

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO deFILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

RECONCILIATION FOR PEACE

Jose Ma. Tinoko. 6.P.

SOLIDARITY:

THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN PRAXIS

Fausto B. Gomez, O.P.

SEMINARY PHILOSOPHY

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIOCESE  
OF ANTIPOLO

Jaime L. Card. Sin, D.D.

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## EDITORIAL

### RECONCILIATION FOR PEACE

Man, as far back as one can recall in history has always been beset with conflicts, whether with himself or with others. And in the long course of his existence, he has always yearned for peace — that illusive commodity which despite tremendous inroads and advancement in technology, science, business, industry, etc. is still ranked as the most precious acquisition and longed for achievement.

What is surprising, however, is the fact that peace which man desperately needs has been promised to him and very much within his grasp. "My peace I give to you..." (*Jn. 14:27*) Christ promised, adding that the peace He will bestow is that which the world cannot give. Two things stand out in this statement — that Christ promised us peace and that Christ alone can give us peace.

If peace is so near us and promised to us, why has it escaped us for so long? The answer lies in the fact that we have alienated ourselves from God, from Christ who is "our peace" (*2 Cor. 3:14*) for so long. It is no wonder then that in announcing the Holy Year of the Redemption, Pope John Paul II has set the tone in "proclaiming Christ not only as the Redeemer but also as the Reconciler and has chosen as the theme for the forthcoming Synod of Bishops in September 1983: "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church".

Peace according to St. Thomas Aquinas following the lead of St. Augustine is the tranquility of order. Peace, therefore, reigns when things are set in their proper perspective, when values are arranged according to their priority and when man seeks for those which ensure his sanctification and salvation over those which assure only his material comfort and temporal well-being. Since the proper sense of values determines man's access to peace and happiness, a return to Christ who alone is "the way, the truth and the life" (*Jn 14:6*) is imperative.

Today, more than ever, a return to God — a keen and genuine revival of the sense of God is needed. Man should

return to God, be reconciled with Him, accepting once more His word, His commandments and His will and make them the criteria of his actions.

Christ redeemed us in order to reconcile us to the Father whom we have offended by sin. Sin alienated us from God and consequently, from our fellowmen since sin has a collateral and inevitable effect in dividing men among themselves. In reconciling sinners, therefore, with God, there is aroused in themselves the impulse towards reconciliation with his brother. Hence, reconciliation has a double movement: reconciliation of man with God and of men among themselves.

Peace can be achieved only when men are reconciled among themselves and with God; when man realizes the need to shun sin which causes him to fight his brother and depart from God. Reconciliation is the start of man's return to God and friendship with his brothers.

In this regard, everyone should contribute his share. The clerics should be steadfast in their particular apostolate of enlightening the faithful regarding the alienating effect of sin and insist on the greatness of God's pardon and compassionate love. To this end, the Roman Pontiff proposes once again to all priests that they renew their "pastoral zeal and responsibility... to give special priority to the ministry of the sacrament of Penance". Conscious of how they collaborate with the Saviour through the sacrament of Penance in the work of conversion, priests should willingly give themselves to this ministry faithfully and indefatigably.

The religious, being as they are the sign on earth of the future world announcing celestial glory, should through their lives always serve as a testimony of peace through prayer and penance. They should always show their faithfulness to God through reconciliation with Christ by reflecting Him as "contemplating on the mountain, announcing God's kingdom to the multitude, healing the sick and the maimed, turning sinners to wholesome fruit, blessing children, doing good to all..." (LG, 46).

The laity, ever conscious that the redemptive act of Christ is nothing else but the offer of reconciliation by God waiting like the Father in the parable of the prodigal son of the repentant return of his son through conversion should bear in mind always that "Christ Jesus our hope" (1 *Tim.* 1:1) wills that we

be reconciled with Him through the sacrament of Penance and has revealed the message of mercy, pardon and hope. They should recognize sin in their own lives and should be ready to undertake reconciliation and open their hearts to penance and personal conversion.

Only if the faithful — the members of God's People, are genuinely conscious of the need for reconciliation will they be able to contribute to the renewal of human society in the varied fields of economic, social, historical, cultural and political dimensions. There is a great need of reconciliation in the world involving all sectors of individual, family, social, national and international life. Christ suffered to redeem us and so establish unity in the human family. Christ through His redemptive act impels all men towards union and reconciliation with Him and with his fellowmen.

Summing up, our reigning Pontiff invites us "to renew our faith in Christ's divine operating energy in the world and pledge ourselves to collaborate with it in order to contribute in this way to the advancement of peace among men and to the extension of joy which follows from it."

Fr. Jose Tinoko, O.P.

## FEATURES

### POPE'S MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS ON "PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION"

(Delivered by John Paul II last, February 10, 1983 to some J,out) participants of the congress and published in L'Osserratore Romano, 7 March 198.1)

Dearest Brothers!

1. I am happy to have the opportunity today to meet a group of members of the "Neocatechumen Communities" gathered in Rome to mediate together on "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church", which is the theme of the next Synod of Bishops.

I greet the bishops, pastors and priests here present, who have come from all the continents for this occasion.

I would like my words to be a reflection on the spiritual and ecclesial experience which you intend to have, that they may be for you an incentive towards an ever greater commitment in offering, within the context of the modern world, a clear and genuine example of profound Christian faith, lived constantly in intimate, docile and happy union with the pastors of the Church.

Your witness is meant to be fundamentally one of announcing the Gospel message, which has as its centre the proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Lord, the incarnate Son of God, who died and rose again for our salvation. "Evangelization — said Paul VI — will always contain — as the foundation, centre and at the same time summit of its dynamism — a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 27). One of the typical manifestations of your community is precisely *the-evangelization* carried out in countries and environments which either have never heard the Christian message or have become almost deaf and dull to this message, because of the prevalence of ideologies, conceptions, behaviour of refusal or of indifference be-

fore the "problem of God" itself. This is why you intend to prepare and train catechists, who will have to strive first of all to study thoroughly and live personally the *mystery of Christ*. "Catechizing — I wrote in the apostolic exhortation about catechesis in our time — is in a way to lead a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions ... to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfilment in that Person ... The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity" (Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, 5).

I have made note of the commitment of your community in the meritorious work of catechesis. During these years the Episcopal Conferences have intensified their efforts in this field of exceptional importance for the very life of the People of God. To follow the *methods*, the *indications*, the *routes*, the *texts*, offered by the Episcopates, as also to exercise the ministry of catechesis in communion and in ecclesial discipline, with regard to the basic ministry of the bishop and the priests associated with him, will be a precious help for your catechesis on all levels and it will certainly provide great spiritual fruits among the faithful.

The specific end of every work and form of catechesis will be that of making the *seed of faith*, deposited by the Holy Spirit with the first announcement and effectively transmitted through *Baptism, germinate, grow, and develop*.

## DEMANDS OF BAPTISM

2. In your communities you want to investigate, not only on a theoretical level, but in a totally special way in its vital dimension, the *significance*, the *value*, the *richness*, the *d demands of Baptism*, the sacrament which is the necessary condition for salvation: which unites one with the death, burial and resurrection of the Saviour; which makes one live Christ's life itself, which makes the baptized person a temple of the Spirit, an adopted son of the heavenly Father, a brother and heir of Christ, a member of Christ's Body, which is the Church. Stich thorough study is directed to the rediscovery and evaluation of the riches proper to Baptism, received usually in infancy, and to which, therefore, it is necessary to refer not as a purely juridical fact, but as the true founding moment of the whole Christian life.



By cultivating what we could call a "baptismal spirituality", you intend to animate, direct, enrich your *pilgrimage of faith*, which is the logical development of the intrinsic demands of the sacrament, so that your witness will be always more authentic, sincere, consistent, active and so that you can always be more available to respond readily to the divine call.

Such availability must be manifested in the continual meditation and in religious heeding of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, which form "one sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is committed to the Church" (Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10). From this follows the need for a constant and serious work of personal and community investigation of the Word of God and of the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, even through participation in serious biblical and theological courses. Such a commitment to study and reflection is shown to be more than ever necessary for those who, having to fulfil the role of catechist, have the duty to feed their brothers and sisters with solid spiritual food. Always keep in mind the solemn and strong statement of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the Body of the Lord, since, from the table of both the Word of God and of the Body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life, especially in the Sacred Liturgy" (Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 21). From Christ the Word and Christ the Eucharist, because the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the source, the centre, the culmination of the whole Christian life.

Celebrate the Eucharist and, above all, Easter, with true piety, with great dignity, with love for the liturgical rites of the Church, with precise observance of the norms established by competent authority, with the intention of communion with all the brethren.

### TAUGHT TO US BY JESUS HIMSELF

3. Your availability to the divine appeal likewise must be manifested in continual, untiring, daily *prayer*, an expression above all of adoration which man, fragile, weak, aware that he is a contingent creature, offers to God, the Transcendent, the Infinite, the Omnipotent, the Creator, but also the loving and merciful Father; prayer that therefore also becomes intimate and affectionate dialogue between Father and Son. Prayer which becomes the suppliant chorus in the *Pater noster*, taught

to us by Jesus himself; prayer which becomes the solemn and knowing profession of Christian faith in the Creed or *Apostolic Symbol*; prayer which finds in the *Psalms* the various and complex interior nuances with which the one who is praying — the People of the Promise, the new Chosen People that is the Church, the Christian in various spiritual situations — can turn to God, his hope, his rock, his salvation: "If the Psalm prays", St. Augustine suggests to us, "pray; if it laments, lament; if it exults, exult; if it hopes, hope; if it fears, fear. All the things which are written here are our mirror" (*Enarr. hi Ps. XXX, II, s. III, 1: CCL 38,213*).

### THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

4. Your availability to the divine appeal is manifested in realizing, day after day, the compelling word of Jesus: "Turn away from sin and believe in the Good News" (Mk 1:15). This conversion, this "change of mentality", is above all the rejection of true evil, sin, which draws us away from God. This conversion is a continuous walk back to the house of the Father, like the return of the prodigal son (cf. Lk. 15:11-32). This conversion finds its salvific sign in the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. "Freedom from sin", I wrote in the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee for the 1950th Anniversary of the Redemption, "is ... a fruit and primary requirement of faith in Christ the Redeemer and faith in his Church... At the service of this freedom, the Lord Jesus instituted in the Church the Sacrament of Penance, so that those who have committed sin after Baptism may be reconciled with God whom they have offended, and with the Church which they have wounded" (Bull *Aperite Portas*, 5).

The ministry of reconciliation — this wonderful gift of the infinite mercy of God — is entrusted to you priests. Be ministers who are always worthy, ready, zealous, available, patient, serene, following with faithful diligence the norms established in this matter by ecclesiastical authority. The faithful will thus be able to find in this sacrament an authentic sign and instrument of spiritual rebirth and of gladdening interior freedom.

And all of you, brothers, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with great confidence in the mercy of God, in full adherence to the ministry and discipline of the Church, with individual confession, as repeatedly recommended by the new Code of Canon Law, for the pardon and peace of the disciples of the

Lord, and as the efficacious announcement of the Lord's goodness to everyone.

### **OBSERVANCE OF LAW IS TRUE WISDOM**

5. Along your spiritual journey try to harmonize the requirements of the catechumenate with the commitment to the necessary dedication to brothers, to the family, to professional and social duties. Above all do not yield to the temptation to close yourselves in on yourselves, isolating yourselves from the life of the parochial or diocesan community, since only from an effective insertion in those very vast organisms can they draw authenticity and effectiveness from your apostolic commitment.

I do not want to conclude these reflections of mine without reminding you and the communities you represent of what I said recently on the occasion of the official presentation of the new Code of Canon Law: the Christian must dispose his own soul to welcome it and to put it into practice. Laws are a munificent gift of God and their observance is true wisdom. The law of the Church is a means, an aid, and also a protection for keeping in communication with the Lord. Therefore the juridical norms, just as the liturgical ones, have to be observed without negligence and without omission.

I am sure that your Communities, moved by the fervour to distinguish themselves in the celebration of Baptism, the Eucharist and Penance, also want to distinguish themselves, under the Church's guidance, in this commitment of fidelity to common discipline.

Dearest Brothers!

While I offer these thoughts of mine for your reflection, I invoke the abundance of divine grace upon you here present and on all the communities which you represent. I entrust everyone to Mary Most Holy, incomparable example of ardent faith and docile acceptance of the will of God.

May she who "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith and loyally persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross" (*Lumen Gentium*, 58) comfort you with her maternal smile in the daily pilgrimage of the following of Christ.

With my Apostolic Blessing.

# CHRIST'S RECONCILIATION AND OURS

"Open the doors to our Redeemer" — *aperite portas Redemptori!* — These are the ringing words with which the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, begins the "Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee for the 1500th Anniversary of the Redemption". This is the call he addresses to the faithful in the whole Church, and thus to each one of us as we approach the opening date of this Holy Year, 25 March 1983.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Heart of Jesus Christ: With this pastoral letter to you I join my voice to that of our beloved Pontiff, the Bishop of Rome. Let us heed his invitation as this Year of Jubilee, this time of grace, comes to us. Let us open the doors — of our hearts, of our homes, of our people and our nation — to the Redeemer, so that in this troubled time He may be present to us, so that His reconciliation and peace may be ours.

## INTRODUCTION

Both the solemn document (known, as we have indicated, as the Bull of Indiction) announcing the Holy Year, and the eloquent address the Holy Father delivered on this great event (on 23 December 1982) to the Sacred College of Cardinals, have already been available for some weeks. In these texts the Pope explains in his usual clear and forceful way what the spirit and purposes of this Holy Year are.

In his address he calls on pastors, preachers, theologians, catechists to join hands with him in fostering the great effort of renewal to which the Holy Year summons all the faithful. Addressing myself to the People of God in our Archdiocese, I too would like to challenge all who exercise the ministry of leadership and of teaching (especially those in schools of catechesis or theology) to make an earnest and concerted effort to proclaim anew, in every way they can, the message of this jubilee year of the Redemption, — through biblical and theological instruc-

tion, through homilies, conferences, retreats, and through the far-flung reach of our communications media. May the prophetic cry, "Open the doors to our Redeemer!", find its echo throughout our Archdiocese so that truly we may receive in abundance the gifts of our Redeemer.

This letter will not be a systematic essay on the meaning and purposes of the Jubilee, but rather a familiar conversation with you, beloved brothers and sisters. I thought that together we could reflect on a few aspects of the theme of Reconciliation, to help us enter into the spirit of this time of special grace: "this special time" (in the words of the Holy Father) "when all Christians are called to realize more profoundly their vocation to reconciliation with the Father in the Son..." For, "the Year that we are about to celebrate follows the same line as the 1975 Holy Year in which ... Pope Paul VI called for *renewal in Christ and reconciliation with God*."

### I. OUR NEED OF RECONCILIATION

Not very much thought is needed, I am sure, to bring home to ourselves the need of reconciliation in our lives, and in the world — the torn and divided world — in which we live.

There/ is conflict, there is alienation and division in the world: between the economic-political, military-ideological bloc of East and West, and — increasingly — of North and South; between races and nations, within regional and national communities. We need mention only the Middle East and its recent events, Indochina, Central America, Afghanistan, Ireland, Poland ... and even our own country. Every one of these place-names rings with the sounds of struggle and violence; nearly every one of these areas on the map is splotched and smeared with blood. The skies we look up to, seemingly so tranquil, are dotted with satellites for spying and other possible uses for warfare. The crucial battle in the ecological spheres pits man?nd what he considers 'modern progress' against the equilibrium of nature and the survival of life itself on our planet earth.

We have mentioned our own country as a scene of strife and violence. You can fill in the details better than I can. There are armed clashes in scores of barrios and towns. In some areas, rebellion gathers momentum and the vision of class struggle gains greater following. There is fratricide and terrorism, and from both sides in conflict, ongoing violation of

human persons and human rights. In both urban and rural legions, conflicts and tensions spread, and harsh suffering grows in the lives of peasants, of workers and of their families.

The Filipino family, that strong core of the social life of our people, the center from which so much of the best in our history and culture have come, where our human and religious values are cherished and nurtured, suffers more and more lacerations, at times even seeming disintegration. Broken marriages, homes splintered in so many ways, increasing alienation between generations — the very enumeration of these wounds strikes our hearts with pain and dismay.

Even within the Church, let us not deny it, divisions are present and tend to increase, largely following lines of ideological strife, differences between generations, or conflicting religious and cultural mindsets.

At the very root of all these alienations between people is the line of division which cuts across our own heart and life: the struggle between egoism and sin on the one hand, and love and grace on the other.' For as Christians we know that at the root of evil, at the very source of human evils and human conflicts, is guilt and sinfulness, our estrangement from God by sin. "For I know that nothing good lodges in me." St. Paul says, speaking of himself as "the purchased slave of sin." "The good which I want to do, I fail to do; but what I do is the wrong which is against my will." "When I want to do the right, only the wrong is within my reach ... Unhappy creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body of death?" (Rom. 8, 18, 19, 25)

With these words of the great Apostle ringing in our ears, how conscious we are of our need of reconciliation: with God, with our brothers and sisters, within our very selves! How much we need the compassion and mercy of God our Father, for healing and reconciliation can come from "God alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 8, 25)

## II. *THE SCRIPTURES ON RECONCILIATION*

Dear brothers and sisters, the first thing the Scriptures teach us about reconciliation is that it is, and can only be, God's doing. "From first to last this has been the work of God." "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself." (2 Cor. 5, 18-19) Only the Father can truly bring us back from sin to

Himself, because reconciliation is the destruction of sin in us, and more — it is also giving to us the gift of "a new way of being and living", of being made "a new creation" in God's friendship and love.

This reconciliation, St. Paul goes on to tell us, is wrought by Jesus. "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Rom. 5, 10) "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." (Col. 1, 19 ff.) Our reconciliation is accomplished by Christ on the cross. Thus the Cross is the supreme showing-forth of the Father's compassion and mercy. It is by Christ's obedience, by His loving self-gift that we are brought back to the Father. Reconciliation is bought with a great price, *magiio preHo*. And it was God's love which paid that price: the blood of Jesus, poured out for us. Reconciliation is costly grace.

The reconciliation which is from God is the source of reconciliation among men. Only Christ's love, given to us in the Spirit, can break down in human hearts the walls of prejudice, of hatred, of estrangement and enmity. For the Spirit teaches us forgiveness and compassion, the gifts which make friendship and brotherhood possible among people, among races and nations on the face of the earth.

"For he himself (Christ Jesus) is our peace. Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them: for he... [created] out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace. This was his purpose, to reconcile the two in a single body to God through the cross, on which he killed the enmity." (Eph. 2, 14-16). "So he came and proclaimed the Good News: peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near by; for through him we both alike have access, to the Father in the one Spirit. Thus you are no longer aliens in a foreign land, but fellow citizens with God's people ..." (Eph. 2, 17-19).

Our peace is from Christ, and Christ on the Cross. The Cross speaks eloquently to us of the utter seriousness and intensity of the love which, in Jesus, balks at nothing to bring us back to God.

St. Paul teaches us one last point that is relevant here: "that the ministry of the Church is — and can even be defined as —

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a ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5, 19-20). "God has enlisted us in this ministry of reconciliation... He has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation. We come therefore as God's ambassadors." (2 Cor. 5, 18-19). We who are Christ's are made heralds and bearers of His reconciliation. It is the task of the Christian and the Church to announce by word and deed that in Christ the Father offers us His forgiveness, His all-encompassing love. "It is as if God were appealing to you through us: in Christ's name, we implore you, be reconciled with God!" (2 Cor. 5, 20).

The Church exists, we know, to create communion between mankind and God. And, flowing from that, is the possibility of communion among people, especially among divided people. This is the Church's fundamental task: the total mission of the Church is embraced in the mission to make mankind one in the love of the Father. "Sharing in God's work, we urge this appeal on you: you have received the grace of God. Do not let it go for nothing." (2 Cor. 6, 1-3) St. Paul ends his exhortation with words which are particularly applicable here, at the beginning of this Year of Jubilee: "The hour of favor has now come. Now, I say to you, the day of deliverance has dawned." (*Ibid.*)

The groundwork of our reflection must be what Revelation teaches us about reconciliation, and so we have reviewed some Pauline themes on our redemption. Your own prayer and contemplation, guided by the Spirit of Jesus, will teach you, and those who meditate with you, many things which speak to your own life-situations. Would it not be fruitful if prayer-groups in our parishes, gathered before the Eucharist, could take up these great texts from the New Testament and make them their own through meditation and prayer?

### III. SOME REFLECTIONS ON RECONCILIATION

In the pages that follow I would like to suggest a few thoughts which might also be helpful for a deeper understanding of what this Holy Year of Renewal and Reconciliation asks of us.

#### *Conversion in Our Lives*

Reconciliation begins with each one of us. It cannot be otherwise. Reconciliation begins in us, with the gift of repentance and conversion. We must underline this: *it is a gift*, from



Christ and from His Spirit. We must beg for it. The process of conversion, which the New Testament calls *metanoia* is (according to the prenotes in *The New Rite of Penance*) "a profound change of the whole person by which one begins to consider, judge and re-arrange one's whole life according to the holiness and love of God made manifest in His Son." "Conversion affects a person from within, so that it may progressively enlighten him and render him continually more like Christ." *Metanoia* is a process which must take place "in the deep heart of man." It is of God's doing, but we must let Him do that work in us.

We must ask the Spirit to enlighten us, so that we can discover the Father's will for us. And finding that, we must discover not only what He wants us to do, but what He wants us to *be*, what He wants us to become. For God's will for us is not merely that we fulfill a code of laws and rules, but that we become like Him and that we grow in likeness to Christ.

### *Sin in V»; Sin in the World*

When the Spirit enlightens us to know God's will for us, we see too what separates us from that divine design for our lives. We become conscious of our sin and our sinfulness, in the world in which we live, but also in our own hearts. For sin is not just isolated deeds, but the evil that these build up in our hearts, the hardness of spirit that selfishness creates within us. As the hold of sin grows in us, it separates us more and more from God, from people around us, from the good that is in others, and finally even from our own true selves. Egoism in ourselves and in others like us sets up barriers of self-seeking, envy, distrust, of estrangement and hatred between people. It poisons human relationships, builds up walls of alienation in society, raises up what have been called sinful social structures — attitudes, vested interests, behaviour-patterns, laws, institutions which make collective selfishness incarnate in society. These in turn give permanent shape to injustice, corruption, exploitation, oppression and other social wrongs. And as these multiply and endure in our midst, we become more and more used to them, and do not even advert to their existence.

### *The Gift of Conversion*

The grace of conversion is first of all a gift of enlightenment which enables us to see this evil in ourselves and to become ; ware of the evil around us. But most importantly, it makes

us see that the evil inside us is part of the evil outside us. It makes us see that the roots of evil in the human condition are planted in our own souls. Seeing this, we know that we cannot think of evil as simply "out there" — there firmly and irreversibly outside of us — in other people, in conditions and situations, in sinful structures. For if we really believe that, then we could deal with it quite simply, — by hating it, by gathering force against it, by destroying it with violence, as Hitler, for instance, tried to do with the Jews.

But if we see that evil is rooted in our own hearts, and in others' hearts, then we know that, in God's mercy and with God's grace, it can be changed; in some measure it can be healed. And that we can begin by our own conversion, which is a turning to God for forgiveness and healing. If we want to reverse the evil outside of us, we must want to reverse the evil within us. We have to yield our hearts progressively to the mercy and compassion of the Lord. The price of authentic social liberation (as the Gospel understands it) is the continual liberation of ourselves by the grace of the Redeemer constantly at work within us, purifying us continually from self-righteousness, hatred and violence.

When we say this, we do not in any way deny the usefulness, even the necessity of the active struggle for justice, of the sustained effort for the defense of human rights, through peaceful means of, e.g., social organization and political action, above all on the part of the Christian lay people in society. Reconciliation *must include* within it the work of justice. The wise motto of Pope Pius XII was, *Opus justiae pax*: peace is the work of justice. But we must remember that the Christian action for justice has the Gospel, not ideology, at its core, as its norm. It must spring from a heart and mind steeped in the values of the Beatitudes. It must be inspired by a courage and a hope rooted in the experience of the forgiveness of God in our own lives. Only such action, informed by the mercy and love of the Father, can effectively change the disorder of the world. These are not just pious words. Those "who have ears to hear" will understand what we are saying here.

### *The Gift of "Becoming New"*

The grace of conversion, then, focuses its light not only on the need of "turning around", of change in ourselves. It also shows us that God's goodness and mercy *make the change possible*, and that the gift of "becoming new", of receiving "a new

heart and a new life" — can be ours, by God's mercy. For His mercy is always there, waiting for us, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, ready with the embrace of forgiveness and the gift of sonship restored. His mercy is always there, like the Christ of our crucifixes, with His hands — open hands — nailed to the wood of the cross. Not drawn together into a fist of anger and enmity, of resistance and rejection. But open: open because they are there in a gesture of mercy, a gesture of gift. They are open, like the pierced-open Heart of Christ.

#### IV. *BEING RECONCILED WITH OUR BRETHREN*

The Christian meaning of reconciliation does not end in us and with our personal experience of forgiveness. It must go beyond that, into our reconciliation with our brothers and sisters. In fact, the Gospel tells us that if "when you are bringing your gift to the altar, you suddenly remember that your brother has a grievance against you, leave your gift where it is before the altar. First go and make your peace with your brother, and only then come back to offer your gift." (Mt. 5, 23-24)

Reconciliation is not simply a gift God gives us for ourselves. Like all God's gifts it is also a duty, a responsibility. A task of working for reconciliation in the community, or the communities, which surround us. Even in the larger world around us, insofar as it is within our reach. We have been given, we remember from St. Paul's words, "a message of reconciliation to proclaim, a ministry of reconciliation to fulfill." (2 Cor. 5, 18-20)

More than once in his writings the monk Thomas Merton develops the beautiful — and profoundly true — thought that we experience God's mercy toward us most authentically when His grace enables us to show compassion and mercy toward others. We know that we are truly reconciled with God when we become true instruments of His reconciliation to others. Does not the Beatitude say, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall have mercy shown them"? (Mt. 5, 7)

We can have the mercy of God [Merton writes] whenever we want it, by being merciful to others; for it is God's mercy that acts on them, through us, when He leads us to treat them as He is treating us.

If my compassion is true, if it be deep compassion of the heart and not a legal affair ... then my compas-

sion for others is God's mercy for me. My patience with them is His patience with me. His love for them is His love for me.

Much more could be said here, especially regarding the social dimensions of reconciliation, and the difficult and demanding ministry of peace-making in society. (Perhaps we can address this theme at another time.) Suffice it to say that in our present national situation there is an urgent need of men and women of faith who can help to create that peace which is the work both of justice and love. We need deeply committed Christians who cannot only lay bare the causes of social evils in our midst, but above all create the effective political will by which genuine reforms and profound transformations can be realized.

#### V. *THE SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION: PENANCE.*

We must now turn to the two great sacraments of reconciliation in our Christian life: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Holy Father, in both of the documents we indicated at the beginning of this letter, focuses on a revival of the Sacrament of Penance as one of the main objectives of this Holy Year. "My principal wish," he says, "is that fundamental importance be given to... individual and complete sacramental confession, wherein takes place the encounter between man's misery and God's mercy, and the worthy reception of Eucharistic communion."

The sacrament of confession is repropounded, through the Jubilee, as a testimony of faith in the dynamic holiness of the Church, which makes saints of sinners. It is repropounded as a need of the ecclesial community, which is always wounded in its totality by every sin, even though committed individually. It is repropounded as a purification for approaching the Eucharist, a consoling sign of that sacrament economy through which man enters into direct and personal contact with Christ, who died and rose for him: *"who loved me and delivered himself for me."*

These are words which contain an entire program for a catechesis on the sacrament of Penance. I can only echo the Holy Father's words with all earnestness.

I urge that a catechesis on the sacrament of Penance be fostered in all our parishes, schools and homes; that a renewed understanding and love of the sacrament be a particular objective this year of every catechist and teacher who instructs others in the Faith, of every preacher who proclaims the Word of God in our communities. I urge every priest in the Archdiocese to make serious effort, even at considerable sacrifice to himself, to be available for the administration of the sacrament. I urge that penitential services, carefully prepared beforehand, be held often in churches and oratories, so that the spirit of penance and reconciliation can truly grow in the lives of all.

For is not the sacrament of Penance so often, for many Catholics, the privileged way by which the experience of God's love reaches them? God's grace accompanies their inner repentance in confession; it descends upon sincere hearts in the encounter which the sacrament itself is. A few minutes of that holy encounter have changed lives, made new beginnings possible, rewritten life-histories of men, women and young people. The sacrament of Penance has made these things possible in the past; surely it will continue, with the special grace of God, realizing them in this Year of the Jubilee of our Redemption.

Not a few Catholics have said to me, when I encourage them to approach the sacrament of Penance: "But priests in our church hardly ever hear confessions now. Some even discourage us from going to confession." Perhaps we priests should spend time to reflect on our duty of making the sacrament of reconciliation really accessible to the faithful. For, after all, it is *our duty* to do this; it is not an optional work. It is also, as holy priests tell us, a powerful means of purifying the heart of the priest, for the ministry of forgiving sins in the name and by the power of the Lord is a constant invitation to greater closeness to the Heart of our loving Redeemer. Though it is my hope to speak later with our priests on this matter, I wanted to include at least a few lines on it in my present letter.

## VI. *THE EUCHARIST AND RECONCILIATION*

Before I bring this letter to an end, I would like to take up a few thoughts on the Eucharist as a sacrament of reconciliation — some have said, as *the* primary sacrament of reconciliation.

Some may be surprised at our giving the Eucharist this name, but this is a truth long present in the Christian tradition,

in both the West and the East. Many recent studies have shown this. The Council of Trent, in its 22nd session, teaches this: that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice only once on the Cross, but, at the Supper, left to his Church a sacrifice, "by which that bloody sacrifice offered once on the Cross might be represented and thus its memory endure to the end of time, and so that its saving power may be applied for the remission of those sins which we commit each day." (17 September 1562 cf. Denzinger-Schoenmetzer 1740).\*

For if the Eucharist, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is the renewed presence in our midst of the one sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, then the Mass is the daily entering into our lives of the power and virtue of "the blood of Christ poured out for all, for the forgiveness of sin." As the prayer (of the Mass of the 9th Sunday after Pentecost) tells us, each time the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, *opus nostrae redemptionis exercetur*, the work of our redemption is made operative, (cf. Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 2) The Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, each day opens to us the floodgates of our redemption. It releases rivers of God's mercy into our lives and over the sinful world.

There is one last thought I would like to borrow from a recent article I have read. The writer points out that in the liturgy of the Eucharist, there are two invocations (*epiklesis*) addressed to the Holy Spirit. One is said over the bread and wine; the other is said over the people. The Holy Spirit is called upon to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. He is also called upon to *transform us*, the Christian people, into the Body of Christ.

The first transformation, we might say, is "an easy one". Bread and wine do not resist the conversion. In the "twinkling of an eye" (if I may use this figure!), by the power of the Spirit, it is done. Bread and wine "welcome" their transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ.

But with us it is "not quite so easy". We are sinners; at least we are sinful, laden with the burdens of sin. Weaknesses of body and spirit, selfishness, evil habits, worldliness ingrained

\* The meaning given to this text in our religion textbooks is that by "the sins we commit each day" the Council of Trent meant venial sins and the remains of sin in our souls even after our sins are remitted. Whatever the correct interpretation of these words are, the Church's law stands that mortal sins must as a rule be submitted to the sacrament of Penance before the sinner approaches the eucharistic table.

in us, attachments to what draws us away from good, — all these resist the transforming work of the Spirit. We want, deep down, to become in truth the Body of Christ, and all that this implies for life. But we say, as St. Augustine did before his conversion, "Yes, but not yet. Later perhaps, but not now." Our sinfulness is stubborn; we do not want to die wholly to sin find to our self-seeking. And yet, we know by faith that finally our holiness, our truest happiness, is in giving ourselves up to the power of God's love. We will find our fullest, deepest joy only in becoming, more and more, friends of God, His saints. We must, like the bread and wine, welcome our transformation. Individually, and as a community, we must "open the doors" of our deepest selves, our whole being, to that conversion which the Spirit of Jesus seeks to work in us.

It is the Eucharist which can realize this miracle in our lives. True, usually it is a slow process, because we are filled with so much resistance. It is a slow process of gradual surrender, of step-by-step purification. But if we let Christ work in us, He can change us to His own likeness. We can in our whole lives become bread like Him, bread given for the reconciliation of the world.

### *CONCLUSION*

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters:

This topic of conversion and reconciliation has so much to tell us, and this letter has gone on far longer than I had first planned.

My hope and my prayer is that these thoughts can give at least some among you food for reflection and nourishment for your spirit. I invite you to make them springboards for your own meditation and prayer; for reflection with your family, your friends, your associates. Perhaps after such reflection some of you will want to suggest to your pastors and to me, how we can all together make this Holy Year of Jubilee truly a year of grace and renewed Christian dedication.

Let us together foster a sustained effort toward the renewal of the spirit of prayer and penance, the spirit of justice and love that this Year of Grace summons us to. I ask the sick and the suffering, the old, the bedridden to pray for this intention. I ask contemplative communities to make this a priority before the Lord in their hours of intercessory prayer and self-sacrifice.

I ask our beloved children to storm Heaven for a descent upon our Archdiocese of the Holy Spirit of reconciliation.

Let us pray for religious men and women, that they may show us all the way to conversion and reconciliation by their ministry, but especially by their example. Above all let us pray for our priests, they upon whose shoulders the Church places a special responsibility for leading the faithful toward true personal repentance, mutual forgiveness, works of justice and mercy, authentic reconciliation. I ask too for your prayers for my fellow-Bishops and myself, that the Holy Spirit may make us better instruments in the ministry of reconciliation, and that our hearts may be fashioned by Him each day more and more to the likeness of the Heart of Jesus, who is our peace and reconciliation. *Cor Iesti, pax et reconciliatio nostra.*

One last and truly important thought I have left to the last, so you would not forget it. Let us place our archdiocesan celebration of the Holy Year under the patronage of the Holy Mother of God. It was her *Fiat* at Nazareth, her total surrender to the Spirit's bidding, which opened for mankind the doors to the Redemption. As we sing in the Advent song, she is *alma redemptoris mater, quae pervia caeli porta manes*, the dear Mother of the Saviour, ever remaining heaven's open door. She was in her whole being mankind's Advent, the morning star of the world's salvation. She stands at the doorway of our redemption — and of this Year of Jubilee — to lead us to her Son.

At this moment, as we open the Holy Year, I wish to lay this letter at her feet, and to place our celebration of this time of grace under her intercession and guidance. It is my hope that this Holy Year may make possible a deep renewal of our devotion to her.

Dear brothers and sisters: These pages will reach you just as Lent is about to begin. My hope is that we may accompany each other during these days of prayer and penitence, these days of the practice of justice and mercy, which precede this year's celebration of our redemption. I ask that we kneel in prayer together, to beg our Lord, *Redemptor Hominis*, mankind's saviour and deliverer, "to visit us, to visit our people and our nation" with His mercy and His justice, His reconciliation and His peace, *Veni, Domine Iesu*: come, Lord Jesus, come.

JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN

Given at Manila, on the Feast of Our Blessed Mother  
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# SOLIDARITY: THE HEART OF CHRISTIAN PRAXIS

• Fausto B. Gomez, O.P.\*

Erasmus once said: "If there are in Europe two most intelligent men, the second man, at least, is Thomas More." (Probably Erasmus thought that he was the first.) There is no doubt, however, that in a field of literary works, More's *Utopia* was the first in the world. Like the great Christian humanist and witness that he was, More's *Utopia* continues to be a moral fable for all seasons, including our consumer-oriented and technological season.

The word itself —*Utopia*— was coined by Thomas More. It means, etymologically "no-place" (that which does not exist in any place), and, really the blueprint of a perfect society, an ideal world — a social dream of a better future. Authentic *utopia* today includes three basic elements, namely, a denunciation of the present social disorder, a proclamation of a future ideal order, and the historical praxis to transform that "disorder" and anticipate that "order".

We are witnessing today, politically, philosophically and even theologically a universal re-birth of Utopian plans, thoughts, ideals and dreams. Thus, Utopias — negative and positive — have become a "sign of our time." Against the Utopias of doom (by Aldous Huxley and George Orwell), we observe the Utopias of hope (the authentic Utopias) : the humanistic vision of a New International Order and the Christian vision of a just and fraternal world. In both Utopias, solidarity is an essential path and goal.

The fundamental aim of the New International Order is *to achieve a life of dignity and well-being for all world-citizens*. The guiding elements for the attainment of that aim are: equity,

\* Text of the Speech delivered by the author who is the Dean of the UST Faculty of Theology and Director of the Social Research Center at the 16th Thomas More Lecture sponsored by the UST Faculty of Arts, and Letters, on February 4, 1983.

freedom, democracy and participation, cultural diversity, environmental integrity and solidarity.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the basic goal of the anticipated Christian utopia is *a new world where every human person, no matter what his race, religion or nationality, can live a fully human life*. The way to reach this goal: the praxis of justice and solidarity in freedom and in truth.<sup>2</sup>

Solidarity, therefore, appears as an essential element of authentic Utopias. Thus, it is important therefore to speak on solidarity; moreover, it is necessary to practice solidarity if we really want to transform our conflictive world, our divisive ideological social systems, our alienated human condition. As men and women living at the threshold of the second millennium, as Christians charged with the task of hastening the coming of the kingdom of God, we all are obliged by humanity and fraternity in Jesus to renew the earth.

Before we speak, however, of the praxis of solidarity as the heart, the central category of praxis, particularly of Christian praxis, we have to reflect on it: authentic praxis includes serious reflection, for "all social action involves a doctrine" (Paul VI), and "there is no revolution without a theory of revolution" (Lenin).

We shall speak as Christians and citizens of the world, our categorical framework will, therefore, be the human and Christian vision of solidarity.

We shall develop our theme from a theological perspective. Theology is *orthodoxy* (correct opinion) and *orthopraxis* (correct action). It is not reflection on faith only, but praxis of Christian faith: it is, as stressed by the theologies of praxis, a *critical reflection on historical praxis from the light of faith*. As theologian Moltmann has said paraphrasing a Marxian thesis (XI on Feuerbach), the theologian is not merely concerned with interpreting the world, but with its transformation, while hoping in its divine transformation.

From a theological perspective, and more concretely from the theological field of *Christian social ethics*, we shall attempt to answer these three questions: first, what is solidarity?

<sup>1</sup>J. TINBERGEN (Co-ordinator) : *Reshaping the International Order* (RIQ), London: Hutchinson and Co., 1976 p. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>PAUL VI: *Populorum Progressio* (1967), n. 47. See also JOHN XXIII: *Mater et Magistra* (1961), part IV.

(*Christian reflection*). Second, what does praxis of solidarity entail for the Christian? (*Christian praxis*). And third, what can we do and should do as individual Christians regarding action for solidarity? (*Personal commitment to solidarity*).

## 1. REFLECTION ON SOLIDARITY

Undoubtedly, one of the salient "signs of our times" and, therefore, a messenger of the will of God, is a growing *collective conscience of universal solidarity*, that is, of unity and fraternity among persons and peoples. And yet, the deepest cause of the world's tensions, divisions and inequalities is the lack of human solidarity. Thus, as Paul VI said, *the sickness of our world is a lack of fraternity*. In dramatic terms, the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) presents the bleak situation of solidarity in our times:

"Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources, and economic power. Yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens is still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before today has man been so keenly aware of freedom; yet, at the same time, new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance."

"Although the world today has a *very keen sense of its unity and of how one man depends on another in needful solidarity*, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces. For political, social, economic, racial, and ideological disputes still continue bitterly and with them the peril of a war which would reduce everything to ashes."<sup>3</sup>

Facing the great lack of solidarity among persons and peoples, the continuing trampling of the poor by the rich, of the weak by the strong, men and women of good will and all Christians are urgently asked to work for solidarity because solidarity is "a pre-condition for establishing social rights, security and participation" (RIO); because solidarity is the central ethical category of a needed "new civilization of love" (Paul VI.) *What is solidarity?*

## HUMAN SOLIDARITY

Etymologically, the English word *solidarity* is derived from the Latin verb *solidare*, which means *to unite and re-unite solidly*. Really, solidarity means the *unity of all human beings and their obligation to cooperate with one another in the building of a human world*.

Solidarity underscores the social nature of the human person. Man is a relational being "and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potentials"; thus, "through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue he develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny."<sup>4</sup>

Human life is, therefore, intersubjectivity, authentic interpersonal relationships, communion, love. "From the standpoint of modern anthropology, the basic moral value, and the ultimate motive in human behavior is the search for and the development of love in the broadest sense of the word" (Oraison). In Christian perspective, man, God's creature, was created *through love and for love*: Love is therefore "the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being"; "man cannot live without love" (John Paul II). Thus, "man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, *solidarity* is *I-Thou* relationship, natural love of every person for other persons. Within the social teachings of the Church, the *principle of solidarity* is one of the two basic principles — with the one on human dignity — of the social order. Solidarity is a right and a duty for all: "Each person has the right and duty to live in communion with one another" (John XXIII). *Love for man, therefore, is the prime value of the earthly city* (Paul VI). *What are the bases for human solidarity?*

The radical bases of solidarity are the *common origin, nature and destiny of all human beings*. St. Thomas Aquinas argues this proposition clearly:

"All men born of Adam may be considered as *one man* in as much as they have *one common nature*.

« *Ibid.* nn. 12 and 25.

\*M. ORAISON: *Morality for Moderns*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972, p. 71.

JOHN PAUL II: *Familiaris Consortia*, nn. 11 and 18.

VATICAN II: *Gaudium et Spes*, 24.

Moreover, there should be a union in affection among those for whom there is *one common end*. Now men share in common the one ultimate end which is happiness ... So men should be united with each other and by a mutual love. Besides, since — as Aristotle said —, man is naturally a social animal, he needs to be helped by other men in order to attain his own end. This is most fittingly accomplished by *mutual love* which obtains among men."<sup>6</sup>

Human solidarity, which makes one family of humanity, is based upon the *equal dignity of all human beings* and therefore presupposes the ethical *mediation of justice*. Hence, we cannot have human solidarity without the respect for human dignity and human rights. Although solidarity is mediated by justice, the former goes beyond the latter as Christian solidarity goes further than justice and perfects the natural love of human solidarity.

## CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY

Man created by God is the natural image of God, especially visible interpersonal relationships. Man, re-created in Christ, is the supernatural image of God, manifested in grace and charity. In fact, however, "man's vocation is one, and so is his destiny: since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine. We ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery."<sup>7</sup>

The ethical horizon of Christian Utopia, of the anticipation of the kingdom of God is *charity, the Christian name for love*. Christian ethics is, above all, an ethics of charity, which is the greatest demand (Mk. 12:28-31), which is according to St. Thomas the form of all virtues. Thus the whole moral life of the Christian is centered on charity; the other virtues, to be real virtues, must become mediations of charity. *What is charity?*

Charity is a gift of God (Rom. 5:5) through Jesus (Jn. 3:16), who is the highest revelation of God's love. It is

<sup>6</sup> THOMAS AQUINAS: *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 81, 1: *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 117. See also J. M. DE TORRE: *The Roots of Society*, Manila: Sinagfala Publishers, Inc., 1976, pp. 14-16.

<sup>7</sup> VATICAN II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22.

*undividedly love of God and love of neighbor*, and not one without the other (1 Jn. 4:21) : Jesus, the Master and Model of charity is the Son of God and a Man-for-others. Moreover, as v.e all know, the Commandment of love is *the new commandment* of the Gospel. What is *new* in the commandment of love?

Biblical scholar K. H. Schelkle answers the question. It is new in three ways: first, in the deep intensity of the commandments of love of God and neighbor, and their mutual unity (Mk. 12:29-31) ; second, in the unconditional application of the commandment of love to all men and women without distinction — including the enemies (Mt. 4:43-47) ; and third, in the foundation of the commandment of love of neighbor, namely, God 98 a generous and forgiving Father (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:36; Jn. 13:35).<sup>8</sup>

Within the horizon of charity, *love of neighbor* constitutes, for the Christian, *the primary norm of his social life*. Love of neighbor is *fraternity*: although strictly speaking we can say that only those persons who know God as Father and are united to Christ through grace and love are brothers and sisters of one another (Mt. 23:8), we can accurately say that all men and women are brothers and sisters for "in Jesus Christ God has united Himself to human nature, which is really one; He has thus made of all men and women His brothers and sisters."<sup>9</sup> Thus, as theologian L. Boros has written *brother is the key word of our faith*; and, as J. Ratzinger adds, near the brother is the sister with the same right. (This is an exclusively Christian characteristic.)

As natural love among persons pre-supposes *justice*, so also Christian solidarity, fraternity prerequisites justice, which becomes for the Christian *the first demand of love of neighbor*. What is the normative content of Christian solidarity?

Traditionally, Christian reflection has centered on love of neighbor as beneficence, manifested in the *works of mercy*. Today, the theological reflection done particularly by the so-called theologies of praxis center, equally or more, on love of neighbor

<sup>8</sup> K. H. SCHEKLE: *Teologia del Nuevo Testamento*, III, Barcelona: Herder, 1975, 184-188. Cf. M. VIDAL: *El discernimiento etico*, Madrid: Ed. Cristiandad, 1980, pp. 29-50.

<sup>9</sup> Y. CONGAR: "God Reveals Himself in Poverty", in *New Testament Themes for Contemporary Man*, Ed. by R. M. RYAN (1969), p. 105.

Cf. L. BOROS: *Dios, mundo, hermano*, Salamanca: Ed. Sigueme, 1973, pp. 23-27; J. RATZINGER: *La fraternidad humanas*, Madrid: Taurus, 1962, pp. 63-85.

as social charity, expressed in the promotion of human dignity, rights, social justice and the preferential option for the poor.

Authentic human solidarity is already, at least, implicitly Christian solidarity, in the sense that all that is human is also Christian. Human and Christian solidarity at the universal, regional, national and local levels can be concretized in various explicitations of universal solidarity. Particularly important are *family solidarity*, for the family is a community of life and love, a school of love, and the Christian family, a domestic Church. Also important is the *educational community* which must be permeated according to Vatican II by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love and whose goal is to transmit values for living.

At the parish level, *small Christian communities* have become often exemplary Christian communities of faith, prayer and love. In a concrete manner, the *solidarity of workers* is given much relevance today as shown in *Laborem Exercens* of John Paul II.

## 2. PRAXIS OF SOLIDARITY

As effective praxis of solidarity entails reflection on solidarity, authentic reflection includes social action through solidarity. Indeed, reflection without action amounts to pure *verbalism*. In this context, P. Freire's words are most enlightening:

"There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis ... When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism*, into an alienating 'blah'. It becomes an empty word, one which can not denounce the world, for denouncing is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action."<sup>10</sup>

## 1HE DEMANDS OF HUMAN SOLIDARITY

In his popular novel *The Plague* (1947), Albert Camus writes compassionately of human suffering. Once he said: "The world in which I live revolts me; but, I feel solidarity with all

<sup>10</sup> P. FREIRE: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Australia: Penguin Books, 1972, p. 61.

men who suffer." As human beings, as believers in a God of Love, we all feel compassion of those who suffer. *What to do?* Practice solidarity.

*Praxis* is not merely a social action, any social action. It is *liberating social action*, that is, an action directed to the change of unjust and anti-solidarity structures. The praxis of solidarity refers, basically, to activities geared to defend and promote human dignity, human rights, social justice and love among peoples and nations. In brief, *the praxis of solidarity is the practical option for the human person.*

### *Option for the Human Person*

The human person is the absolute value for all, the fundamental norm and measure of social life: "According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike all things should be related to man as their center and crown."<sup>11</sup> As the great philosopher E. Kant said: "Act in such a way that you always take humanity, in your person as in the person of any other, as end and not as means."

Thus, *the Church*, as the universal sacrament of salvation, in her evangelizing mission *opts for man, always for man, only for man*: "Man, a personal and social being. . . is the primary and fundameyital way for the Church, a way that, in a sense, is the basis of all the other ways that the Church must walk." Why? "Because man, every man, every man without any exception whatever, has been redeemed by Christ; and because with man, with every man without exception whatever, Christ is in a way united — even when man is unaware of it."<sup>12</sup>

Every Christian, therefore, in all his interpersonal relationships, and as a member of the Community of Jesus, must act in favor of man, as a being open to God and to others, in freedom and responsibility; he must defend and promote the dignity of human life (from the very beginning of its conception), the rights of all men and women and children. He must promote all human causes, not because this is fashionable, but because it is a part of his vocation.

<sup>n</sup> VATICAN II: *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 12.

<sup>^</sup>JOHN PAUL II: *Redemptor Hominis*, n. 14.



*Promotion of Justice*

The defense and promotion of man entails the praxis of social justice. This, in turn, is part of the praxis of solidarity: the realization of social justice is a permanent condition, a "conditio sine qua non" of solidarity; otherwise, *the praxis of solidarity would become romantic and sentimental love* — the love of giving alms, as an excuse not to give justice. St. Catherine of Siena said: "To perform charity when justice must be practised would be like applying balm on a wound while retaining all its infection."

The practice of social justice, however, is not enough to transform unjust and anti-solidarity social structures. Love is required, because the practice of "pure" justice has often been the practice of injustice; because in the relations of justice man continues to be "another", when he is also a "brother". John Paul II has said:

"It is obvious, in fact, that in the name of alleged justice (for example historical justice or class justice) the neighbor is sometimes destroyed, killed, deprived of liberty or stripped of fundamental human rights. The experience of the past and of our time demonstrates that justice alone is not enough, that it can even lead to the negation and destruction of itself, if that deeper power, which is love, is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, for man, for the Christian, the choice is not between the praxis of justice or solidarity. The choice is both, because *the praxis of solidarity is impossible without the praxis of justice*. At the international level, the praxis of solidarity demands "the pooling of efforts, of knowledge and of funds" towards the integral development of all persons and peoples; however, this praxis should allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny and permeate international relations between nations with the stamp of mutual respect and friendship, of interdependence in collaboration, seeing the betterment of all as the responsibility of each individual.<sup>14</sup>

## REALIZATION OF CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY

The praxis of Christian solidarity, that is, of love of neighbor demands the realization of the *works of mercy* (short-range

<sup>13</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Dives in Misericordia*, n. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. PAUL VI: *Populorum Progressio*, n. 65.

paths of charity) and of *social charity* (long-range paths of charity).

### *Merciful Love*

Throughout the centuries,- the Church of Christ and her members have manifested an unparalleled commitment to the practice of charity as *beneficence*, particularly through merciful works. The best example today of *merciful love of neighbor* is being given by Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who continues revolutionizing the world by her total dedication to "the poorest of the poor." Thus, she is realizing what seems to be the most revolutionary aspect of Christ's love, the love of 'the little ones'. Y. Congar writes: "The great revelation of His Gospel is the boundless love of Himself and of His Father for the little ones whom the world scorns or condemns. When we know of the mistrust of Judaism — \*and of so many 'self-respecting' religious — for these 'unclean ones', we sense the full revolutionary character of the attitude of Jesus."<sup>15</sup>

Christian salvation, or final liberation, passes necessarily through the practice of merciful love: "I want mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt. 12:7), Jesus said. More than others, *Christians are obliged, individually and collectively, to help the Samaritans of our streets, of <nir nation of our world* — the lowly, the helpless, the marginalized of our societies who lay wounded on the highways of exploitation, injustice, poverty and un-love. These "little ones" are "blessed" — not because they are poor or good, but because Christ is mysteriously present in them. Our way to salvation, then, passes necessarily through the "poor".

### *Social Charity*

To help the "little ones" is not enough, however, to change the social structures of injustice and un-love. To change these structures, the praxis of social charity is required: *it is good to heal the wounds of the sick and the abandoned and the aged; but it is better to heal also the root causes of these wounds*. This is the reason why some theologians today tend to give great importance to the praxis of social charity {*long-range paths of charity*}. Brazilian theologian J. B. Libanio writes:

"The long-range paths of charity seem to correspond more closely to the attitude that is being called for in

our present situation. These are paths that do not lead us immediately and directly to the people... We help the people via the mediation of structures upon which our charity is exercised as to transform them, abolish them, or create them anew, as the case may demand. These changes are a more effective, more universal charity and thus more 'divine'.<sup>16</sup>

The praxis of social charity is part of the Christian prophetic role (beside his priestly and kingly roles). As a *prophet*, every Christian and Christian community must *speak the Word of God* to the world's societies. This task comprises three main functions, namely, *denunciation of injustice* (negative function), *proclamation of justice and solidarity* (positive function) and *education of the people in love and peace* (educational function).

*In the face of evil* — injustice, poverty, violence, glaring inequalities between developed and developing nations, between rich and poor —, *the People of God cannot keep quiet withnd being unfaithful to the Gospel*: they have to denounce these evils as contrary to God's kingdom, as obstacles to a just, participatory and fraternal society. Their denunciation, however, might be branded, at times, as "political activity". Is it necessarily "political"?

### "Doing" Politics?

*Denunciation of injustice* — of structural violence — in itself is *not directly political*: "political", directly, are those human activities directed to the administration or transformation of society through the conquest and exercise of power (Boff). "Political" activity in the strict sense is the art of politics, including party politics. In this field, the Church as a community in society is not and should not be political. She cannot be involved in politics, although her lay members can and should be directly involved: "Christ to be sure, gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious ones." "Let those (faithful) who are suited for it, or can become so, prepare themselves for the difficult but most honorable art of politics."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>J. B. LIBANIO: *Spiritual Discernment and Politics*, New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1977, p. 37-38.

<sup>17</sup>VATICAN II, *Gaudiium et Spes*, nn. 42 and 75.

parish and school levels. The Church fulfills her evangelizing education through her *schools* that are obliged to give an *integral education* that humanizes and liberates fully its constituents, fostering a development geared towards the creation of a society that is truly participatory, free and fraternal. The *Catholic school* must — practise solidarity among its members — administration, faculty, students, employees and alumni —, to become more and more a *school of love, a model of witnessing solidarity* in a given place, in the whole society. As Paul VI said: "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers; and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

The praxis of Christian solidarity comprises the praxis of merciful charity and social charity. In both cases, praxis is directed preferentially to the poor. In this aspect, it is time to pass from verbal message to real commitment. As the Federation of Asian Bishops said recently: We must go beyond merely seconding Pope John Paul's words, that 'the preference for the poor is a Christian preference'. We must now make them the real pattern of our daily praxis."<sup>19</sup>

We have talked of the praxis of solidarity in universal perspective. *Each one of us is charged with the obligation, the vocation of practising it in our different milieus and situations.*

Christian solidarity, as love of neighbor (of all men and women, our brothers and sisters) must be practised, to be really effective and transforming, at the existential level, it must permeate all our interpersonal relationship; and at the smaller human and Christian communities' level, particularly at the family, parish, school, professional and local community levels. All of us are obliged to reflect often upon these questions: *Is solidarity, love the central value in our families? Are our Christian families "domestic Church"? Are our Christian families in solidarity with other families, especially the poor ones? As Christians, do we really belong to the parish community and do we really care for the religious movements and associations committed to social commitment and solidarity? Is our Catholic school, as Vatican II requires, "an educative community permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love"? In our professional life, do we practice solidarity within the profession and with the larger community? Do we really know and care and love our neighbors at home, in our local communities?*

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in *Info on Human Development*, Vol. 9, No. 11 (Nov. 1982), pp. 2-3. See also Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines: "On Social Justice", *CBCP Monitor*, Vol. III, No. 2 (February 1982), p. 19.

### 3. PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO SOLIDARITY

The Utopias of a New International Order and the anticipation of Christ's kingdom demand "new structures" and, more radically, "new men and women"! We strongly believe that *the present structures of injustice and un-love at the international and national levels cannot be changed effectively unless the men and women who maintain, live or merely survive under these socio-economic and political structures change*; unless men and women of good will and Christians become renewed in the depth of their hearts. As the Fathers of Vatican II said: "Man painstakingly searches for a better world, without working with equal zeal for the betterment of his spirit."<sup>1</sup> "It is a 'monstrous masterpiece' of this age" — John XXIII asserts — "to have transformed man, as it were, into a giant as regards the order of nature, yet in the order of the supernatural and eternal, to have changed him into a pygmy."<sup>20</sup>

### CHANGE OF STRUCTURES AND PERSONAL CHANGE

*To change structures, therefore, men and women must transform themselves; not externally, but internally, that is, in their own hearts: the heart, symbolically, is the center and source of the human person's life options, attitudes, values and actions.*

For the Christian, change of heart means change from sin to love. It might seem to some a little far-fetched to *connect praxis of solidarity with conversion*. In fact, however, it is not: We cannot practice solidarity with others unless we consider them brothers and sisters in Christ. And this is not possible unless we are united to Christ in grace and love; unless God is viventially our Father. *Our Father!* Sin, grave sin, is a rejection of God's love in Christ, a betrayal of love of God and neighbor. *Solidarity in evil, in sin is the real obstacle to the praxis of solidarity in love.*

*Repentance of sin* — a permanent Christian attitude: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk. 1:15) — *is a precondition for the genuine praxis of solidarity*. As theologian L. Boff has written:

"The Gospel is not only a declaration: *Salvation is in our midsts! The kingdom is already here!* It is

- "VATICAN II: *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 4. JOHN XXIII: *Mater et Magistra*, n. 243.

also an imperative: *change your life!* Without this change in our way of thinking and living (conversion), the kingdom will not really come ... The transformation of the world in God's sense (kingdom of God) is not a theory but a praxis,<sup>21</sup> that is, the process of a conversion and a liberation.

To be committed to the process of liberation from oppression, injustice and un-love, we all need to be liberated *from sin* and *for love*, to become *liberators of the world*. Christian liberation through justice and solidarity comprises the political, economic and religious dimension. Without the liberation from sin — religious dimension — there can be no true political and economic liberation in the Christian sense: "Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift from God which is liberation from everything that oppresses man but which is above all liberation from sin and the Evil One (Paul VI). The originality of the Christian message "is not found directly over the affirmation on the need of a change of structures, but in the underlining of man's conversion, that demands afterwards change of structures. Truly, there will not be a new continent without new and renewed structures; above all, there will not be a new continent if there are not new men, who in the light of the Gospel, know how to be free and responsible beings."<sup>22</sup> Therefore to love the neighbor as brother or sister, we have to love God as Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Y. Congar says that Jesus was a Man-for-others, because He was a Man-for-God.

Conversion from sin means turning away from evil: from structural as well as, and principally, from personal evil. Do we realize that we have some share in the structural injustice and un-love that permeate our societies? The martyred archbishop Oscar Romero said in a homily:

"Our present society is a sort of anonymous society in which no one is to blame... and each one is guilty of his own shabby tricks." "It should be borne in mind by any group of liberators ... that the primary liberation to be aimed at... is to free itself from its own sin.

<sup>21</sup> L. BOPF: *La vida religiosa en el proceso de liberación*, Salamanca: Ed. Sígueme, 1979, pp. 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> CELAM: *MedeUin Documents* (1968), "Justice". Cf. CELAM: *Pueblo. Document* (1979), n. 973.

As long as one is the slave of sin, of egoism, of violence, of cruelty, of hate, one is not the right person to liberate the people."<sup>23</sup>

*Are we responsible for unjust social structures?* It is true that the structures are there and we feel rather impotent confronting them; moreover, the structures — any structures, for that matter — are limited, imperfect, always in need of being reformed or revolutionized. And yet, it is also true that, in general, *nobody can escape from some responsibility for structural injustice and lack of solidarity*; in particular, each one of us is responsible according to the degree of participation in the evils permeating structures. *How responsible are we, as individual persons and as members of various communities, for structural sin? How much are we immersed in social structures? Do we take advantage of them? Do we denounce their evils* — not only privately, not only with words, but also, and mainly with just and fraternal deeds? *How often do we use, in our interpersonal relationships, the unchristian ethical norm "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"?* *Are we indifferent or insensitive to the plight of the down-trodden and the poor?* Paul VI advises us:

"Let each one examine himself, to see what he has done up to now, and what he ought to do... It is too easy to throw back on others responsibility for injustices, if at the same time one does not realize how each one shares in it personally, and how personal conversion is needed first." And Vatican II states:

"To be sure the disturbances which so frequently occur in the social order result in part from the natural tensions of economic, political and social forms. But at a deeper level they flow from man's pride and selfishness which contaminate even the social sphere."<sup>24</sup>

We may be partly responsible for social sins. We are mainly responsible, however, for our *personal sins* — these are the root causes of the tensions and division in man's heart, and thereafter in society. Unfortunately, still is true that "Adam is Man. Cain is to be found in the newspapers and may be seen

23 "The Teaching of Archbishop Oscar Romero", *Info on Human Development*, Vol. 9, No. 12 (Dec. 1982), pp. 4-5.

<sup>M</sup> PAUL VI: *Octogesimo adveniens*, n. 48. VATICAN II: *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 25.

within our own hearts. Noah and the builders of Babel — they are ourselves."<sup>20</sup>

The road to conversion begins with our awareness of personal sins. And yet, often *some of us are more aware of the neighbor's sins* — the rich, government leaders, the multi-nationals' directors, school administrators — *than of our personal sins*: as in the time of Jesus, so today it is easier to see the speck of sawdust in the other person's eyes than the plank in our own eyes. Hence, we ask others to reform and, perhaps, we do not reform ourselves. This is useless, for "to ask others to reform without starting with personal reform is the surest way not to reform anything: it is simply to charge others with the responsibility of reform."<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, if we want to practice solidarity effectively, credibly, we have to change ourselves — to eradicate the power of sin and sinful actions from our hearts. This is not an easy task; but it is an urgently needed task, if we want to anticipate the coming of the kingdom, and if we want to belong to the eternal kingdom. Truly, by ourselves personally, we can do little, but with Christ, we can be converted and really live as Christians: "By himself and by his own powers, no one is freed from sin or raised above himself or completely rid of his sickness or his solitude or his servitude. On the contrary, all stand in need of Christ, their Model, their Master, their Liberator, then Saviour, their Source of Life."<sup>27</sup>

This personal conversion in the depth of our hearts is what Jesus, above all, asked from us. In fact, "*Jesus did not give us a social program of change*; but He demanded of his followers an interior transformation of their persons. And the reason for this is not that a social program to transform structures is not necessary (and even morally obligatory), but that it is not possible to change structures without changing the hearts of men; structural change alone will soon become a new unjust appropriation. Contact with Jesus' way convinces one of the truths of the saying 'once the law is made, the trap is also made'.

2= DUTCH HIERARCHY: *A New Catechism*, New York: **Herder and Herder**, 1969, p. 261. Cf. F. GOMEZ, *Man's Reconciliation with God*, Manila: UST Press, 1975; M. VIDAL, *Como hablar del pecado hoy*, Madrid: PPC, 1977, 182-190.

-o J. ALFARO: *Esperanza cristiana y liberation del hombre*, Barcelona: Herder, 1972, p. 277.

27 VATICAN II: *Ad Gentes*, n. 8.



A man who is not converted is capable of accepting even revolution as long as he can be 'situated' in it. Nevertheless, facing the call, which stems from the heart of Christ, man is left without escape".<sup>28</sup>

## PENANCE, PRAYER AND THE CROSS

Effective praxis of solidarity requires *conversion from sin and continuing conversion*. This demands necessarily a life of austerity and penance, which is nothing else than total commitment to charity as love of God and neighbor. This penance is actualized vividly through a prayer life as the language of humility, hope and love. There are Christians who, in their zeal for social change and service to the poor relegate prayer to a secondary place in their lives, as if prayer time were a wasted time. And yet, the history of the Church shows that *prayer and action, love of God and love of neighbor must go undividedly together*. A better world and a more faithful Church will come about mainly through the actions of the saints — the true Christian revolutionaries. Take the case of St. Teresa of Avila: the more she was united to God in prayer, the more she committed herself to the service of the Church and of humanity. To be converted from sin, to be reconciled with God and neighbor, we have to pray always and participate in the Eucharist, for how can we pray the "Our Father", if we hate the oppressors? How can we participate in the Eucharist, the banquet of fraternity, center and font of our Christian lives, if we do not forgive the enemies?

Continuing conversion through penance, prayer and charity includes necessarily the *can-ying of the cross*, for Jesus, the Way, is a crucified Lord (I Cor. 1:23). He rose but only after he carried the cross and was crucified in it. Noted theologian. Gonzalez Faus writes these harsh words:

"The scandal of Christianity is that it demands faith in the crucified Jesus as the Son of God. The scandal of our time is that rich nations and even the institutional Church obscure this scandal in sinful indifference. They silently lower Christ from the cross ...

<sup>28</sup> J. I. GONZALEZ FAUS: "Jesus de Nazaret y los ricos de su tiempo", *Mision Abierta*, Vol. 74, Nos. 4-5 (1981), p. 72.

(For them and others) Jesus may be anything but the Crucified One — as if the resurrection instead of illuminating the cross, simply eliminated it."-<sup>9</sup>

It is encouraging that the Theology of Liberation is being completed by a *Theology of captivity*. Indeed, the practice of solidarity includes suffering for the service to others (Mk 10:45), in love with all persons, especially the poor, the crucified of this earth (Mt. 25:31 ff.). Christ taught us, by what He did and what He said, that we too must take up the cross (Mk. 8:34) which the world places upon the shoulders of those who search after justice, peace and solidarity. Truly, bearing our cross in solidarity is a seed for the resurrection of our people (Jn. 12:24), and our own resurrection with Christ.

United dynamically in the praxis of solidarity! This is really the heart of Christian praxis: solidarity, fraternity, love of every neighbor. As Vatican II wrote in *Gaudium et Spes* (24) *if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself;" love therefore is fulfillment of the law; to men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.*

•\*>J. I. GONZALEZ FAUS: "The Relevancy of a Crucified God", *Theology Digest*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (1981), p. 223.

# PRIESTLY RENEWAL AND ST. THOMAS

From the insight that the Holy Year of Redemption is also a year of renewal for priestly vocation, a question would naturally arise: What is there to be renewed in those who are called to the priestly vocation? In other words, what is the *true priestly identity*? Do priests effectively project such an identity? Answers to these questions have a special relevance and interest due to the widespread confusion brought about by the multifarious and sometimes contrary opinions on the subject of priesthood.

The following doctrine on the *true priestly identity* is totally inspired by the teachings of St. Thomas regarding the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the sacramental character. It is my conviction that the teachings of St. Thomas on priesthood have a special relevance and interest due to the widespread confusion on these subjects. Hence, we have to go back to the great masters of theology and spirituality.

\* \* \*

1. Christ Jesus is the Priest of the New Covenant. He is the only Mediator between God and man. In Him dwells the full power of spiritual priesthood. He is the source of all salvific graces while all other priesthoods are founded on Him (*fans totius sacerdotii*).

Christ's priesthood is eternal.

Since the moment Christ assumed human nature in the Blessed Mary's bosom, uniting it with the divine nature of the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, Christ was then anointed by the Holy Spirit as Priest and Victim for our salvation. It is through humanity that Christ became a Mediator between God and man. Therefore, Christ's humanity is the great instrument of salvation and mediation. The priesthood of Christ became a *priuium* «o ne assumed human nature which in God's

hands brings about our salvation. "Christ's Passion, which belonged to Him in respect to His human nature, is the cause of justification, both meritoriously and efficiently, not as the principal cause thereof, or by His own authority, but as an instrument, in so far as His humanity is the instrument of His God-head" (III, 64, 3).

2. One of the most amazing things in all these, however, is that Christ did not want to exercise his ministerial priesthood by Himself alone. He had called certain men to this work and had granted them exceptional powers. First, He founded His Church from the wound opened by a soldier's lance. Later on, in order that the Church will shine in beauty and splendor "He established Order in Her so that some should deliver the sacraments to others, being thus made like to God, in their own way, as cooperating with God (Suppl. 34, 1). By virtue of this mission, all who had received the sacrament of Holy Orders were constituted as active collaborators of Christ's priesthood. And this is precisely what is meant by the word *sacerdos*: "to give sacred things by dispensing the sacraments.... to give the sacraments of grace... As ministers, and as instruments so to say of the outpouring from the Head to the members" (Suppl. 36, 3, 1m, 2m).

3. But how can man, a wretched sinner, overburdened with imperfections, come to realize such a lofty and divine mission? The answer is simple. Everything is God's work: *Hoc solius Dei est*. To all those that had been called by Christ to His ministry, the words of the Prophet could be appropriately said to them: "I have loved you with an everlasting love, so I am constant in My affection for you" (Jer. 31:3).

4. When was the moment when this astonishing manifestation of God's love and generosity took place? On the day of ordination, when the bishop imposed his hands upon the one to be ordained. It was at that precise moment when an influx of divine power, coming from Christ, passed through the hands of the bishop towards the soul and the whole personality of the one being ordained. At that exact moment, man was made a priest of Christ; His minister, collaborator with Him in the work of redemption. "That inward character itself is essentially and principally the sacrament of Order" (Suppl. 34, 2, 1m).

B. What, was the main impact of the Divine influx passing through the hands of the bishop upon altering the inner re-

cesses of the one being ordained? At the time the Bishop laid his hands on the head of the one being ordained, Christ, on His part, filled him with a most copious grace, *amplissima gratia* and at the same time, He *marked him with a divine seal* that could never be erased. It was Christ's will that His collaborators in the priestly ministry should be conformed unto His image. And this is precisely the main effect of the sacramental character of Order: to make priests *like Christ Himself*; engraved on them *by way of an image, the copy of Christ* as Christ Himself is the figure of the substance of the Father.

By virtue of this seal, the priest will no longer be what he was. His mission from now on, in spite of his sins and infidelities, will be:

- "Communicator of Divine gifts" (III, 63, 2)
- "A living instrument of Christ" (III, 64, 5, 2m)
- "To bestow on others things pertaining to divine worship" (III, 63, 5)
- "Deputed to confer sacraments on others" (III, 63, 6)
- "As ministers, and instruments, so to say, of the outpouring from the Head to the members" (Suppl. 36, 4, 2m)
- "To exercise acts immediately directed to God, because to impersonate the whole Church belongs to him alone who consecrates the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of the universal church" (Suppl. 37, 4, 2m).

6. But we have not yet totally mentioned all the marvelous effects produced in the soul of the priest by means of the sacramental character. *The character is an instrumental power* (III, 63, 5) which Christ is using to carry out His priestly action in behalf of man. By means of this instrumental power, the priest realizes *in the name of Jesus* the celebration of the Holy Eucharist for the whole Church. He administers all the other sacraments and explain the word of God to the faithful for a fruitful reception of the Holy Eucharist.

Taking into account that "the nature of an instrument as such is to be moved by another, but not to move itself" (III, 63, 5), it is evident that the one who accomplishes redemption through the sacraments is Christ Himself through His priest.

Therefore, the priest should always think, while exercising his mission, that he is acting *instrumentally*. That is to say, *not by his own but by Christ's power* (III, 64, 9). In this sense the priest is properly called *a copy of Christ* (Suppl. 40, 4, 3m).

7. Needless to say, a dignity and a mission as such needs special graces with corresponding serious responsibilities.

- "The worthy exercise of Orders requires not any kind of goodness but excellent goodness in order that as they who receive Orders are set above the people in degree of Order, so may they be above them by the merit-of holiness" (Suppl. 35, 1, 3m).
- "When they receive Orders they are given a yet greater gift of grace, whereby they are rendered apt for greater things" (Suppl. 35, 1, 3m).
- "Because they are made to stand between God and people, therefore they should shine with a good conscience before God, and with good name before men" (Suppl. 36, 1, 2m).
- "The divine bounty bestows grace on those who receive the character, so that they may accomplish worthily the service to which they are deputed" (III, 63, 5).

For St. Thomas, priestly ordination comes as the highest dignity man could ever receive — *the most divine of the divine ivorks* (St. Dionysius). That is why St. Thomas would conclude that all those who had been called to priesthood should be found perfect in holiness (*perfecti in virtute esse debent*) as the sacramental character made *like Christ Himself* (III, 63, 3). Indeed, this Holy Year of Redemption is one potent opportunity for priests to renew and live up to their vocation in order to be assured, in faith, of their own redemption, and in order to become more effective and powerful instruments for the redemption of others.

Fr. Pedro Tejero, O.P.

# SEMINARY PHILOSOPHY

## Initiating Classroom Strategies

By

**Fr. Norberto Castillo, O.P.**

The aspirant comes on the first day. Like a good seminarian, he appears almost immaculate, *ready, willing* and hoping he'd be *able* to hurdle philosophy. After all, he wants to become a priest.

Entry diagnosis reveals that the candidate possesses a normal IQ, Filipino norm, a "decent" language mastery and a guaranteed set of study habits.

The first months are critical for the adjusting candidate. He soon realizes that philosophy is beyond language requirements and more than a stubborn intelligence quotient. The pressure is on. His superiors are watching closely, expecting him to pass if he can't excel. His family back home takes pride in having a seminarian in the brood and they certainly expect to see him off, after vacation, back to the seminary.

Suddenly, he develops a taste for the relevance of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary!

### *The Agony of Language*

If the trend reading is correct, the majority of first year philosophers are high school graduates. Usually, they bring along with them to the seminary the problems of language and maturity compounding to make the initiation to philosophical concept quite difficult.

Entrance examinations, if these consist in written tests, are at best, only indicators. Chances are, the examinees may have been already exposed to the same or similar set of exam;-

nation which better high schools in the country are well stocked with. These would be no problem, then, in getting a satisfactory score.

The facility of written language is a tremendous asset. What aspirants usually lack is the oral facility to express his ideas, to articulate in flesh and blood and color concepts which are otherwise too structural and sterile. This constitutes a major skill in the truth-search. And this is where the real trouble begins. It is too difficult to write and to speak English philosophically.

The baselessness of the assumption that the young philosophy student is indeed articulate in both oral and written communication becomes evident after a week of drill. It's not the rule, and exceptions are rare indeed.

Such an assumption then becomes a primary objective to be attained. The teacher can only hope that this objective could be qualitatively perceivable at a given time-frame.

### *The Scouring in the Classroom*

'Start them young', educators are wont to declare in unison. And by this they mean: 'Scourge them early!'

Skills and good study habits are not learned overnight. Learning is an uphill climb which is why the formation process becomes excruciating the bigger the boulder to be surmounted. The contact-communication appears to be an *ens immobile*, but only for the moment, we hope.

Hence, it is necessary that an orchestrated set of approaches be marshalled during the initiation years of the budding philosophers. The same set of strategies should be employed in *all* classes.

First, the basic learning materials should be made available for individual use. This may come in the form of a prescribed text, lecture notes or other handy resources. With the advent of copiers and multipliers, there is no reason why the materials should be privy only to the lecturer.

Precisely because of the varying ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of the students, the<sup>1</sup> professor should learn to choreo-



graph a particular behavioral objective which will enable him to identify better the learner's strengths and weaknesses.

Emphasis on the development of the ability is likewise indispensable. The future apostolate of the seminarian calls for the refined use of such a skill. Hence a generous concentration of the classroom strategies towards the refinement of oral skills is called for.

Among the variety of methods already known, several could easily be put to use and used properly. The following are:

1. *Recall* — The ability to summarize the lesson content in one's own words.

2. *Summative interpretation* — The ability to reduce a series of interrelated paragraphs into more essential, thought-idea sentences.

3. *Logical correlation* — The ability to correlate thought-idea sentences on their logical agreement or disagreement relationships.

4. *Definition-building Exercises* — The ability to come up with a personal formulation of the main idea or concept.

5. *Application and analysis* — The ability to test a fundamental thesis or principle with another principle in a related area and/or in a concrete, example.

6. *"Tertium Quid" Formation* — The ability to infer, to deduce a series of logical statements from given fundamental principle.

7. *Philosophy of Prepositions and Particles* — The ability to use prepositions and particles accurately in different modes and applications.

These cognitive skills should be rigorously developed, calling for the learner to talk, talk-act (role-playing), write-and-talk, construct-and-talk (includes building one or three dimensional models and explaining the rationale behind such models).

The learner, no doubt, depending on the degree of socialized recitation he had experienced before, will react to write and-talk atmosphere with ambivalence. But no matter, as long as this positively challenges him and keeps his study hours and beyond, filled and occupied.

A healthy academic 'anxiety' is developed in the learner. He knows that he will be called to participate on a daily basis. He knows that he should always be ready for class, a class which now transcends its physical walls and the hands of the clock. The primacy of priorities are now what determines the limits of the class.

At the end of the time-frame, the candidate hopefully, will more cognitively-articulate, affectively-responsible, psychomotor-creative.

### *The Carrying of the Task .*

Negatively, learning requires that the ground should be cleared of debris and other materials which are alien and inimical to a study-life which should sink into the whole system of the individual. This is a continuous process.

After the learner has been initiated in the comprehension skills and its articulation, philosophical principles are now next in order. But first, attitudinal skills are administered and needed health check. Can the seminarian carry on the task of learning, to think philosophically? Does he have the proper attitude and aptitude for this unnerving endeavor?

If time is a function of learning, then the qualitative use of the MEC—imposed period of time is as essential as the quality of the philosophical program at hand. While there is an advantage of a longer time span, practicability of making the best out of what is time-available, is the second best.

Philosophy is an area which is not exempted from a rainfall of school of thoughts and a battalion of philosophers-of-their-own-kind.

We are not training encyclopaedists. We are training philosophers who are supposed to be equipped to discern and to discriminate the multifarious manifestations of truth and truth claims.

Doing theology is the central goal of a behaving philosophy. Hence, philosophy taken in a seminary assumes a formality determined by the "job description" the candidate will assume in the future. This task takes place in a school which does not delve into the manufacture of intellectuals *per se*, but

of persons learning to grasp the joys and pains of consecrated life within which intellectual life is one of the basic instruments.

Hence, a long process of formation should come up with Aristotle's *wise man*: the embodiment of consistency, coherence, order and integration.

This calls for a sustained and well-evaluated program which should put the training of a lawyer or a doctor at a pale second place. Mediocrity creeps in when the atmosphere becomes too relaxed for comfort as experience of formators testify.

The "core essentials" of the basic courses should be a specialist in a specific area but is cognizant of the general structure of the whole philosophical edifice. Conviction, mastery, relevance ensue.

At this point, there is a need to emphasize that the role of a professor is more of a guide than the source. He leads his students by the ladder-type question method, allowing them to see and appreciate for *themselves* so that memory becomes an effect rather than a cause. He encourages the learner to come up with his own insights, view the query with a dimension of his own generation. Difficulty in the early state of philosophical initiation is lessened when the learner is made an active participant and is held responsible for his own learning and formation. The individual now approaches the study of philosophy as "learnable" because he has been treated as "teachable". The encounter this time is on "friendlier" terms because he possesses a modicum of the necessary tools.

He is now ready to learn how to learn.

# CANON LAW

## WHAT IS NEW IN THE 1983 CODE ABOUT PARISH PRIESTS?

INTRODUCTION: As the title of our talk implies —

- (1) we shall try to cover as much grounds as possible which may interest parish priests without, however, any pretense to exhaustiveness;
- (2) the nature of our talk, therefore, will be *generally* informative rather than *minutely* critical;
- (3) our methodology will be like that of a bee which flies from flower to flower which interests him, so also we shall go from canon to canon which we think shall be of interest to parish priests;
- (4) lastly, our outline shall be the following:
  - I. On the Parish
  - II. On the Parish Priest
  - III. On the Different Functions of a Parish Priest
  - IV. On Councils to be erected in a Parish
  - V. On the Parochial Vicar and the Parochial Administrator
  - VI. On the Termination of the Office of A Parish Priest

### I. ON THE PARISH

1. Unlike in its drafts, the New Code defines a parish as a *community* instead of using the phrase *portion of the Christian faithful*. This difference distinguishes the parish from the particular church (c. 515, 1).
2. A legitimately erected parish possesses juridic personality (c. 515, 3).
3. The parish priest represents the parish in all juridic affairs (c. 532).

4. After hearing from the council of priests, the diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress, or alter parishes (c. 515, 3).
5. The ordinary rule is that the Bishop is the person competent to assign the office of parish priest unless another person possesses the right of presentation or of election (c. 523). It is he who shall determine the suitability of a candidate to a parish (c. 521, 3) taking into account the requirements of law, namely that he should be a priest distinguished for his sound doctrine and integrity of morals and endowed with a zeal for souls (c. 521).
6. The New Code equates a parish to a quasi-parish (c. 516, 1). But it also provides a place for the possibility that certain communities cannot be erected into a parish or a quasi-parish (c. 516, 2).
7. A parish may either be territorial or personal (c. 518)

#### ON THE PARISH PRIEST

1. The Code of 1918 enunciates that: "In one and the same parish there can be but one and the same pastor who has the actual care of souls; all contrary customs are disapproved and all contrary privileges recalled (c. 460, 2).

In the New Code, this one-parish-one-pastor principle is also considered as the normal case (c. 526, 1). However, it also states: "When circumstances require it, the pastoral care of a parish or of several parishes together can be entrusted to a team of several priests. By law, however, one of these priests should be the moderator in exercising pastoral care, i.e., he should direct their combined activity and answer for it to the bishop." (c. 517, 1)

Team ministry, therefore, is admitted by the New Code.

Each of the members of this team shall have the rights and duties of a parish priest (c. 543, 1); they should be endowed with the qualities required by law in a parish priest (c. 521); through common counsel,

they should arrange among themselves the functions which each one should perform (c. 543, 1) ; but only the moderator shall represent the parish as a juridic person (c. 543, 2, n. 3).

When one of the members of the team or even when the team's moderator ceases from office or when one of them becomes incapable of exercising pastoral duties, the parish or parishes entrusted to the team's care do not become vacant. It is the duty of the diocesan bishop to assign another moderator. The priest in the team who is older by reason of assignment should fulfil the office of moderator until another is appointed by the diocesan bishop, (c. 544)

2. A juridic person can not be a pastor. The diocesan bishop (not the diocesan administrator) can, with the consent of the competent superior entrust a parish to a clerical religious institute or to a society of apostolic life. By law, however, one priest should be the parish priest of the parish or one priest should act as moderator in case of team ministry (c. 520, 1).

The assignment of a parish to an institute of perfection can be permanent or it can be set for a pre-determined period by time. In either case, the assignment should be made by means of a written agreement entered upon between the diocesan bishop and the competent moderator of the institute or society. Among other matters, this agreement should expressly and carefully determine matters which concern the work to be fulfilled, the persons to be attached to the parish, and finances (c. 520, 2).

3. As the Pio-Benedictine Code admitted exceptions to the principle of one-parish-one-pastor, so also the New Code repeats: "A parish priest shall have parochial care of but one parish only. The care of several neighboring parishes, however, can be entrusted to the same priest due to a death of priests or to other circumstances." (c. 526, 1)

The care of several parishes can also be entrusted to a team ministry (c. 517, 1).

Further, a diocesan bishop may decide that due to a dearth of priests, participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish may be entrusted to a deacon

or to a lay person or to a community of lay persons. In this case, however, the Bishop should appoint a priest who shall be endowed with the powers of a parish priest and who shall moderate the parish's pastoral care (c. 517,2).

4. The New Code also stresses the importance of the stability of the tenure of a parish priest. It says: "The parish priest ought to possess stability in office. He should therefore be assigned for an indefinite period of time. The diocesan bishop can assign him for a certain period of time if a decree of the Conference of Bishops had permitted this (c. 522). This is the reason for the suppression of the distinction between movable and im-movable parishes.

### III. ON THE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS OF A PARISH PRIEST

1. Canon 519 of the New Code describes the different functions of a parish priest in the following manner: "Th-; parish priest is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him. He exercises pastoral care over the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share. In accord with the norm of law, he therefore carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and ruling, while employing as co-workers other priests or deacons and conferring other jobs to lay Christian faithful."
2. These functions are further specified by the New Cod\*<sup>1</sup> when it enumerates the obligations of a parish priest, namely —
  - A. to announce the Word of God in its integrity specially through —
    - a. the homilies on Sundays and holy days of obligation which a parish priest may not delegate to a lay man (c. 767, 1) ;
    - b. through catechetical instructions to children and young adults, to non-practising Catholics and to unbelievers (c. 528, 1).

## BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

- B. to encourage devotion to the Blessed Sacrament;
  - C. to foment family prayers;
  - D. to exercise vigilance on the liturgy in his parish lest abuses creep in (c. 528, 2) ;
  - E. to know his flock by visiting homes and emphasizing in their cares and worries (c. 529, 1) ;
  - F. to direct the lay apostolate to religious ends;
  - G. to cooperate with the programs of the diocese and of the universal Church;
  - H. to reside in his parish (c. 533, 1) ; and
  - I. to say the Missa Pro Populo every Sunday and holy day of obligation (c. 534, 1).
3. In this connection, we can point out that the New Code no longer talks of functions reserved to parish priests. It now only lists down the functions entrusted (not reserved) to parish priests in order to enhance the ministerial character of his office. They are the following —
- A. the administration of baptism:
  - B. the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those who are in danger of death;
  - C. the administration of viaticum and of the anointing of the sick as well as the imparting of the apostolic blessing;
  - D. assistance at a marriage and the imparting of a nuptial blessing;
  - E. performing funerals;
  - F. the blessing of the baptismal font during the Easter season, leading processions outside the Church, and solemn blessing outside the church; and
  - G. the more solemn celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

## ON COUNCILS TO BE ERECTED IN A PARISH

1. Pastoral Council — After the diocesan bishop has listened to the council of priests and if he should judge it opportune, a pastoral council should be established in each parish (c. 536, 1) :



- A. its existence depends therefore on the decision of the bishop;
  - B. the parish priest presides over it;
  - C. parochial vicars shall belong to it;
  - D. the Christian faithful who share in the parish pastoral activity shall be represented to it as members;
  - E. it shall have a consultative vote only;
  - F. it is ruled by norms issued by the diocesan bishop, (c. 536, 2)
2. Financial Affairs Council
- A. Each parish should have a Financial Affairs Council;
  - B. This shall be regulated by the universal law and by norms issued by the diocesan bishop;
  - C. Its members are chosen in accord with diocesan norms (c. 537).

## ON THE PAROCHIAL VICAR AND THE PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

1. The *Code of 1918* mentions several parochial vicars, namely, the *vicarius actualis*, the *vicarius economus*, the *vicarius substitutus*, the *vicarius adjutor* and the *vicarius cooperator*. Of these, only the *vicarius cooperator* is retained by the New Code. However, it calls it parochial vicar.
2. Parochial Vicar
- A. Parochial vicars are priests who render their services in the pastoral ministry as co-workers with the parish priest in counsel and endeavor (c. 545, 1).
  - B. They are subject to the authority of the parish priest (c. 545, 1).
  - C. A parochial vicar can be assigned to direct his efforts toward fulfilling the entire pastoral ministry in behalf of the entire parish (cc. 545, 2; 548, 2).

- D. He can also be assigned to direct his efforts to some definite part of the parish, or to a certain group of the parish's Christian faithful, or towards fulfilling a certain type of ministry in several determined parishes concurrently (c. 545).
- E. For valid appointment as parochial vicar, ordination to the sacred priesthood is required (c. 546). A deacon therefore cannot be a parochial vicar.
- F. It should also be noted that consultation with the parish priest and/or the vicar forane on the appointment of a parochial vicar depends on the judgment of the bishop and is, therefore, not mandatory (c. 547). The bishop freely appoints the parochial vicar.
- G. The parochial vicar should regularly consult with the parish priest on parish programs (c. 548, 3).
- H. He also has the obligation to reside within the parish (c. 550, 1) in community with the parish priest whenever this can be done (c. 550, 2).
- J. For a just cause, the parochial vicar can be removed by the diocesan bishop or by the diocesan administrator (c. 552).

### 3. Parochial Administrator

- A. The bishop may appoint a parochial administrator not only when a parish is vacant but also "when the parish priest is hindered from exercising his pastoral duty in the parish due to captivity, exile, banishment, incapacity, ill health or some other cause ..." (c. 539).
- B. The diocesan bishop should issue norms which provide for the care of a parish by a priest equipped with the needed faculties during the absence of the parish priest (c. 533, 3).
- C. A parochial administrator is bound to the same duties and enjoys the same rights as a pastor unless the diocesan bishop states otherwise (c. 540, 1).
- D. He is not permitted to do anything which can call into prejudice the rights of the parish priest or which can be harmful for the parish's good. (c. 540, 2) ;

- E. After he has fulfilled his duty, the parochial administrator should render an account to the parish priest (c. 540, 3).

## VI. ON THE TERMINATION OF OFFICE OF A PARISH PRIEST

1. Removal or Transfer — A bishop may remove or transfer a parish priest according to law (c. 538, 1).
2. Resignation (c. 538, 1)
  - A. for a just cause
  - B. accepted by the bishop
3. Retirement (c. 538, 3)
  - A. when a priest reaches his 75th birthday
  - B. he is supposed to resign
  - C. the bishop may or may not accept
4. Lapse of definite time of appointment — as when a decree from the Conference of Bishops is had.

Fr. Wilfredo Paguio'

*\* Editor's Note: This talk was delivered during the Seminar on "The New Code of Canon Law: An Update" for Parish Priests at UJS.T. The author will be publishing a follow-up and more complete article in the near future.*

## 1. PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

*Can you publish in BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO the norms of the new Codex regarding the preparation of a marriage? I hear they differ considerably from the norms contained in the 1917 Codex still in force. If we know what those norms are, we can prepare future couples accordingly. Thanks in advance.*

*A newly ordained Priest*

The new Codex which will start to be binding on November 27 of this year devotes the first chapter on marriage to the preparation of future couples for the reception of the Sacrament of Marriage. This chapter in its entirety reads as follows:

### CHAPTER I

#### THE PASTORAL CARE AND THE THINGS THAT SHOULD BE DONE PREVIOUS TO THE CELEBRATION OF MATRIMONY

Can. 1963 — Pastors of souls are duty bound to procure that the proper ecclesiastical community should give assistance to the faithful, so that the matrimonial state may be preserved in the Christian spirit and may progress in perfection. This assistance should be given principally:

1<sup>st</sup> through preaching, a catechesis adapted to children, young and adults, even with the use of the means of social communication, by all of which the faithful should be instructed in the significance of Christian matrimony and the obligations of the consorts and of Christian parents;

2<sup>nd</sup> through the personal preparation for contracting matrimony, by which preparation the spouses may be disposed for the holiness and duties of their new state;

3<sup>rd</sup> through the fruitful liturgical celebration of matrimony, by which it is shown clearly that the consorts signify and partake of the mystery of the unity and fecund love between Christ and the Church;

49 through the help given to the married, so that they, keeping and protecting faithfully the conjugal union, may come closer day by day to a holier and fuller life to be led in the family.

Can. 1064 — It pertains to the Ordinary of the place to take care so that the same assistance be duly put in order, even consulted, if it would seem opportune, men and women proven in experience and expertise.

Can. 1965 — §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation, ought to receive it, if it can be done without great inconvenience, before they be admitted to matrimony.

§2. So that the sacrament of matrimony be received fruitfully, it is insistently recommended to the spouses that they approach the sacraments of penance and the most Holy Eucharist.

Can. 1066 — Before matrimony may be celebrated, it ought to be proven that nothing lies on the way to its valid and licit celebration.

Can. 1067 — The Conference of Bishops ought to lay norms about the examen of the spouses, also about the matrimonial banns and other opportune means to perform the investigations which are necessary before matrimony; such norms having been diligently observed, the pastor may proceed to assist at the matrimony.

Can. 1068 — In peril of death, if other proofs cannot be had, unless there be signs to the contrary, the affirmation of the contracting parties is sufficient, under oath if the case should bear so, that they are baptized and are not hindered by any impediment.

Can. 1069 — All the faithful are bound to reveal to the pastor or the Ordinary of the place, before the celebration of the matrimony, the impediments, if they know any.

Can. 1070 — If other than the pastor, who has the right to assist at the matrimony, has performed the investigations, he ought to inform the same pastor as soon as possible about their result, by means of an authentic document.

Can. 1071 — §1. Except in the case of necessity, without the license of the Ordinary of the place, no one may assist:

1º at a matrimony of vagrants;

29 at a matrimony which may not be acknowledged or celebrated to the norm of civil law;

39 at the matrimony of one who is bound by natural obligations toward another party or toward the children born from a preceding union;

49 at the matrimony of one who notoriously has cast the catholic faith;

59 at the matrimony of one who is bound by a censure;

69 at the matrimony of a minor child of a family, the parents being uninformed or reasonably opposed;

79 at the marriage to be entered into by procurator, about which in can. 1105.

§2. The Ordinary of the place ought not to grant license to assist at a matrimony of one who notoriously has cast the catholic faith, unless the norms of can. 1125 are observed.

Can. 1072 — Pastors of souls ought to take care to avert from the celebration of matrimony the young before the age in which matrimony is usually entered into according to the accepted customs of the region.

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It is obvious that parish priests should take into consideration whatever their local Ordinary has prescribed regarding preparation of future spouses, as stated in can. 1064. Likewise, the norms given by the Conference of Bishops on the examen of the contracting parties, on marriage banns and other things, ordained to find out the capacity and freedom of the spouses (can. 1067), should be carefully studied and put into practice faithfully, if we want to achieve a worthy reception of the sacrament of marriage by the faithful. A uniform practice of all these norms and a conscientious zeal for the spiritual welfare of prospective spouses will prevent defective nuptial celebrations that, later on, will cause headaches to the matrimonial ecclesiastical tribunal. Many cases brought to the Church's tribunals can be prevented if only the pre-matrimonial investigation were conducted properly according to the law.

## 2. JUSTIFYING REASON FOR BINATION

*Nowadays it is frequent for a priest to say two or even three Masses on weekdays and four Masses on Sundays and Holidays of obligation. Parish priests are empowered to allow guest priests to do so when necessary. A few days ago a friend of mine got married and invited me to have the nuptial Mass. They wanted to have the wedding ceremony on the afternoon, just to give time to some relatives to arrive from the province. I said my morning mass is in the parish where I am assistant parish priest, then I phoned the parish priest of the church where the wedding would take place to allow me to binate for the wedding. I was surprised when the parish priest told me that he could not allow me to binate, since there is a priest in his own church who would be willing to say the mass for the couple in the afternoon. We discussed the problem for some time over the telephone, but the parish priest did not give in. I was really embarrassed and did not know how to tell the couple. I have promised them to solemnize their marriage. In order to clarify the problem may I request you to answer the following questions:*

- 1. Can the pastor of a church allow and deny a priest to binate in his parish?*
- 2. Couldn't I get permission from my own parish priest to binate in another parish church?*
- 3. What was the real reason for denying me to binate in the wedding?*
- 4. Was not my previous promise to the couple a sufficient reason to allow me to binate?*

*An assistant parish priest*

Our consultant is correct in saying that nowadays it is frequent to see priests binate and even trinate on ordinary days and to say four masses on Sundays and Holidays of obligation. The scarcity of priests is keenly felt and the Church allows priests to say more than one mass for the welfare of the faith-

ful, who would suffer the effects of this scarcity if the few existing priests were not allowed to say more than one mass, as the universal law states. But this is a concession granted by the Church and it should be used only by fulfilling the conditions imposed by the Church herself. The favor of binatinj; cannot be used indiscriminately.

Bination is not granted unless necessary. This necessity originates from the fact that there is no available priest who has not said his Mass yet. If there is no available priest to say the Mass, the parish priest or other priest may be allowed to say another Mass. Bination is only granted for the spiritual welfare of the faithful, not for the welfare or convenience of the priest who binates.

With these observations in mind, we answer the questions of our consulting friend:

1. The parish priest may allow another priest to binate, when there is need on the part of the faithful and there is no available priest to say that mass without bination. Likewise, he may deny the faculty to binate when there is no need for bination, namely when the faithful- do not need it and when there is an available priest to say the mass without^ bination. We assume that the parish priest has received from the Ordinary the faculty to allow bination in case of necessity.

2. The proper parish priest could not give our consultant the permission to binate outside his own parish. The parish priest has received, we suppose, this faculty to allow bination within his own parish only.

3. The real reason of denying our consultant to binate in the wedding was simply the availability of another priest to say the mass without resorting to bination. The local Ordinaries are given by the Holy See the faculty to permit bination *when priests are lacking*. In other words, bination is not allowed when a priest is available to prevent bination.

4. The previous promise of our consultant to the couple that he would officiate in their wedding mass is not a sufficient reason to allow him to binate. The proper thing for him to do would be not to have promised the couple to officiate before asking the permission from the pastor of the Church where the wedding was to take place.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.



## HISTORY

# DOMINICAN TOWNS IN PANGASINAN

## THE DOMINICANS - FOUNDERS AND BUILDERS OF TOWNS IN PANGASINAN

(1587 - 1898)

### 8. SAN CARLOS

*Founding, etymology and location.*

San Carlos originally called Binalatongan at the time of its founding, was the very first town that the Dominicans founded in the Philippines. Its missionary history dates back to the year 1587 when the sons of St. Dominic arrived in the Philippines, and some of them a little later proceeded to Pangasinan.<sup>1</sup>

Binalatongan, the original name of San Carlos, comes from the root word *balatong*, which means *mongo* (a kind of bean), with the infix *in* and the suffix *an*, the meaning of the whole word being a "place where mongoes are grown."<sup>2</sup>

San Carlos is situated in the central plains of Pangasinan and in the interior of this province, in a region formerly called Caboloan, which means "a place where *bol-o* is found in abundance."<sup>3</sup>

It is bounded on the northwest by Lingayen; on the north by Calasiao at a distance of about 13 to 14 kilometers; on the northeast by Santa Barbara; on the east by Malasiqui at about 7 kilometers; on the south by Mangatarem and Urbiztondo, and on the southwest by Aguilar from which it is separated by the Agno river, which also divides it from Salasa towards the west.

<sup>1</sup> ADUARTE, *Op. cit.*, p. 70, col. 2.

<sup>2</sup> SUAREZ, *Op. cit.*, fol. 188v.

<sup>3</sup> Bolo is a special kind of bamboo which, due to its thinness and lightness is specially used in making woven baskets, *sairali* and *bilao*.

Such were the boundaries of San Carlos in 1869 when Father Suarez wrote the history of the towns of Pangasinan.<sup>4</sup> At present it has the additional bordering towns of Bugallon to the west, and of Basista, a former dependency of San Carlos itself, to the south/

The jurisdictional grounds of San Carlos are irrigated mainly by the Agno river, the largest in the province, which originating in the eastern mountain ranges northeast of Pangasinan, flows in a southwest-northern direction and empties into the gulf of Lingayen. San Carlos, according to Father Suarez, had a vast expanse of land but hardly half of it was put to agricultural purposes. Formerly it abounded in swamps, and it was a common saying of the townspeople that it had more swamps than the rest of the Philippines.

*The four successive sites of San Carlos. —*

In bygone times it was not infrequent in the Philippines that a town be transferred from one site to another. This policy, so unfamiliar to Europeans, was here an easy affair because the houses were of makeshift materials and the first occupants of the place were not yet well acquainted with its environmental conditions. It was but a matter of course that they should look for a more convenient site, whenever possible. At times there might have been exceptional reasons, as it happened in the fourth transfer of San Carlos.

The town of San Carlos which the first missionaries won into the fold of the Catholic church, was located between the left bank of the Agno river and the Zambales mountain ranges. Later, on an unknown date it was transferred to the right bank on a site dubbed by popular tradition "Baley-daan," which in the local dialect is equivalent to "Old Town."<sup>7</sup> Then with the occasion of the burning of the convent and church in 1718, it was again moved in 1721 to a new side called "Abagbagaan"

<sup>4</sup> «SUAREZ, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> The parish of Bugallon was established in 1920. Bugallon was made a town after the great flood of 1935 in lieu of Salasa which lost its township at that time. The present municipality of Basista was erected into a town on September 5, 1961 (Cfr. *Souvenir Book of the Solemn Consecration and Inauguration of the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist*, Dagupan City, Pangasinan, December 26-27, 1974, pp. 48, 57.

<sup>6</sup> SUAREZ, *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> MORA, MANUEL, O.P., *Estado de las casas de la Provincia en Filipinas, Años de 1801-1805*, MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 2, fol. 87.

where it stood until its convent and church were put to the torch in 1763 by Palaris and his men. Again, due to the active participation of the people of San Carlos in the 1763 uprising, its former name of Binalatongan was changed by decree of King Charles III to San Carlos, with the proviso that its population should never go beyond 500 tributes. However, throughout the 19th century its inhabitants never fell below 5,000 tributes, despite the eventual segregation from it of Aguilar, Mangatarem and Urbiztondo.

The same decree of King Charles III provided that Binalatongan was to be relocated. Hence, its transfer to its present site.

### *Church buildings. —*

To win the people of Pangasinan for Christ, the Dominican Father Bernardo Navarro, famous in the early religious history of this province for his eminent holiness, arrived with five other priests in Binalatongan in September, 1587, and a Spanish *encomendero*, Jimenez del Pino, left at their disposal as their dwelling place a small bamboo and nipa hut, inasmuch as the natives stubbornly refused to provide them with better living quarters.<sup>1\*</sup> Some time later the Fathers themselves managed to put up for their use a house and a church that in all probability were not much better than that given them by Del Pino. Without doubt as years rolled by, Binalatongan might have boasted of more sumptuous and more artistic church buildings, but History keeps silent about the time and quality of their construction.<sup>11</sup>

When Binalatongan was located in its second site, both its church and convent went up in flames on August 4, 1718, and the succeeding buildings built in its third site suffered a similar fate during the 1763 uprising, for it so happened that after the insurrectionists of San Carlos had set afire the convent and church of Calasiao, feeling embarrassed that they did not start

<sup>8</sup> SUAREZ, *hoc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Regarding its third site Father Suarez remarks: "As a matter of tact, between Aguilar and San Carlos, not far from the 'lake' Matulag and in the place named Abagbagaan remnants of the old structures were seen, a clear proof that the town was located there before" (SUAREZ, 188v).

<sup>10</sup> ADUARTE. *Op. cit.*, p. 70, col. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75, col. 1.

their burning rampage at home, they returned to their own town and reduced to ashes their own church and convent.<sup>12</sup>

Towards the year 1770 the foundations of a new church were laid and the whole structure seems to have been finished by 1773. It was very high and wide but of defective construction for lack of proportion especially in its foundations. Some attributed to this defect the damage that it sustained on the occasions of the successive earthquakes of 1796, 1798 and 1799. Thus by order of the Superior Government the walls of the church had to be lowered and reinforced from the very foundations with buttresses about the years 1802-1804. As Father Manuel Mora attests, the convent of brick had been under construction for many years and in 1804 it was not yet finished.<sup>13\*</sup>

Then, in 1822 another fire reduced to a heap of ashes the convent and church, except for the masonry.<sup>14</sup> In 1864 or thereabouts the church, already rebuilt, was roofed with tiles, but which Father Gabriel Perez replaced with nipa shingles. The convent by this time was also of bricks, but the roof was covered with nipa shingles.<sup>15</sup>

Many years later, one of the Vicars of San Carlos, the scholarly and active Father Francisco Alvarez Carrozal, raised the belfry about nine meters. For many years the church of San Carlos had had no tower, as its historians repeatedly state. This same Father built right from its foundations a cemetery of stone and mortar walls, with its own chapel and various rows of niches alongside the walls.<sup>18</sup> Besides, he dug a ditch in order to empty a lagoon which, by flooding the cemetery during the rainy season, turned it into a breeding place of mosquitos and a source of diseases for the townspeople.<sup>17</sup>

*Indigenous sanctity in Binalatongan. —*

A town that was founded by a priest of such sterling holiness as Father Navarro and administered after him by some priests of eminent virtue could not fail to breed plants and fruits

<sup>12</sup> SUAREZ, fol. 189.

<sup>13</sup> MORA, fol. 87v.

<sup>14</sup> SUAREZ, fol. 188v.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> OCIO, *Compendia de la Resena*, p. 925.

<sup>17</sup> Under his direction and supervision the courthouse was restored and covered with galvanized iron roof. This is what historians have transmitted to us, but San Carlos owes him other improvements that have sunk into oblivion. (*Ibid.*)

cf high spirituality. However, only one case — that of Maria Guinita — has been handed down to us by historians.

Born to poor parents who had already many children more than they could feed, she like Moses of old was placed in a basket and suspended from a tree in the forest there to die from exposure and hunger. However, it happened that a chieftain passed by and saw and had pity on her and took her home, and brought her up as one of his children. In time she got married and had children of her own. After some years, her husband died, and Guinita dedicated her life to God in the vow of virginal chastity.

She used to wear a coarse dress, to fast heavily, to put on a hair shirt and practised other ascetical austerities, such as to sleep on a wooden cross as if she were nailed to it. She used to wake up at midnight and recite her prayers at the same time that the Fathers were singing matins in church. Once God rewarded her with a mystical grace.

She took charge of many girls, training them not only in the skills proper to their sex but, above all, in the fear of the Lord, and with their help, she looked after the decoration and cleanliness of the churches of Pangasinan.

God wanted or allowed her to be purified in the crucible of tribulations and calumnies, but in the end her virtue and good name shone more resplendently than ever before. She passed to her eternal reward around the year 1673.<sup>8</sup>

*Statistics of population. —*

The population of San Carlos grew slowly through the 17th and 18th centuries, but began to increase by leaps and bounds thereafter, in spite of the fact that the towns of Aguilar, Mangataram and Urbiztondo had been detached from it in the 19th century as Malasiqui had also been dismembered from it in the 17th. The following statistics reflect such an increase:

1621.....	-	1,000 (souls or tributes?) <sup>0</sup>
1751.....	8,692	souls, without counting the children <sup>20</sup>

<sup>0</sup>"SALAZAR, VICENTE, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila, 1742, pp. 46-47.

<sup>20</sup>>>Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 4, Doc. 1, fol. 1.  
-o "Informe al Rey nuestro Señor," Año de 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelanea," Vol. 3, fol. 8.

1787.....	7,293	souls <sup>21</sup>
1848.....	22,170	souls <sup>22</sup>
1875.....	26,242	souls <sup>23</sup>
1896.....	23,934	souls <sup>24</sup>

*The Dominicans leave San Carlos. —*

San Carlos was lost to Spain without a struggle on June 24, 1898, when, after the "voluntarios" had passed over to the insurrectionists with their rifles, a certain Juan Rosario changed his title of "capitan municipal" to that of "presidente local" and removed a portrait of Alfonso XIII, which until then had been hung up at the backwall of the main sala of the courthouse.<sup>25</sup>

By a quirk of good luck the parish priest and last Dominican "Vicar" of San Carlos was away in Manila; but his assistant, Father Vicente Avila, together with some visiting Dominican priests, fell into the hands of the insurrectionists, and had to endure the rigors of captivity for over a year and a half almost always on the move through Central and Northern Luzon. However, they returned to San Carlos once again, now as prisoners of the Philippine Revolutionary forces, together with dozens of unfortunate Religious who were sharing their fate. Before reaching San Carlos they were full of misgivings about the good will of the townspeople, but they were overjoyed when showered with affection during the two brief days of their stay in San Carlos on May 7-8, 1899.<sup>28</sup>

## 9. CALASIAO

*Founding, etymology, boundaries and acceptance of Calasiao. —*

The second ministry founded by the Dominicans in Pangasinan was Gabon, which was a small barrio situated northwest of San Carlos. Later on, as we shall soon see, Gabon was absorbed by a still smaller barrio called Calasiao.

<sup>21</sup> GONZALEZ, JOSE MARIA, O.P., *Labor Evangelica y Civilizadora de los Religiosos Dominicos en Pagsanjan (1587-1898)*, U.S.T. Press, Manila, 1946, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup> *Revista Catolica*, p. 468.

<sup>23</sup> *Estado General*, Manila, 1875.

<sup>24</sup> *Estado General*, Manila, 1897.

<sup>25</sup> HERRERO, *Nuestra Patria*, p. 522.

\*<sup>></sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 333-336.

Etymologically, Calasiao is derived from the root word *lasi* (lightning) which, together with the particles *ca* and *an* placed respectively before and after *lasi* forms the compound word *Calasian* which therefore means "a place of lightnings." *Calasian* soon became *Calasiao* in popular use.-

Calasiao is bordered on the east at a league distance by Santa Barbara; on the north, at a distance of about two leagues, by Mangaldan; on the northwest by Dagupan; on the west, with a slight deflection to the north, by Binmaley; on the south by San Carlos; and also on the south, but with some deflection to the east, by Malasiqui and Santa Barbara.<sup>27</sup>

According to an old tradition, still current when Father Suarez wrote his notes on the towns of Pangasinan, there were at the start two petty chieftains in the barrios of Dinalaoan and Gabon, who, having been engaged in a long bitter feud, finally came to terms at the insistent remonstrations of the early missionaries, and, as a sign of reconciliation, they agreed on having the church and the convent built in between the two barrios, or where they stand to this day.<sup>28</sup>

It was accepted by the Provincial Chapter of 1588 and placed under the advocacy and with the name of "Santo Domingo de Gabon." The next Chapter of 1592 already calls it Calasiao. It was accepted again by the Chapter of 1596 under the name of Calasiao and under the patronage of St. Paul, the Apostle; and, finally, since 1621 it already appears in the Capitular Acts with the denomination of "San Pedro y San Pablo de Calasiao."<sup>30</sup> Father Juan Maldonado was its first Vicar.<sup>31</sup>

*The early days of the missions of Gabon and Calasiao. —*

In the very early days of its evangelization Father Alonso Montero had visited Gabon in order to instruct in the faith and to baptize a sick person, and on this occasion he met another native who, previously admonished in a vision, not only offered to relinquish his second and third wives but also asked for the sacrament of baptism, and built for the Fathers a house and a chapel somewhat better than the ones they had there."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> SUAREZ, fol. 201.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>TM</sup> *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, Vol. I, pp. 8, 18; OCIO, *Monumento*, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, loc. cit., p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> ADUARTE, p. 81.

As a matter of fact, the first residences and chapels of the Fathers in Gabon and Calasiao were so flimsy and miserable £JJ they were makeshifts that could not last for long. Suffice it to say that of one them was a donation of the local *encomendero*, who had bought it from the natives for the measly amount of four *reales*.<sup>32</sup>\*

The reason why the Dominicans left Gabon for Calasiao was the cool reception accorded them in the former; and although the townspeople of Gabon, motivated by envy, tried to entice the Fathers back, it was to no avail.<sup>33</sup>

*Vicissitudes of the church and convent of Calasiao.*—

In his work *Labor Evangelica y Civilizadora de los Religiosos Dominicos en Pangasinan*, Father Jose Maria Gonzalez very aptly summarizes the vicissitudes and changes which the (Calasiao) church and convent underwent through the years: "The first church was that of Gabon, built at the arrival of the first missionaries. The one of Calasiao followed, which was erected when the missionaries left Gabon. The third one was that of Gabon, put up on the advice of Father Gandullo, as we have already stated, inasmuch as the church previously built had collapsed.

"In 1763 the insurgents headed by Falaris or Palaris, from Binalatongan, put the church of Calasiao to the torch. In 1804 there was already a good church of three naves, constructed years before. It measured 89 Spanish *varas* (yards) in length, 22 in width and 18 in height, with two rows of windows. It was of brick, as was also the belltower, which was older than the church itself; very likely it was the same that stood close by the church in 1763. Towards the year 1841 or 1842 the church went up in flames again.

"A little later, Father Dalmau started rebuilding it, and since 1845 Father Misa, his successor, carried on the work. However, before it could be finished, it was burned once more in 1852. Lastly, after having had much to suffer and to surmount, Father Ramon Suarez rebuilt it between the years 1853-1858.

"It is one of the largest and outstanding in Pangasinan for it measures 88.30 meters in length and 25.50 in width. It has

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94, col. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90, col. 2, 92, cols. 1-2.



three naves and it is made of brick. Its belfry is the second best in Pangasinan.... When Father Bonifacio Probanza, its last Dominican Vicar, left it in 1898, it was the richest church in ornaments of the whole province.

"The convent passed through the same ups-and-downs that the church had gone through, and the present one is that also rebuilt by Father Suarez through the years 1853-1858."<sup>37</sup>

*A mystic in Calasiao.—*

The tourist or visitor, as he goes up the staircase leading to the second floor of the convent of Calasiao, cannot fail to see a canvas, hung to the wall, depicting a Dominican friar in a prayerful mood, who is the ecstatic Father Luis Gandullo.

Born in Aracena, province of Huelva, Spain, Father Gandullo was yet a stripling when he embarked for Mexico. There after the necessary studies he was ordained to the priesthood and entered the Dominican order. In 1588 he left Mexico for the Philippines, where he did missionary work in Pangasinan and Cagayan, and, in between, he was the Prior of Santo Domingo. He took advantage of an ambassadorial appointment to preach the Gospel in China, but his attempt ended in a painful failure.

During his stay in Pangasinan he worked in Calasiao, was Vicar of Binalatongan, and, urged by his thirst for the salvation of souls, he became a tireless traveller over one third of the Province. Wherever he knew there was a soul in need of his priestly ministry, there he went, regardless of distances, impassable roads, hot weather, heavy downpour, without minding his poor condition of health, despite the frequent indifference and at times opposition of the natives to his zeal. Thus he visited every now and then what would later become the towns of Mangaldan, Binmaley and Malunguey (now Bayambang).

His interior life was an almost uninterrupted succession of mystical graces, during which he conversed familiarly with God or His saints, obtaining often the conversion of obstinate souls. To soften the initial stubbornness of the people of Pangasinan God deigned to work some extraordinary signs through him.

He died in Manila sometime before the Provincial Chapter of 1612.<sup>TM</sup>

36 Pp. 49-50.

3« ADUARTE, p. 342 ff.; OCIO, *Compendio de la Rescicia*, pp. 20-21.

*An episode in the history of Calasiao. —*

During the uprising of Pangasinan in 1763 the insurgents suddenly surprised three Spaniards who were taking their lunch at the convent of Calasiao. Not having a chance to escape, they took refuge in the belltower with the remnants of their meal and with their firearms. There, while the church and convent were a-burning, they fought for their lives during several days until the liberating army of Bonnardel arrived.

According to a tradition still fresh in 1804, the refugees had no other way of quenching their thirst than by going down, fully armed, to the baptistry to drink of the water in the baptismal font. Also in 1804 the singed boards still remained over the top of the door, as a constant reminder of the siege of the tower.<sup>37</sup> The protagonists in this episode were: the *alcaldes mayores* Jose Rafael Acebedo, Ignacio Barzaola (a Vizcaino), a certain Gonzalez (an American), and a Spanish mestizo.

On the other hand, the Dominican Fathers who were in the convent at the time of the arrival of the insurgents, just walked out of the town through their ranks, unharmed and amidst demonstrations of respect.<sup>38</sup>

*The Synod of Calasiao. —*

Ten years after the episode just described about the belltower, that is, in 1773, Bishop Miguel Garcia de Nueva Segovia chose the town of Calasiao as the site of a diocesan synod held in compliance with a ruling of the Provincial Council of Manila of 1771, which had provided in its Acts that diocesan bishops should hold diocesan synods for the better implementation of church decrees.

Calasiao was chosen due to its central location, and such a choice proves that by then both the church and the convent had already risen from their ruins. Only nine priests — most probably all Dominicans — attended it. Its Acts, which were the exclusive work of Bishop Garcia, were not honored with the Royal and Papal approval, although they are useful for historians to get acquainted with some interesting details about the sacramental and disciplinary life of the Church in the Philippines during that time.<sup>39</sup>

37 MORA, *Op. cit.*, fols. 92v-93.

as *Ibid.*

39 FONSECA, *Historia de los PP. Dominicos*, Vol. V, p. 135 ff.

*Father Stidrez reports on Calasiao. —*

Writes Father Suarez: "Calasiao had in 1869 a population Of 3,600 to 3,700 'tributantes' or taxpayers, of which less than 600 lived in the town proper or 'poblacion.' Its barrios barely deserved such a name since they were only names of sites, whose houses were sparsely scattered all over. The town proper, although large, did not have streets worthy of the name nor followed any definite plan. As a whole, Calasiao could be considered as the most disarrayed town in the province of Pangasinan."<sup>40</sup>

*Statistics. —*

Calasiao shows the same uptrend in its population as San Carlos and all other towns of Pangasinan. Here are some figures:

1621.....	550	tributes or souls?"
1751.....	4,449	without counting the children <sup>41</sup> -
1765.....	4,111	souls <sup>43</sup>
1848.....	13,088	souls"
1875.....	15,436	souls <sup>4ii</sup>
1898. ....	13,800	souls <sup>4n</sup>

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\**QLoc. tit.*

<<sup>i</sup> Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 4, Doc. 1, fol. 1.

•"Informe al Rey nuestro Señor." Año 1751, MSS in APSR, Section "Miscelanea," Vol. 3, fol. 8.

« GONZALEZ, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

•\* *Revista Catolica, loc. cit.*, p. 468.

46 *Estada General*, Manila, 1875.

\*<sup>o</sup> OCIO, *Monumnto Dominicano*, p. 81.

## FR. JUAN VILLAVERDE, O.P.

One man whose feet once touched and left prints on the soil of the country was Fr. Juan Villaverde, O.P. There could be no other reason but his heroic commitment to the Gospel that left those traces on the roads of many northern towns of Luzon.

Born in 1841 in Lapoblacion, province of Navarra, Spain, Villaverde, when yet a stripling, worked as an apprentice to a shoemaker. Soon afterwards he pursued what he thought and wished as his vocation — the religious priestly life. So, after having learned enough Latin, he knocked at the door of the convent of Ocana, Toledo, was admitted and was given the Dominican habit in 1861.

His year of novitiate over, he studied Philosophy for three years, and on October 28, 1865 he made his solemn profession. At the end of 1866 he was ordained priest.

Soon after, he left for the Philippines, via the still unfinished Suez Canal in a steamboat from which he transferred to another waiting at the other side of the canal. He arrived at Manila on May 11, 1867. Pretty soon he was assigned to the mission of Nueva Vizcaya, specifically to the town of Bayombong, where before everything he grappled with the Gaddang dialect of the place. After a year in Bayombong, he passed to Bae, in Kiangan, as a missionary for the Ifugao Igorots. Bae was the most far-flung mission so far, and required an apostle of the highest caliber to maintain and even extend it. Father Villaverde filled the bill to a T.

He found the mission of Bae in total disarray and its Christians demoralized as a result of the violent death of his immediate predecessor, Father Jose Lorenzo, on August 14, 1868. Uppermost in Father Villaverde's attention was the rehabilitation of the school, for he was well aware of the utmost importance and effectiveness of Christian education in civilizing\* and converting infidel tribes.

After four years in Bae amidst the most trying circumstances and vicissitudes, his Superior saw fit to transfer him — together with the corporate personality of the mission under him — to the lowlands. Here he soon founded the town of Ibung, now called Villaverde after him. In Ibung he stayed twelve long years, that is until 1886 when he got a new assignment from the Provincial Chapter, this time for Solano, where he worked zealously for four years.

In 1892 he was back at Bae, Kiangnan, to finish and crown his missionary career where he started it in 1868 as a young priest full of dreams and vigor. Although endowed with a strong physical build and constitution, his health gave way. what with too many hardships, trials, problems, inclement weather and austere living. In 1897 he left Kiangnan for Manila, and from Manila he sailed for Spain to regain his health. But he breathed his last while still in the boat cruising the Mediterranean Sea near the port of Barcelona, on August 4, of the same year 1897.

Now a few words about his lifework.

In 1872 he found nothing in Ibung but fertile agricultural fields. He brought there a number of Igorot families, which gave him much trouble until they got acclimatized to the hot climate of the lowlands. But he attracted many hardworking and thrifty Ilocanos who turned Ibung into a prosperous new-town. To carry on such grandiose projects he had to ask for aid in Manila, ordinarily in kind rather than in cash, in the form of tools, clothing, foodstuffs, etc. Living frugally, he shared what he spared from his yearly allowance of six hundred pesos with his settlers. He taught them farming, and other useful crafts. He also was the infirmarian of his people, especially during a plague that killed many of them. All told, he raised a church, schools and public buildings, and thus organized Ibung into a political "tenencia absoluta", or a quasi-independent district of Solano, its mother town.

As a missionary, Father Villaverde firmly believed that, to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the lowlanders and to carry the light of the Gospel to the Igorots in the mountains, it was necessary to open up roads, since such "facilitated communication and trade, opened new lands for cultivation, offered possibilities of building new towns, and in general contributed to the progress of the region."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>TEJON, O.P., Guillermo, *Juan Villaverde, O.P. Missionary and Road-builder*, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, 1982, p. 115.

Thus he built, let alone some minor trails, a road in the heart of Kiangnan, which he later planned to lengthen over a gorge of the Cordillera Central mountains as far as Lepanto, where the road at the Ilocos side ended abruptly, and thus connect the Cagayan Valley with the Ilocos Region.

In 1884 he built another important road leading from Bagabag to Kiangnan of some 40 kilometers. In all his projects he himself had to train the foreman, recruit and supervise the workers, provide them with tools, look for the money and rice to pay and feed them with, and finally he had to "face criticisms" from some quarters.

The third big undertaking he launched was to straighten and improve the road from Bagabag to Carig (now Santiago) over the rough crest of the Abungul. The townspeople came to call it "Camino del Santo Rosario".

These three roads so well technically constructed even by modern standards portended and paved the way for his crowning project, namely, the long trail from Aritao in Nueva Vizcaya through the Caraballo Mountains to San Nicolas in Pangasinan, a respectable distance of 74 kilometers. On top of all these, he was preoccupied with the plan of extending the railroad from Dagupan to Nueva Vizcaya, a project which by far exceeded, let alone all the resources he could muster, even the potentialities of the government at that time. His success in his projects may be explained by that he always tried to win and count on the help of the officials of the government, the *polo* services, the goodwill of the people and the generous contributions of the Dominican Province as well as of a number of generous Christians. He certainly knew the technical aspects of what we now call civil engineering, and was an expert in the use of theodolite or surveying instrument.

Over and above these accomplishments as a road builder, which are truly amazing especially in a priest, we can regard U3 Father Villaverde's main and crowning glory his successful efforts during his second stay in Kiangnan, in organizing politically the district or region into different towns and "tenencias absolutas". At this time the inhabitants of Kiangnan were already transformed into a peace-loving and industrious people. Thus Commandant Miguel Candela, upon suggestion of Father Villaverde, thought the time ripe to incorporate the people of Kiangnan into the political mainstream of the rest of the Archipelago. However, the plan was aborted due to adverse circumstances and the Revolution that burst out in 1898.

Father Villaverde was also a "Protector of the natives", for in the midst of his manifold occupations he still found time to look after the welfare of the lowly and of the oppressed. As a man, he saw in them creatures of God and fellow citizens, and as a priest brethren in Jesus Christ, because, as Father Tejon aptly remarks: "In the same way that he praised honest officials, he condemned dishonest ones; and while he advocated discipline and obedience on the part of the natives, he never hesitated to side with them whenever he felt that they had been wronged. The natives, who revered him as a Father, knew this. They trusted him fully and, when in trouble, had recourse to him".<sup>2</sup>

Father Villaverde never was wanting in courage to translate his principles into facts whenever the occasion called for such course of action. Here is one incident:

Due to a false alarm — the result of local politics — many people were arrested in Nueva Vizcaya, and twenty three of them sent to Bilibid in Manila. Father Villaverde — being well aware of the fact that a gross injustice had been committed — left no stone unturned until he obtained from the proper authorities, a full redress. As they themselves stamped in a document: "... Thanks to the intervention of Father Juan Villaverde and his Provincial, the decision of deporting us to Jolo was withheld. It would be impossible to describe how much Father Villaverde had to struggle to defend us in Nueva Vizcaya and to secure our freedom in Manila."<sup>3</sup>

In Kiangnan he followed a similar policy whenever dishonest officers or soldiers took advantage of the superior position to trample on the rights of the people. Thus, in that remote corner of the Philippines he trod on the footsteps of his great confrere, Bishop Salazar, and of so many others who, motivated by love of justice and fatherly commiseration, took up the cudgels in the defense of their flock from haughty oppressors, be they Spaniards or Filipinos.

A man of such hectic activity, was Father- Villaverde also a man of deep and mystical prayer? If we are to give credence to widespread legends about him soon after his death, he was a real "mystic". However, historical sources merely tend to prove him as an exemplary religious and a deeply pious priest.

= *Ibid.*, p. 251.

• *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

How often must he have recited the liturgical hours under a tree or rock or by the wayside! But he formed souls of high spiritual caliber from among the poor and lowly Ifugao neophytes of Kiangnan who just a few years earlier were submerged in their ancestral superstitions.

His prestige as a man of God crossed the ocean to some monasteries in Spain, such as those of San Benito de Estella and of Santa Elena de Najera, in which some nuns used to write to him for spiritual counsel and encouragement. In those Ifttters, one still sees the traces left by one who gave all he had for the service of the Gospel.

Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P.



## DOCUMENTATION

### APPOINTMENT OF THE MOST REV. ANTONIO TOBIAS AS AUXILIARY BISHOP OF ZAMBOANGA

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

dilecto Filio ANTONIO TOBIAS, seminarii minoris archidioecesis Manilensis Rectori, electo sacri Praesulis Zamboangensis Auxiliari atque Episcopo titulo Tipasensi in Numidia, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Naudquaquam quoniam Nos praeterit quantis hac aetate archidioecesis Zamboangensis effloruerit incrementis turn religiosarum turn civilium quoque rerum, adeo ut actionis pastoralis necessitates geminatae vere sint, libentes idcirco optatum, suscipimus exaudimusque Venerabilis Fratris Francisci Raval Cruces ipsius archiepiscopi Zamboangensis qui haud ita pridem episcopum sibi flagitavit adiutorem communicandis secum apostolatus ibidem oneribus idoneum. Talem in primis te ipsum, dilecte Fili, pastorem esse posse ac talia laudabiliter explere officia arbitramur utpote qui ariis adhuc sacerdotii muneribus efficienter sis sapienterque perfunctus. Ex consilio propterea Venerabilium Fratrum Nostorum S. R. E. Cardinalium negotiis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis praepositorum atque ex potestatis Nostrae apostolicae plenitudine nominamus te Auxiliarem illius quem commemoravimus Sacrorum Antistitis simulque destinamus Episcopum. vacantis Sedis titulo **Tipasensis in Numidia**, concessis profecto universis iuribus et coniunctis pariter cunctis obligationibus illuc spectantibus quae in Apostolicis Litteris — Ecclesiae Sanctae — describuntur die VI mensis Augusti foras datis anno MCMLXVI. Permittimus autem ut a quolibet extra urbem Romam catholico Episcopo ordinationem recipias, cui duo ad liturgicas regulas adstant eiusdem ordinis viri consecratores. Prius quidem quam id tibi eveniat, professionem catholicae fidei facias oportet, teste quovis pariter rectae fidei Episcopo, ac fidelitatis ius iurandum pronunties erga Nos et Successores Nostros deindeque formulas a te usurpatas quam primum cures ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis transvehendas solito more signatas ac sigillo munitas. Quod reliquum est, dilecte

Fili, quamvis currentem iam alacriter te incitare videamur, in Domino tamen fraterno cum adfectu cohortamur ut tuae semper dignitatis episcopalis memor tuumque novum in Ecclesia opus summi aestimans totus sedulo incumbas in adiutorium Praesulis Zamboangensis fidasque uni Deo pastorum omnium custodi, a quo cotidianis etiam precibus necessaria omnia tibi lumina caelitus ac robora postulabis. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die tertio mensis Novembris anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo secundo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli  
a publicis Ecc. negotiis

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## **DIOCESE OF ANTIPOLLO :: .**

*(Cont'd, from page 448)*

Domino — Blessed are you who believed; for all the things God had in mind for you shall be accomplished in you. And you too, will exclaim like Mary: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum — My soul doth magnify the Lord for he has graciously looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid ... He who is all-powerful has worked great wonders in me. And Lis name is forever holy and worthy of all praise."

To you now, O Virgin of Antipollo, Queen of peace and good voyage, we turn. Remember, most gracious Virgin, that never was it heard that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, and sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, we commend to you this new diocese of Antipollo. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, take under your mantle and into your heart this daughter of yours. With you beside her, with you to guide her, may she know peace amidst the severest storms that the evil one will raise against her. May she always steer a good and true course through the shallows and reefs of this treacherous and malicious world. May she ever be faithful to the Love of your divine Son, and generous and big-hearted in the service of all fellow-travellers making the journey to the house of our Father in heaven.

And now, with a big hand, let us all make a joyful noise to the Lord our God.

## PASTORAL GUIDELINES FOR PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS AND LAY WORKERS IN THE TASK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Last February 20, 1983, we issued a Joint Pastoral Letter entitled "A Dialogue for Peace". It was addressed to all the faithful in our country.

This present document is being addressed to you, our Priests and Religious, and to you, our Lay Workers. You are our closest co-workers in the ministry for social justice. While it is your duty to assist us in this sensitive sphere of human development, we accept that it is equally your right to know the minds of your Bishops on the same matter. For this reason, we give you the following as guidelines in this important ministry you are in.

1. *Let your unity with your Bishop be maintained unreservedly as demanded by the sacramental bond existing between you and him. Thus, the Bishop should be kept adequately posted on the programs and activities of the social action office including the orthodoxy of persons and literature.*
  2. *Let us keep always in mind that our engagement in the promotion of Social Justice should not result in the neglect or abandonment of what are properly and specifically the reasons for our priestly ordination.*
  3. *Let us renounce, in theory and in practice, violence as part of our apostolate. To the people of Tondo, John Paul said: "The road towards your total liberation is not the way of violence, class struggle or hate; it is the way of love, brotherhood and peaceful solidarity."*
- Jf. Avoiding the use of liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations in denouncing social ills should be our norm, and respecting the sacred character of the pulpit and refraining from using it for partisan political pronouncements and for anything that does not fit the sacredness of the place and offends the Christian sensitivity of people coming to church, our guide.*

5. *Let us obey the laws of the land in so far as they are truly just and conducive to the attainment of peace in the community. In the spirit of Gaudium et Spes, let us not demand special privileges for ourselves. On the contrary, we should even be prepared to renounce any concession offered us for the sake of guaranteeing our freedom of pastoral action.*
6. *Let our efforts be exerted towards fostering a greater sense of responsibility and leadership among our lay people, both in the planning and implementing phases of our Social Action programs towards the renewal of the temporal order, in accordance with Lumen Gentium that says: "They (the laity) are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven."*
7. *Let us be constantly on our guard against infiltrators, whether from the left or from the right, who do not share the Christian goals of the Church, denying them the use of Church facilities to vested groups who may hinder or divert the pastoral mission of the Church.*

While deeply committed in giving effective expressions to the Church's social teachings, we should also expect to be challenged by those same teachings in so far as our personal and institutional behavior is concerned. Our social commitment is an integral part of our following of Christ. Hence, the crucial need for a deep union with Christ. Then, too, the absolute need for an authentic prayer life.

We will always ask civil leaders to respect the right of the Church to work for human advancement and to work for the promotion of social justice. But it is also our manifest conviction that each apostolic endeavor should be in harmony with the teaching of the Church and in unity with the Bishops of the Church. It is to insure that harmony with us, your bishops, that these guidelines are being issued.

With our blessing and prayer.

ANTONIO LI. MABUTAS, D.D.  
Archbishop of Davao  
CBCP President

March 19, 1983  
Feast of St. Joseph

## HOMILETICS

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF ANTIPOLLO\*

"All things have their season, and in their times all things pass under heaven. There is a time to be born, and a time to die. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to keep, and a time to let go..." I am sure you all recognize the quotation. It is from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

How would Ecclesiastes describe this day? Is it a time to weep and mourn? Or a time to rejoice and dance? Is it a time to keep? Or a time to let go?

There are days of great joy and happiness in this life. Think of the joy when a baby comes into the world. Think of the gladness experienced by the parents when the baby first pronounces the words "mama", "papa". Think of the happiness in watching the infant turn into a child, grow into a youngster, blossom into a young man or woman. Each time we would like to freeze time and stop it dead in its tracks. We would like to preserve forever the cuteness and cuddleness of the baby, the bright-eyed wonder of the child, the touching awkwardness of the teenager. We would like to... but we dare not.

There always comes the time to let go... And if we did not, we will never have the greater joy of potentials developed, of promises fulfilled, of hopes achieved, of expectations become reality. The dawn is beautiful, but if it did not pass, we will never know the splendid glory of noonday. The baby is cute and winsome; but if we did not let go of infancy, there will never be the fulfillment of mature manhood.

So today we have reached a time to let go. From the very beginning Antipollo has been a part of the archdiocese of Manila. Four hundred years of togetherness—nay, of oneness: one assembly of adorers of the Father who created us and of the Son who redeemed us and of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

*\* Homily delivered by His Eminence Jaime Card. L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila, on June 25, 1983.*

One "ekklesia" of faith, hope and love. Today there are two: Manila and Antipole. It is time for Manila to let go of Antipole. But it is not easy to let go of 400 years of togetherness. And so in my heart—and in your hearts, too, I should like to think—there are at this moment mixed and conflicting emotions.

Is it a time to weep, or a time to dance? Perhaps the word "or" is not accurate. Perhaps we should say "and". A time to weep *and* to laugh *and* to dance. For there is a weeping that comes not from grief but from joy. There are tears the source of which is not sorrow but happiness. A mother sheds tears at her son's graduation. A father feels his eyes blur with moisture when he gives away the bride.

Both graduation and wedding are times to let go. To let the young find or make themselves a place in the world and to build themselves a home and a family. But the end of togetherness brings sorrow to both parent and child. Still, the occasion is more one of rejoicing and celebration; and the tinge of sadness only serves to spice up the joy, as a touch of black brings out the highlights in a canvas and a pinch of salt enhances the flavour of the dish.

Therefore today Manila and Antipolo rejoice and celebrate the coming of age of the latter. And I, as the father of the bride, so to speak, am happy at the privilege of giving the bride away. For the bridegroom in today's nuptials is none other than Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we install the Most Rev. Protacio Gungon as the first bishop of the new diocese of Antipolo. But let me tell you that Bishop Gungon is only the proxy of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the express teaching of the Second Vatican Council. "The bishops govern the particular churches assigned to them as vicars and legates of Christ..." (*Lumen Gentium*, No. 27). It is instructive to note how the particular church or diocese stands in relation to the universal Church.

What is a diocese? In the words of the Second Vatican Council, "a diocese is a section of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal to its pastor and formed by him into one community in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active."

[*Christus Dominus*, No. 11) In other words: in terms of quantity, size, or numbers, the diocese or particular church is only a portion of the Universal Church. But in terms of quality, nature and life, there is no difference but identity between the particular and the Universal Church. The invisible head of the Universal Church is none other than the Lord himself; so, too, the invisible head of the particular Church is Christ himself. But just as the Lord governs the Universal Church through a visible Vicar in the person of the Pope, so also He governs the particular church through a visible vicar in the person of the bishop. Because he is incorporated into the episcopal college which is the successor of the apostolic college, the bishop falls heir to the direct and personal commission laid by the Lord upon the apostles. That is why the bishop is described as Christ's own legate. Consequently, in *Lumen Gentium* we read that "in the person of the bishops... the Lord Jesus Christ, supreme high priest, is present in the midst of the faithful." (No. 21)

To you, then, the Lord Jesus comes to establish a covenant today. And so to you I will repeat the words spoken by Moses to the children of Israel: "You are a people holy to the Lord. The Lord your God has chosen you to be his peculiar people. Not because you surpass other people in greatness, for in truth you are the smallest of any people. He has chosen you because He has loved you..." (Deut. 7:6 ff.) No longer are you to be sheep lost in the anonymity of the vast flock. He has singled you out to be a peculiar, distinct, individual community in his Church. And this, not through any great merits of your own, but simply because of his own great love for you.

The Lord comes to you as a bridegroom to his bride. What kind of a bride does He expect you to be? What does a man expect from his wife? Three things. In the first place, faithfulness: she is to be his and his alone. In the second place, he expects her to please, revere and honour him as the head of the family. In the third place, he expects her to give him children. Faithfulness, honour, fruitfulness. These are the same things Christ expects from you.

In the Cantic of Canticles, the groom addresses his bride as "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up." (4:12) These are the symbols of her fidelity. Fidelity to the Lord means, in the first place, fidelity to his teaching, to the doctrine of faith. Faithfulness to the faith implies loyalty to the Rule of Faith, namely, the living Magisterium, that is to say, to the

teaching authority of the Holy Father and of your bishop who teaches in communion with the Holy Father. These are not two teaching authorities, but one and the same teaching authority, since the bishop who breaks his communion with the Pope *ipso facto* cuts himself off from the episcopal college and thus from the succession to the Apostles. He is, then, no longer a true shepherd but a hireling in the employ of the enemy.

The faithfulness to the faith shall henceforth be yours in v. special manner. Starting today, Antipolo is a cathedral church. Cathedral because there is in it a *cathedra* — the teacher's chair. Christ's special prayer for Peter, also applies to you proportionally. "I have prayed for you, Antipolo, that your faith may not falter, because you are to confirm your brothers — the towns and barrios committed to your jurisdiction: these you are to nourish, to strengthen and confirm in the faith."

But fidelity to the faith means much more than the mere unwavering assent of the intellect. For, besides the internal assent, the faith must also be externally professed. "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, him also will I acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I in turn will disown him before my Father in heaven." Now, the external profession of faith is not done chiefly by words. "Not everyone who says to me 'Eord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven." Faith is externally professed chiefly by a life lived in accord with the belief in the mind and by worship.

And this brings us to the second thing a man expects from his bride — that she please, revere and honour him. And all this, in the case of the divine groom spells worship.

Everything that God has made is good and pleases him. There is only one thing in this world that God has not made, and it is the one and only thing that displeases him and provokes him to wrath: *sin*. You don't like me to tell you how much sin has infected and covered our modern world like leprosy. Especially those sins that the Bible describes as sins crying to heaven for vengeance. The blood of babies murdered in the womb of their mothers is one such sin. The defrauding of workers of the wages fairly and justly due them is another such sin. The oppression of widows and orphans, of the weak and defenseless is still another such sin. Everything that is



in the world, says St. John, is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Everywhere you turn your eyes you behold sex rampant in all its aberrations; everywhere you observe an irritating ostentation of wealth that dazzles the eyes; everywhere you witness an arrogant display of power that puffs up and bloats the ego.

Only one thing is so infinitely pleasing to the heavenly Father that it can effectively counteract the malignancy of sin and appease his wrath. And that is the cross on which his Son hangs atop Calvary. There it stands a lightning rod drawing upon the spotless Lamb all the fury of heaven in order to spare the world. Therefore, the bride of Christ should, like the early churches, be constant and unceasing in the offering of the bread and wine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, knowing that "once for all Christ has appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself... Christ was offered once to take away the sins of many." (Heb. 9:26-28)

Yet the worthy offering of the Eucharistic celebration requires us not merely to offer but also to participate in the sacrifice, that is, not merely to offer the death of Christ but to share in that same death, so that as we have been baptized in his death, we may rise to newness of life. "The blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished unto God, cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified." (Heb. 9:13-14, 10:12-14) "Therefore, my brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh; for if we live according to the flesh, we will die; but if by the spirit we put to death the works of the flesh, we will live." (Rom. 8: 12-13). Let us, then, strip off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man—one made according to the image of Christ—let us put on a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another even as the the Lord has forgiven us. But above all these things !et us love one another, for love is the bond of perfection. Thus will the peace of Christ reign in our hearts and in our community. For unto that peace we have been called in one body. (Cf. Coloss. 3:9 ff.)

In this manner the royal priesthood of the whole People of God is brought to full consummation. The ministerial priest effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The faithful, by virtue of

their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. But they exercise their priesthood also by prayer and thanksgiving, by the witness of a holy life, by self-denial and active charity. (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, No. 10)

Thus is the Father, who is Spirit and Truth, fittingly worshipped in spirit and in truth. And thus does the Bride live up to her description in the Song of Solomon: "Who is she that goeth up from the desert like a pillar of smoke from the burning of aromatic spices, of myrrh and frankincense and all the powders of the perfumes?" The smoke of incense rising up to heaven is the symbol of divine worship, of adoration, praise and thanksgiving. It is also the symbol of a life of virtue by which a man's whole life is transformed into a spiritual sacrifice, a sweet-smelling burnt-offering to the Lord.

Finally, a man expects his wife to give him children, to be fruitful. "My beloved, my spouse, your plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard ... The fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus." (Cant. 4:13-15) The bride's fertility is here depicted by the fruit-laden trees of the orchard. It is also depicted by the strong stream of living waters which enable the soil to yield crops in abundance. The bridegroom also extols his bride saying: "How beautiful are your breasts: they are like two young roses that are twins, which feed among the lilies." (*Ibid.* 4:10, 5) Spiritual writers interpret these breasts of the bride to mean the commandments of love of God and love of neighbour, which are twins, and in which the whole of the Law is summed up and synthesized.

Breasts are filled with milk. The breast of the love of God must be filled with the milk of the sacrifice of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and reparation for sin. But to have one breast full of milk and the other stone-dry is an anomaly, described by St. John the Apostle in these words: "The man who proclaims he loves God and shows no love for his brother is simply a liar." (Cf. 1 John, 4:20)

The twin breast of love of neighbor must similarly be filled with the milk of good deeds towards our brother men. The love of God is expressed not only in the odour of incense, but also in the pomegranates and all the other fruits of the orchard. Otherwise, the love of God is sterile, just a show of leaves, like the fig tree which Jesus cursed, because it was all leaves and no fruits.

Genuine love always wills and operates the good of the beloved. But we cannot operate anything for the good of God himself. So God wills that the genuineness of our love be proven by our effectively operating the good of his other children, our brothers. The groom wills that the love of his bride be fruitful in service to men, in unrelenting effort and work towards the amelioration of the less fortunate individuals, towards the upliftment of the community and the building of a just and compassionate society, a society established on the only two foundations that can guarantee its stability, its peace and its common good, namely, the foundation of justice and the deeper foundation of charity.

It is no accident that the Second Vatican Council ends the section dealing with bishops with respect to their own dioceses with a call to the apostolate. "The various forms of the apostolate should be encouraged ... The faithful should be carefully reminded of their obligation to promote the apostolate according to their state of life and aptitudes, and they should be urged to participate in or assist the various works of the lay apostolate, especially Catholic action ... The forms of the apostolate should be duly adapted to the needs of the times, taking into account the human conditions, not merely spiritual and moral but also social, demographic and economic ... Social and religious research conducted by institutes of pastoral sociology ... (are) strongly recommended." (*Christus Dominus*, No. 17)

A bride without taint or blemish; ever faithful, watchful and zealous for the purity of the faith; ever assiduous in the honour and worship of God through the celebration of the Eucharist, and ever exhaling the sweet smell of frankincense, myrrh, spikenard, saffron and cinnamon of all the virtues that incorporate the faithful into the one perpetual sacrifice of the Lamb immolated in both his physical and mystical body; a bride fertile in the works of the apostolate at the service of individuals and of the community: this is the bride the bridegroom desires, and the kind of bride that this new diocese pledge itself to be.

If you should feel trepidation at the magnitude of these commitments, let me tell you that I understand how you feel. I felt that way when I was made a bishop, when I was transferred from my provincial see to this metropolitan see, when they made me a Cardinal. And I should think that all brides experience a sense of anxiety, a feeling of trepidation in the

face of the responsibilities they are about to assume on their wedding day. Even Mary was troubled in spirit at her Annunciation.

That sense of trepidation is a good sign: it means an awareness of our smallness and insufficiency, an absence of conceit. And that is good. But it would cease to be good, if it were made an excuse to refuse God, to block the designs of his Providence. Instead, the sense of our insufficiency should urge us to a more complete abandon and trust in God's loving plans. Borrow a leaf from Mary, your very special Patroness. To calm her troubled spirit, the angel discloses she is to bear the Son of the Most High. And Mary replies: "How is this to be done? I know no man." These words seem to betray doubt, skepticism. Do they? No, Mary's question must be taken in conjunction with her "Fiat". What the question means is this. "I am not married: how will I be a mother? If I marry, how will my son be the son of God? Mary seeks to be enlightened, not because she doubts, but because she wants to know what God has in mind to be able to cooperate more fully. That is why, the moment God's plans are revealed, her immediate answer is "Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum—be it done to me as you say". Her question, then, was prompted by the fullness of her faith, by the absoluteness of her submission.

People of Antipolo, God segregates you today, gives you your own ecclesial identity because he has plans for you. God is not like men. A man may give another a responsibility, a task to accomplish. But he cannot give him the internal talents, qualities and abilities to fulfill the responsibility and bring the task to a successful conclusion. But when God appoints you to a task, in so doing he also provides you with both the internal and external helps that are necessary for its successful achievement.

So your response to the Lord this day must be, like Mary's, one of utter confidence, one of absolute surrender into his hands. "How is this to be done?" Ask for enlightenment, that you may know what it is He wants done. And then with absolute sincerity say: "Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum."

If you are faithful to God, He will be more than a hundred times faithful to you. To you also will be addressed those words with which Elizabeth greeted her cousin Mary: "Beata quae credidisti, quia perficiuntur in te quae tibi dicta sunt a

*(Turn to page 438)*

## HOMILETICAL NOTES FOR SUNDAYS OCTOBER

By

Fr. Angel Aparicio, O.P.

### 27th SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1983

*Hab 1:2-3; 2:2-U The upright man will live by his faithfulness.*

*2 Tim 1:6-6, 13-14 Never be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord.*

*Lk 17:5-10 If only you had faith!*

*Hab 1:23; 2:2-U:* Prophet Habakkuk, on behalf of his people laments the oppression they suffer in the hands of foreign invaders and inept local rulers.

It is an invocation, a lamentation, a supplication for liberation. God asks Habakkuk to put into writing His answer so that the people will realize how faithful He is. God allows time for the evil man to falter, but he also gives the just man time to prove his justice by fidelity. (The Hebrew word used here for fidelity is *emunah* which means: firmness in principles, loyalty to God).

*2 Tim 1:6-8, 13-14:* Paul reminds Timothy of the gift which he received at his ordination: "A spirit not of timidity, but of power, and love, and self-control".

Power stands for intensity of life.

Love for the warmth of self-giving.

Self-control, for a reasoned, disciplined, well-ordered life. It is this spirit which God bestows upon every minister at ordination.

Verses 13-14 furnish the foundation of the Catholic teaching on Tradition. The apostles have received the Good News from the Lord; they themselves have transmitted it orally, especially to their co-workers and successors in the ministry, who, in turn, have the duty to conserve it in all its purity and to communicate it only to men capable of assuring further transmission. But this conservation and this transmission cannot be sufficiently guaranteed by human efforts. It is the Holy Spirit which preserves them from all unnecessary alterations, and all deviations, and according to verse 7, one may specify that this action of the Holy Spirit is exercised with peculiar efficacy in the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. (C. Spick, *Saint Paul: Les Epitres Pastorales*. Paris: Gabalda, 1947, p. 320).

*Lk 17:5-10*: Verses 5-6 tell us that faith is the greatest force in the world. Even that which looks completely impossible becomes possible if viewed in faith.

Verses 7-10 tell us that we can never put God in our debt and can never have any claim on him. When we have done our best, we have only done our duty; and a man who has done his duty has done only what, in any event, he could be compelled to do.

Sometimes, our life as Christians may be described in the words of the prophet Habakkuk in the first reading. We experience crises, not only in times when we are persecuted or looked down, but also on occasions when we are down, when all seems dark in life, when somebody we love is sick without hope of recovery ...

Then, we lament as the prophet did: "How long, O Lord, shall I cry for help, but you do not hear; I cry to you, but you do not intervene."

We think this way: Why does the Lord allow all these to happen to us? We pray to him, but he seems not to hear our prayers. The wicked succeeds in life, while the honest, just, religious person is unlucky.

Habakkuk seems to pick up the complaints of all innocent sufferers throughout history and present them to God. "How long, O Lord, shall we cry for help but you do not hear?"

Then — continues the first reading — "The Lord answered me and said: 'Write down clearly what you have seen, so that

one can read it readily. It will not disappoint anybody, if it delays, wait for it. It will surely come at a given time.' "

"The man who endures shall live."

"The just man, because of his faith shall live."

Now, the objection is this: Who can endure? Who can hold on fast? Who can wait?

It is very difficult to wait especially in unfavorable circumstances. No wonder then that the disciples asked Jesus — as we have heard in the Gospel — to increase their faith, so that they can endure, hold fast, wait.

To understand the Gospel that we have heard today, we have to read what precedes it: Peter approached Jesus and asked him how many times should we forgive those who offend us; and Jesus answered, "If your brother sins against you and repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in a day, and turns to you seven times and says 'sorry', you must forgive him." Often, we minimize this teaching of Jesus and we think it cannot be taken seriously. He must be exaggerating, we say.

But to have an idea of its seriousness, we listen to the request of the disciples of Jesus. "If it so, Lord, increase our faith," that is, make us hold on fast, let us endure, give us the courage. And Jesus answered them: "If only you had a little faith, even as little as a mustard seed!"

And then he made a comparison: To forgive our brother again, and again, up to seven times or seventy times seems to be as impossible as for a tree to be uprooted and be transplanted into the sea. Jesus agreed. Indeed, it is ridiculous to think that a tree may be uprooted and be transplanted into the sea.

And yet, he says, if you have faith, no bigger than a mustard seed, that which seems as impossible as uprooting a tree and transplanting it into the sea (that is, to forgive your brother as many times as he offends you) could be made possible. A little faith can make the impossible possible.

We seldom get the point of today's Gospel. We think that if we have enough faith we could move mountains or change the course of nature. Thus, we base our faith on marvels,

on miracles, on extraordinary events, and once we discover that the nature follows its laws, when we realize that sickness follows its course, we start to waver, we begin to move away from God, we do not hold on anymore to faith, we lose courage.

Our eyes, as Jesus keeps on repeating on many occasions, are closed, our ears, deaf.

The extraordinary thing, the real miracle which our faith can effect is: we can love our brother to the point of forgiving him up to seventy times seven.

In many occasions Jesus was to complain about the lack of faith of those who listened to him. They were looking for miracles. They were expecting that Jesus would say to a tree: "Be uprooted!" But the real miracle, the extraordinary thing which Jesus did was done there, on the cross, forgiving those who have offended him, putting into practice what he had been preaching all his life: LOVE.

If only we had faith!

Let us ask with the disciples: Lord increase our faith; make the impossible be a reality in our lives.

Then together with Habakkuk, we can write down in our hearts: "The just man, because of his faith, shall live."

## 28th SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1983

*2 Kgs 5:14-17 Naaman returned to Elisha and acknowledged the Lord.*

*2 Tim 2:8-13 If we hold firm, then we shall reign with Christ.*

*Lk 17:11-19 One of them returned back, praising God at the top of his voice.*

*Today's theme is gratitude.*

*This gratitude is exemplified by Naaman (first reading) and by the leper healed by Jesus (Gospel).*

*2 Kgs 5:14-17: Naaman, the Syrian commander-in-chief, has received every honor that military skill and good fortune can bring, but he is a leper.*



A little Israelite girl has been captured in a raid and becomes a servant of Naaman's wife. She tells her mistress of Elisha, a prophet in her country. The king of Syria commands the king of Israel (causing a diplomatic misunderstanding) to heal Naaman. The peremptory command causes the king of Israel great concern, until he is reminded of Elisha the prophet and his miraculous power. Elisha bids Naaman to bath seven times in the Jordan. Naaman refuses, but is persuaded by his attendants. The Syrian is healed and returns home with all the gifts which Elisha refuses to take.

2 Tim 2:8-13: Timothy is summoned to keep in mind Jesus Christ risen from the dead. This is to remind him, in his sufferings and difficulties, that for Christ the *Via Dolorosa* became the *Via Gloriosa*. So for Timothy, too, (and for Paul himself), suffering will bring a crown of glory. This is God's message, and nobody can question it; no human power can hinder God's free activity as no human power was able to stop Jesus from going to the tomb and rising from it.

The exhortation ends with a hymn, used probably in the liturgy of the early communities:

"If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;

If we endure, we shall also reign with him;

If we deny him, he will also deny us;

If we are unfaithful, he will be faithful for he cannot deny his own self."

Lk 17:11-19: No story in all the Gospels — says William Barclay — so poignantly shows man's ingratitude. Ten lepers came to Jesus with desperate longing; he cured them; and nine never came back to give thanks.

Have you ever gone out of your way to help someone and received no word of thanks in return? Or, looking at it from another angle, have you ever received a gift from a friend or relative and sent no note of thanks? Most of us have probably had both experiences at some time in our lives.

Insults hurt, and being ignored by others is often very trying, but the experience of ingratitude on the part of those we have helped is very difficult to bear without harboring thoughts of bitterness. Today's Gospel relates an incident in Jesus' life

which shows the ingratitude on the part of the nine cured lepers who did not return, and gratitude on the part of the cured Samaritan leper who came back "praising God in a loud voice".

Samaritans, as we already know from other Gospel episodes, were despised by the Jews. Jesus was a Jew. The nine Jews, however, did not return. They accepted Jesus' gift without a word of thanks. The hated Samaritan, on the other hand, realizing that he had been cured, returned praising God in a loud voice.

In the first reading we have another example of gratitude: Naaman, the Syrian, a foreigner, comes to ask prophet Elisha to cure him of his leprosy. Once he was cleansed, he returned to the prophet to thank him and to honor Elisha's God.

In both cases we find accounts of prayers of petition, followed by the granting of a special favor, and then the recipients of the favors return to praise and thank God.

We, too, in our own way can be considered other Naamans or Samaritan lepers, not in the sense that we too, have leprosy but in the sense that we have also petitioned and received many favors from God. It is not necessary to be cured from a grave sickness to realize all the favors from God:

— Our life is a gift of God: our eyes, our hands, our heart are all gifts of God.

Have we ever thank God for all these gifts received from him?

— The things around us: the sun that rises every morning, the air we breathe, the water we drink ...

We have become accustomed to think that the sun, the water, the air belong to us, as if we have bought these, and so use as we want.

— The family ...

We take for granted many things in our lives.

Jesus laments that of the ten cured, only one has a sense of gratitude.

We hasten to ask God for favors, to cure us from illness, to grant us a safe journey, to help us through some trials.

It is true that God wants us to ask him for what we need. But let us not forget to thank Him too. If all we have has been given to us by God and everyday we are receiving new favors, it would be nice that we express our gratitude everyday.

In the morning, for a new day.

In the evening

At meals ...

— The Mass is an act of thanks: It is called Eucharist, which means thanksgiving.

— In the Gloria, we say: "We give you thanks for your glory."

— The preface begins: "It is our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks . . ."

— At the consecration, we say the words: "Jesus took bread and gave thanks to his heavenly Father."

Men reveal themselves by their gratitude. Some are grateful for things; some are grateful for friends. But we must be grateful for friends we have in Christ and for the use we can make of things for Christ's sake. This thanksgiving breaks into song even though things are taken away and friends are lost from sight.

Francis of Assisi took all men to his heart because he saw in them the Christ who gave him everything.

"For light and air; sweet sense of sound and smell;  
for ear to hear the heavenly harmonies;  
for eyes to see the unseen in the seen;  
for visions of the Worker in the work;  
for hearts to apprehend Thee everywhere.

Thank God for sleep in the long quiet night,  
for the clear day calling through the little leaded panes  
for the shining well water and the warm golden light,  
and the paths washed white by singing rains."

**29th SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1983**

*Ex 17:8-13 As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel had the advantage.*

*2 Tim 3:14-4:2 All Scripture is inspired by God.*

*Lk 18:1-8 It is necessary always to pray and not to lose heart.*

*Perseverance in prayer is the theme common to the first reading and the Gospel. This theme is illustrated by the examples of Moses who kept his arms outstretched till sunset; and of the widow in the parable who did not give up until the judge listened to her. The second reading is an exhortation to Timothy on the value of the Scriptures.*

*Ex 17:8-13:* The battle in the field is not described because the writer gives more importance to what is happening on the hilltop.

The hands of Moses had already become a symbol to his people. Through them the power of God had manifested itself:

— Moses had stretched them out and, through the plagues, the people had been freed from slavery; the sea had been divided; they had been delivered from dying of thirst and hunger.

Now Moses' hands bring power for victory in battle.

When Amalek pressed forward, Moses' faith wavered. He doubted if they could win, his hands fell, and Israel began to lose courage till Aaron and Hur came to his support.

*2 Tim 3:14-4:2:* This text has been and is still used for appraising the importance of the Scripture in the life of the Christian.

The Christian's Scriptures are completely adequate "to make . . . wise", i.e., to convey the knowledge, theoretical and practical, which leads to salvation.

Timothy is urged by St. Paul to persist in holding on to this teaching received from his teachers, "in season and out of season". The minister must be faithful in "refuting, checking, and exhorting men", appealing to their minds, their consciences,

and their wills. He must not be discouraged by slow results: "Never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching."

*Lk 18:1-8:* Christ constantly teaches us to pray. He himself gave us an example on how to pray. Before making a big decision, he always retired to pray: before choosing his disciples, before entering into his Passion, before his death.

And on several occasions he taught the people and his disciples how to pray. Today's Gospel is one of these occasions.

We are very impatient. We would like our prayers to be quickly answered: "I asked for it, so I get it." Instant results! It seems a waste of time to persist, to remain with our "hands outstretched" the whole day like Moses. When Moses lowered his hands, the Isaelite army withdrew. We think that instead of remaining in prayer it would be better to put down our hands and engage in some "worthwhile" activity.

Today's Gospel teaches us how to be persistent in our prayer, like that poor widow who came again and again to the judge until he did her justice.

"Persistence is the secret behind every achievement in life. The electric-light bulb was not made in a flash. Edison labored over it, even despaired over it, experimenting with it for months and months. The idea, no doubt, might have come to him like lightning, but the fulfillment of the idea was the result of months of persistent, plodding labor. It gave Edison the right to say that genius is 1% inspiration, and 99% perspiration."

It is the same in the realm of character. Few, if any, characters are born ready made. They are forged by men and women who work tirelessly at it. Setbacks, reversals, defeats, failures, come what may, they keep on trying. If they have a bad habit they try to correct it. When they slip into it again, they do not give up the battle; they attack it from a different angle.

No one has ever accomplished anything in public life without this quality of persistence.

Some people have a flair for making great beginnings. They have unbounded enthusiasm, an inexhaustible reservoir

of ideas, imagination, personality and charm. But the spray soon begins to fall, and the sea is still again, leaving no trace of their impact. They made a good beginning, but they could not keep going. They had the incentive to start, but not the persistence to continue. It is the day after day routine that is difficult. It is the monotonous round of duties that wears us down. Almost anyone can launch an undertaking, but not everyone has the grit to keep it going.

The final test is not the ability to rise to great heights on great occasions, nor to stretch the nerve and muscle to incredible lengths under pressure; the final test is to keep going, to walk, to plod through the irritations and nuisances of each day's toil, through the disappointments, detours and delays of each day's travel, and to do it without fretting and without weariness which is the sign of a worn spirit.

We have to persevere in prayer, we have to pray always, not just when we are in the right mood, as sometimes people say.

Somebody might object that God is very much unlike that judge in the Gospel story. Indeed, he may not be like that judge. But why does he not listen at once and grant our petitions? Let us look into Christ's example as narrated in the Gospel.

Jesus himself does not like to grant immediately what people asks him:

- The Canaanite woman had to insist to Jesus even to the point of humiliation.
- The sisters of Lazarus, his friend, had their brother dead before Jesus arrived.
- His mother at Cana was dispatched with a phrase that to us seems disrespectful.

All have to wait or to insist.

Is it not paradoxical? We are told to go to God with our petitions, yet God seems to delay his action. But does God really delay? Or are we, in fact, impatient, fussy and unbelieving? Do we not too often speak to God as if he had forgotten, and we had to remind him of what he should do? Do we not, at times, lose patience with his methods which appear too incomprehensible?

Are we not always running ahead of him, or Juggling at his hand, bidding him, hurry, hurry, do something, in a way that is ridiculous?

The earth is not soaked by a quick rain, no matter how violent it is. It needs the constant and persistent rain of a whole season. Then the sun will make life grow from that soil.

To pray is to expose oneself to this constant pouring of God. Life will be produced in us: we will become more generous and less demanding in our dealing with others.

### 30th SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1983

*Sir 35:15b-17, 20-22a The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds.*

*2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18 I have fought the good fight to the end.*

*Lk 18:9-14 The publican went home justified before God.*

Today is World Mission Sunday, and the theme of our reflection is: "We cannot enter heaven alone."

Either we enter together with the people we love, the people we live with, the people we have somehow influenced, or we will not enter heaven at all. We will be damned together with those we have abandoned, those whose trust we have betrayed.

Listen to this story, taken from Dostoyevsky's novel, *The Brothers 'Karamazov*.

"Once upon a time there was a peasant woman, and a very wicked woman she was. And she died and did not leave a single good deed behind.

The devils caught her and plunged her into the lake of fire.

So her guardian angel stood before God and wondered what good deed of hers he could remember to tell Him. 'She once pulled up an onion in her garden,' said he, 'and gave it to a beggar woman!' And God answered: 'You take that onion then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out from the lake, let

her come to the Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is.'

The angel ran to the woman, and held out the onion to her. 'Come,' said he, 'catch hold and I'll pull you out!'

And he began cautiously pulling her out. He had just pulled her right out when the other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being drawn out, began clinging at her so as to be pulled out with her.

But she was a very wicked woman and she began kicking them.

'I'm to be pulled out, not you! It is my onion, not yours!'

As soon as she said that, the onion broke. And the woman fell back into the lake. So the angel wept and went away.

The woman is burning there to this day."

This is only a story, but it illustrates our point: We cannot be saved alone.

Remember the servants in the parable of the talents:

"To one the Lord gave five talents, to another two, to a third, one, each in proportion to his ability."

The man who had received five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The second man did the same with his two talents.

But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

When the time of reckoning came, they came forward, one by one. The two servants who traded with their master's talents were praised and rewarded by him.

But the man who had one talent came forward and said: 'Sir, I have heard you were a hard man reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is, it was yours, you can have it back.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant... take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents,



As for that worthless servant, throw him into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'

The same may happen to us if we care only for ourselves, if we do not utilize our talents to help others.

God will ask us that same question: "Where is the product of your talents? Do you come alone? Where are your brothers?"

Like Cain, we may answer, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" Like the woman of the story we may want to be saved alone, but that is not possible.

Today is Mission Sunday and we are reminded, particularly on this day, of our Christian obligation to spread the Gospel, to bring people to God. Have we ever worried about our task as missionaries? You may be wondering what it means to be a missionary for an ordinary Christian. What can we do for the missionary activity of the Church?

— First of all, we can be missionaries by the example of our lives.

It is frequently argued that Christians should see to their own moral improvement and not bother about other people's; that if other people do not care about Christ that is their own affair.

And yet the command of Jesus is clear: "preach to everybody the Good News of the Kingdom of God..." If we are really convinced that the Good News could transform us and others, we would go out and communicate this message to others.

— Secondly, we can be missionaries by our prayers. Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus is the patroness of the missions although she never went out of her cloister. By her prayers, she helped those missionaries; she was a missionary herself.

— And thirdly, we can be missionaries by providing material aids to the mission. As Christians, we are obliged to sustain not only our local church, but other churches that may be in need.

The Acts of the Apostles narrates how St. Paul solicited contributions from some of the churches to help others that

on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent. For you love all things..." (Wisdom). "The Lord is good to all, and compassionate to all his works ... the Lord lifts up all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down" (Psalm).

This attitude of Jesus inviting himself to the house of a man he does not know is very surprising. But St. Francis of Assisi says: "God is always courteous and does not invade the privacy of the human soul."

At the Incarnation, nobody invited God to take the human form. Although there are reasons why he invited himself:

- to bring light into the darkness. And many people were happy that their way was made clear by such light
- to proclaim the truth although many would be disgusted
- to give life to those in prison, in suffering, in hunger.. .

His enemies resented Jesus inviting himself into the house of a public sinner, and this convinced them of their decision to kill him.

But others were filled with happiness, as we can see in Zaccheus' wholehearted answer to this visit of Jesus. The man undergoes a complete change of heart, a complete conversion.

Up until his meeting with Jesus, only money and wealth meant much to him. But He showed by his reaction to Jesus' words that Jesus' presence in his house had changed him.

And St. Luke concludes this beautiful and touching story with these words "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

A thing is lost when it is removed from its own place; and when we find such a thing, we return it to the place it ought to occupy. A man is lost when he has wandered away from God; and he is found when once again he takes his rightful place as an obedient child in the household and the family of his Father.

The story of Jesus and Zaccheus should give confidence to all who have stayed away from the Lord through sin. Jesus is willing to invite himself into our house, but only if he is welcome.