Berta the marital debt. If this has happened

*always* since the celebration of marriage up to the present, their marriage has not been consummated. Then there is a possibility of obtaining its annulment, not from the ecclesiastical tribunal, but from the R. Pontiff. Canon 1119 of the 1917 Codex reads as follows: "Non consummated matrimony among the baptized . . . is dissolved . . . through a dispensation of the Holy See." And Canon 1142 of the new Codex says: "Non consummated matrimony among the baptized . . . may be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff for a just cause." To get this kind of annulment it is necessary to prove beyond any doubt the non consummation of the marriage. It would entail some difficulties, but it is not impossible.

4. Had the marriage of Fred and Berta not taken place on January 1, under the 1917 Codex, but after November 27 of this year, under the new Codex, their marriage could perhaps be declared null and void. The new Codex has the following norm applicable to similar cases: Canon 1098. "Who enters matrimony cheated by a fraud committed to obtain the consent regarding a quality of the other party which by its very nature can gravely perturb the partnership of the conjugal life, contracts invalidly."

Undoubtedly, Fred being sick with VD is something that is likely to cause by its very nature a deep perturbation in the marital life between him and Berta. But it should be borne in mind that Fred's concealing his being sick should have been done in order to obtain Berta's consent to marry him, which is quite probable to have happened. However, as mentioned before, this norm of the new Codex cannot be applied to this marriage. It was celebrated on January 1. Thus the 1917 Codex, not the new Codex regulated its validity. The new Codex will start being in force on November 27, 1983.

**Fr. Excelso Garcia, O.P.**

## 2. ON GENERAL ABSOLUTION

*Please explain what is the teaching of the Church on general absolution given without any individual confession. It is confusing to hear how priests differently talk about this matter. Many faithful are simply deterred from the confessional in expectation of forgiveness through a general absolution. Perhaps the new Codex has clarified this matter. Thanks in advance.*

*A Legionary*

Considering the great difficulties encountered by many faithful in making their individual confessions due to the scarcity of priests in many places and limited time allotted to hear individually the sins of many faithful who need to confess or come to do so during special occasions, the Church allows the imparting of general absolution in some cases, especially when the danger of death impends over a number of persons. Indeed, there are some distorted theories about the sacrament of penance and we cannot but lament the indiscreet tendency of some priests to resort to the general absolution; and so the Holy See has time and again clarified the conditions and circumstances when such a general absolution is allowed and even called for. The main points contained in the official documents issued by the Holy See on this matter are aptly summarized in the norms contained in the new Codex on general absolution. They are the following:

Can. 960. — Individual and integral confession and absolution constitute the only ordinary mode by which a faithful conscious of a grave sin is reconciled with God and the Church; only physical or moral impossibility excuses from such confession, in which case reconciliation is possible by other modes.

Can. 961. §1. Absolution given simultaneously to penitents without previous individual confession may not be given as a general mode, except:

℣ when death is imminent and there is not sufficient time for the priest or priests to hear the confession of the individual penitents;

2? there is a grave necessity, as when, the number of penitents considered, there are not enough confessors to properly hear the confession of the individual penitents within a congruous time so that they, without their own fault, would be deprived for a long time of the sacramental grace and Holy Communion; however, the need is not considered as sufficient, when the confessors cannot promptly attend to everyone by the mere reason of a big concourse of penitents, as may happen during any big festivity or pilgrimage.

§2. To pass judgment whether the conditions required according to the norm in §1, no. 2, obtain pertains to the diocesan Bishop, who can determine the existence of such a need, consideration taken of the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the Conference of Bishops.

Can. 962. — §1. So that a faithful may enjoy validly the sacramental absolution imparted to many simultaneously, it is required not only that he be aptly disposed, but at the same time he should have the purpose to confess singly in due time his grave sins which he cannot confess presently thus.

§2. The faithful should be taught, inasmuch as it is possible even on the occasion of the general absolution, about the requirements according to the norm in §1; and the general absolution should be preceded, even in case of danger of death, if time would suffice, by an exhortation that each and everyone should make an act of contrition.

Can. 963. — The obligation about which in Can. 989<sup>1</sup> remaining in force, he to whom grave sins are forgiven by a general absolution should as soon as possible, given the occasion, make an individual confession, before he can receive another general absolution, unless a just cause should earlier arise.

The Ordinaries of the Philippines have adopted the following guidelines for general absolution in our country (*CBCP Meeting of January 29-February 3, 1975*) :

1. General absolution is not to be integrated with the eucharistic celebration and should not take the place of the penitential act of the Mass, but it can come immediately before the Mass. If general absolution immediately precedes the Mass, the penitential rite of the Mass may be omitted on the basis of the general principle of avoiding duplication.

<sup>1</sup> Can. 989 provides that every faithful should confess at least once a year his grave sins, after reaching the age of discretion.

2. There should be uniform policies regarding the following points:

a. When there is imminent danger of death and the priest has no time to hear the confession of each penitent, any priest has the faculty to give general absolution to a number of people after first, if there is time, exhorting them very briefly to make an act of contrition.

b. Are to be considered special circumstances of physical or moral impossibility when there is a serious pastoral need for general absolution: cases of barrios rarely visited, of barrio fiestas, occasions of great conflux of people, as on some days of Holy Week, Christmas, and the novena of preparation for Christmas (Aguinaldo Masses), graduations, and the like.

c. General absolution is not applicable at the beginning of retreats of priests, sisters or small groups. At such occasions there is (or should be) sufficient opportunity for confession.

d. Ordinaries should inform their priests about the exact application of the norms for general absolution and the manner it should be celebrated.

Fr. Excelso Garcia, O.P.

## DOCUMENTATION

### CBCP: SPECIAL FACULTIES FOR CONFESSORS ON THE OCCASION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR

17 March 1983

Your Eminences/Excellencies:

At the request of His Eminence Giuseppe Cardinal Paupini, Major Penitentiary, I am transmitting hereunder the text of the faculties which the Holy Father grants to all priests who have jurisdiction for sacramental confessions, by reason of and for the entire duration of the forthcoming Jubilee Year of Redemption, in order that it be made more fruitful and more accessible for the faithful:

#### FACULTIES WHICH THE HOLY FATHER GRANTS TO ALL CONFESSORS FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE YEAR OF THE REDEMPTION

*The Holy Father, on the occasion of and for the entire duration of the Extraordinary Holy Year of the Redemption, grants to all priests who have jurisdiction to hear sacramental confessions the faculty of absolving penitents, without any obligation of recourse to the competent Authorities, from all non-declared "latae sententiae", which will cease with the entry into force of the new Code of Canon Law.*

*Consequently, only the following cases will remain exclusively reserved to the Holy See: attempts against the Person of the Holy Father; consecration of Bishops without Papal appointment; profanation of the Eucharistic species; violation of the seal of confession; absolution of an accomplice "in peccato turpi".*

The Holy Father besides, wishes that the Ordinaries of Dioceses, for the duration of the Extraordinary Holy Year, grant to the confessors subject to them the faculty of absolving, without obligation of recourse, from the non-declared censure connected with a procured abortion, which will also remain in effect under the new Code of Canon Law.

f ANTONIO MABUTAS, D.D.  
Archbishop of Davao  
President



ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER:  
PATRON SAINT OF THE DIOCESE OF DAET

**IOANNES PAULUS PP. II**  
**ad perpetuam rei memoriam**

Sanctos caelites a christianis fidelibus sibi adoptari Patronos quam libenter haec Apostolica Sedes sua auctoritate confirmat: nam per hoc turn illorum honorem auget hie in terris, turn hominibus egregia virtutum exempla proponit, turn denique certantibus pro fide ac religione sua auxilia praebet, cum Sancti amici Dei sint atque intercessores potentes. Qua re, cum Venerabilis Frater Caelestinus Rojo Enverga, Episcopus Daetiensis, iam petierit ut, ad normam "Instructionis de Calendariis particularibus atque Officiorum et Missarum Propriis recognoscendis", n. 30, apostolica Nostra potestate sive electionem confirmaremus S. Josephi Opificis tamquam suae dioecesis a populo factam turn etiam probationem quam ipse superaddidisset; Nos id reputantes nonnisi magno cum fructu animorum fieri, quam libenter admotis precibus concedimus. Ea igitur rata habentes, quae Sacra Congregatio pro Sacramentis et Cultu Divino factis olim a Nobis potestatibus de re statuerit; explorato omnia ad iuris normam acta esse, comprobamus S. Josephum Opificem esse et haberi dioecesis Daetiensis caelestem Patronum, simul iuribus tributis privilegiisque concessis, quae iuxta rubricas consequuntur. Contrariis nihil obstantibus. Ceterum, data occasione, humili prece S. Josepho supplicamus ut populum Daetiensem, que tanta pietate in eum fertur atque religione, eo amore, curet, protegat, prosperet, quo olim Nazarethanam familiam fovit. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, sub anulo Piscatoris, die XXIX mensis Novembris, anno MDCCCC-LXXXII, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

AUGUSTINUS CARD. CASAROLI  
Publicis Eccl. Negotiis

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SWORN STATEMENT

(Required by Act 2580)

The undersigned, FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P., editor of the BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS published bi-monthly, in English, Spanish and Latin, at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, hereby submits the following statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by Act 2580, as amended by Commonwealth Act. No. 201.

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