

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO deFILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

**LORENZO RUIZ AND COMPANIONS:
TOWARDS CANONIZATION?**

Fidel Villaroel, O.P.

**A THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION
FREE OF VIOLENCE?**

Felicisimo Diez, O.P.

**MESSAGE FOR WORLD MISSION DAY
23 OCTOBER 1983**

John Paul II

**REMOVAL AND TRANSFER
OF PARISH PRIESTS**

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PRE-MARITAL INVESTIGATION

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EDITORIAL

LoRenzo RUIZ an6 Companions:

TOWARDS CANONIZATION?

When on February 18, 1981 Pope John Paul II solemnly declared the blessedhood of our protomartyr Lorenzo Ruiz and his fifteen Companions who gave their lives for the faith in Nagasaki in 1633-1637, we felt the normal elation and spiritual pride of a local Church who receives the reward of a flower of sanctity for four hundred years of witnessing to the Christian Gospel in the midst of a continent with an immense non-Christian majority.

That memorable beatification ceremony was not just meant to be a commemoration of past martyrdoms, however sublime and heroic, or the glorification of 16 persons before the pilgrim Church, however deserving that glorification was. It was also intended to provide the people of God in this and other countries with edifying models of generous living, to stimulate and encourage us by their example and to have in them willing intercessors before God in our needs.

In order to promote a greater knowledge of the martyrs and a deeper love and authentic veneration for them, much has been done and achieved in the past two years: A National Movement for the Cause of Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz and Companion Martyrs has been organized and an office for this purpose has been set up; the anniversaries of their martyrdom (liturgically on September 28) and of their Beatification (February 18) have been celebrated with notable enthusiasm and with numerous liturgical, religious and cultural acts; novena prayers to Blessed Lorenzo and Companions have been printed in several dialects with wide popular acceptance; statues of all sizes and medals of the Filipino Protomartyr have proliferated; and the books and informative literature on the martyrs have obtained great diffusion.

Our devotion to the Blessed and to the Saints is often expressed in the form of supplication to God through them, motivated by the need of a favor, by the anxiety to find solution to human problems or alleviation to suffering. Not exactly the highest form of prayer, but a reasonable one. Other people are seeking, through prayer, an ulterior exaltation of Blessed Lorenzo and Companions, which is given in Canonization. Canonization would entitle them to *universal* veneration and would consequently expose our local Church to wider recognition in the international family of Christian communities. Even in their religious selfishness this wish and this prayer are perfectly legitimate, and besides, Canonization is the normal final stage of acknowledged sainthood, the consummation of Beatification.

But people should know that for Blessed Lorenzo and Companions to be canonized the Church requires a sign from God, and this sign is a miracle obtained through their intercession. A miracle is not a naturally produced event, but a happening supernaturally caused by God beyond the possibilities of nature and above the explanation of science. We believe in miracles because God is omnipotent and works them, and we believe in the intercessory powers of the saints before God. Miracles can happen and do happen. But while it is for us to pray, for the Saint to intercede and for God to grant, it is only for the Church to discern which favours attributed to the saints can be considered miracles. And the Church does not take the study of a miracle lightly.

Many favours are being attributed to Blessed Lorenzo and Companions by people who say their Novena prayers, and we presume that perhaps God rewards their faith by granting the favour even without, departing from the laws of nature. Other people seem upset for not obtaining the graces they are asking for. But we should neither despair because our petitions are denied once nor pretend that every cured headache is a miracle when an aspirin or the loving hand of a mother may explain the wonderful relief from pain. Against despair we have perseverance and humble faith; against pretensions of easy miracles we have prudence and common sense. And confronted by startling favours we have the Church to give us a final judgment.

We can certainly ask God to give us a sign for the Canonization of Blessed Lorenzo and Companions. But meanwhile, they are up there on the altars for the purpose for which Pope John Paul II beatified them; for God's glory, for the exaltation of the Church on earth and for our copying their heroic virtues and death so that we may lead generous, just and holy Christian lives.

FIDEL VILLAROEL, O.P.

pe6R0 casipit OF MANGALDAN

The life and deeds of Don Pedro Casipit were recorded by Fr. Diego Aduarte in only two pages of his *Historic/, de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinos, Japon y China*. These two pages however say in very few words what others convey in many.

Don Pedro was said to have been born in Mangaldan in the early years of the 16th century and must have died in the same town in the beginning of the 17th century at the ripe age of more than a hundred years.

Father Aduarte describes him as a powerful and rich chief, endowed with a strong character and blessed with a wife and three daughters. His household included distant relatives and slaves. He was energetic, conscious of his obligations and ready to carry them out according to the dictates of his conscience. Being a pagan, he stood by his pagan religion with the same ardor that a true Christian cares for his own. This disposition led him, after his conversion to become one of the most ardent and most efficient apostles of the new faith which he had embraced.

If circumstances have been more propitious, he might have been a great leader and, perhaps, a renowned saint. Fr. Aduarte* affirms Don Pedro's decision to his religion and his family. If only the Philippines had today many "Patresfamilias" like Don Pedro Casipit, then perhaps there would be less juvenile delinquency, fewer crimes, a more orderly society, a widespread peace, barely any family troubles with their attendant evils of quarrels and divorce. But let us proceed with what Fr. Aduarte has written.

"The conversion of another prominent chief of the town of Mangaldan, named Don Pedro Casipit, was not less marvelous. He was formerly so inimical to the Faith that on one occasion he nearly killed a Franciscan religious (The Franciscans came ahead of us to this province of Pangasinan). Don Pedro had already brought the Franciscan to the ground in order to kill him with a sharp poniard, and he would have carried out his intention if others had not stopped him.

When the Dominicans came into his place, Don Pedro was so outraged that he went to Manila in order to negotiate with the authorities for the removal of the Friars from his town, even promising to give up one-half of his property in return. But wonder of wonders! Things turned up so unexpectedly that he even embraced the Faith and became such a fervent Christian.

First, his wife, Lalo embraced the faith due to the preaching of Father Pedro de Soto, who was one of those first illustrious men of this Province renowned for their learning and virtue. Father de Soto knew that Lalo's conversion was not one of the ordinary conversions, since it was accompanied by special outpourings of devotion. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he concluded from it that she was destined to receive a copious amount of grace, and wishing this fact be signified by her name, he called her Gracia. Later events would indeed prove that she was to be as her name portended.

Seeing herself a Christian, she at once began to insist to her husband that he become one, entreating him with many and repeated supplications. Her pleas were backed up by the exhortations of Father Pedro de Soto, and above all by the Lord who was interiorly softening and disposing him until finally, he was baptized. And so it was fulfilled what the Apostle says *Sanctificatus est vir infidelis per mulierem fidelem* — "The unbelieving husband is made acceptable to God by being united to a believing wife" (I Cor. 7:14). This regeneration of Don Pedro Casipit effected such renewal of morals, such fear of the Lord and so much virtue within his household that it rather seemed a house of reformed religious than of natives recently converted to the faith.

In this way Casipit was transformed from a persecutor to a devout and faithful child of the Church. To the church of his town he made a large donation; he spent for the building of the main altar and of the side altars.

His three daughters followed the footsteps of Don Pedro and his wife. In Baptism, they received the names of Maria, Ines and Ana. All their household were also baptized.

Maria had her hours of prayer everyday and many other devotions. She often went to Confession, and received Communion as frequently as she could obtain permission from *her* Confessor. Besides, she did not allow any day to pass without hearing Mass. Her devotion was such that she even persuaded her husband to build a house near the church of the town of Binalatongan (now San Carlos), where they went to reside. Being near the side of the choir loft, she was able to follow in the prayers of the Religious.

She used to rise at midnight to recite her vocal prayers while the Religious prayed their Matins. Then she had her hour of mental prayer while they had theirs; and this over, she took the discipline at the time the Friars were also taking their own, not allowing herself to lag behind them in all these.

Following her example, her husband and children did the same before an altar that they had at home, decorated with taste, near which a lamp was always burning.

Eventually she died a most holy death as a result of childbirth, leaving plentiful alms to the Church and for pious works.

Her father, Don Pedro, assimilated so well the doctrines and obligations of the Christian religion that by his examples and exhortations, he brought to Baptism all his vassals, who were many. Even those who were not his vassals came to be baptized.

Before he received the Most Blessed Sacrament, he prepared himself for some days in advance with the greatest devotion and concern, spending the last three nights all the time in the church, either praying or scourging himself or sleeping on the ground.

On all feastdays he gathered together all the natives of his town and lectured to them, emphasizing the concern they should have for their souls and the good upbringing of their children. He also spurred them after their fields, for on these depended the sustenance of their households, severely reprimanding those whom he found negligent in this regard.

In all these things, and more so in whatever pertained to their souls, he exhorted them — and very especially on all feastdays of the Church to hear Mass, notwithstanding the fact that

many of them were not bound to do so due to a special dispensation granted to them by the Apostolic See.

On the main feasts like the Corpus Christi, Easter, Holy Week and of the town's Patron Saint, he readied all his household, assigning to everyone the task each of them was expected to do with all punctuality and charging them not be found wanting in the fulfillment of their duty.

When the time for the yearly Confessions arrived, he saw to it that all his subjects went to Confession. He himself took them to church and, if anyone was found negligent, he admonished him as a man who, instructed interiorly, knew how indispensable this sacrament is for the well-being of the soul.

One of the priests of that Province declared that he saw him a number of times in his town gathering together all its people in the courtyard of the church, and there, placing himself in their midst, he delivered to them a brief spiritual sermon, exhorting them to practise the works of mercy and repeating to them some examples which, for this purpose, he had heard from the Religious in their preaching. This he did using plain and simple words but spoken with such fervor and devotion that he made his listeners break into tears, including the Religious who, concealed, was overhearing him. In this way this good native did a great deal of good among his townfolks.

His wife did the same among the women to the town's great spiritual advantage, which seemed to have become one school of virtue, where men and women alike, were enrolled without exception, and all for their greater spiritual good.

And so, the good couple, Don Pedro y Dona Gracia, with all their simplicity, became proficient teachers who by word and example taught much; and from them, the other chiefs took the lead because good example is always a compelling force.

In their zeal for the salvation of souls, this good couple excelled all others in keeping with their obligation towards their subjects, thus repaying them generously for their services.

If they were solicitous as regards the welfare of those who were not related to them, the more did they care for their relatives and members of their household. They brought up their children in the midst of such virtue and recollection. They saw to it that their slaves, who were many, heard Mass, went to Confession, and received Communion even more often than they were bound to, prayed the Rosary everyday, prayed before and after meals, and commended themselves most earnestly to God.

Don Pedro used to punish them more severely for their deficiencies regarding these matters than for whatever negligences they might have committed in his service. He often said: 'I had rather tolerate that my slaves steal a portion of my property than they be found lax in the duties pertaining to their founts, because of the latter, God will require an account of me, but of the former of them only.'

Once a slave of his died at a time when, as it often happened here, the waters of a swollen river extensively damaged the ricefields that there was no possibility to dig a grave for him. Don Pedro resolved to carry out personally the work of burying the slave. He decided to bring the corpse to another town — which for being in a higher ground was not flooded — in order to bury it there in the church, so as not to be found wanting in this work of mercy.

When they learned of his plan, his relatives began to remonstrate with him for the many risks that were involved in this undertaking. The river was so swollen, that it swept along many uprooted trees and trunks that might overturn the boat. Moreover, Don Pedro had to row upstream against such a powerful current. Besides, there were many eddy currents which might submerge any boat that happened to come on their way. In addition to this, the river was infested with crocodiles which on such occasions became more aggressive and attacked the boats with greater vigor to snatch the people and devour them. For this reason nobody dared to navigate the river on an occasion like this.

Don Pedro was aware of these deterrents and he also knew the risk that an old man like him, who was already over one hundred years old, was about to encounter, although he was far from being feeble with age or a decrepit.

His wife, his daughters, all his household and other natives of high rank begged him not to go — since all loved him tenderly and were deeply concerned about the dangers that he might run into —, but to entrust the job to others. However, he retorted that God had entrusted the slave to him and thus he was bound to watch after his body and soul. It was, therefore, his duty to bury him after his demise without passing the task to another since it was his personal obligation.

Failing to convince him, they finally enshrouded the corpse and he placed it in a small boat with greatest care, and rowing the boat himself, he transported the corpse to the town of San Jacinto which, for the reason stated above, was not flooded.

The good old man arrived there drenched and almost frozen from the cold waters and chilly winds that buffeted him. For strong young men this would have been considered most difficult venture, what more for a man so advanced in age!

A Religious who was then dwelling there in San Jacinto could not restrain his astonishment when he saw him arriving at the height of such bad weather, and his amazement knew no bounds when he learned of the reason of his coming; with so much risk and personal discomfort.

Don Pedro saw to it the slave's corpse was decently interred. After the burial, he went home in a joyful mood for having performed his obligation to his greater spiritual profit.

On another occasion, another slave of his met a sudden accident. They sent for a priest, who at once heeded the call. However, when he arrived, he found that the slave was already dead. It was eleiar to all that no one was blameworthy for what happened.

Yet, Don Pedro took it so much at heart and was so anguished at seeing his slave had died without the last sacraments that, shedding copious tears, he told the Religious how fearful he was lest God punished him in account of it. The Religious scarcely could appease his grief. Don Pedro did everything he could, going to Confession and receiving Communion on behalf of the deceased. In addition, he made an offering of many candles to the church, had many Masses said for him and made other suffrages for his soul. Yet, even then, he was scarcely able to cast off himself the sadness and uneasiness that the accident had brought him.

From all these, we may infer that although Don Pedro and the natives were rather slow in embracing the Faith, yet God, Who is wont to grant His grace with a greater generosity to those whom He loves, finally bestowed it on them most liberally. With God's grace, and with the great diligence and eminent sanctity of the friars who were chosen by God to minister to these people, these converts turned out to be the best or one of the best Christian communities that, to our knowledge, ever existed in these Islands.

Translated from: DIEGO ADUARTE, O.P. *Historia de la Provincial del Santisimo Rosario de Filipinos, Japon y China*, Zaragoza, 1693, pp. 77-79.

PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

Gregorio:

GENIAL AND HOLY BROTHER OF THE ROSARY

When he was catching his last few breaths that cloudy afternoon of July 6, 1982, he was in his room in the hospital — alone. It appeared that he had just finished repairing a clock entrusted to him that very day by an old Father (the clock was seen on the table where he was found weakly leaning). For Brother Gregorio Hontomin — or Fray Goyong, as he is familiarly called by his confreres in the Order of Saint Dominic — was a genius in repair business. One confrere once said of him: "If there is something that needs repair, give it to Brother Gregorio. He can repair anything."

No cooperator brother was as dependable as he was in terms of repairing things. He knew how to dismantle anything and put the dismantled parts together in their right places.

People who have known his practical genius would never forget what Brother did in the late fifties. It was decided in 1959 that the huge musical organ in St. Albert Priory in Hong-kong would be transferred to the Santo Domingo Church in Quezon City. Fray Goyong, commissioned for the job, dismantled the intricate parts of the musical instrument. When the parts arrived, he put them back together piece by piece. The organ is still found in the spacious choir loft of the same church — a magnificent, yet silent witness to Fray Gregorio's ingenuity.

Everyone in the populated University of Santo Tomas is reminded every hour of this genial Brother. Every hour the bell of the big clock — placed at the foot of the tower of the magnificent main building — tolls, the Brother is remembered. For his skillful hands repaired and maintained the huge time piece.

He shared his genius not only within the university but even outside as well. No house of the Order in the country did not somehow enjoy his services. In fact, during the morning of the day he passed away, Brother went to San Juan del Monte to deliver three electric polishers. And one of these belonged to the St. Martin de Porres Charity Hospital run by the Dominican Tertiaries for the indigents. Was it by Providence or by coincidence that Brother Gregorio went to the sanitarium — named after his fellow cooperator brother, Martin de Porres — where nearby his remains would rest? Nobody, of course, would know the answer. But one thing could be sure: that Brother's repairing of the polisher of the hospital was just one of his countless acts of charity inside and outside his house of assignation.

Hospitals became the favorite working venues of Brother. Till his death, he was in charge of the General Services division in the two large hospitals of the university. Brother is recalled as the "genial fixer" of furnitures, and a thousand and one fixtures of the said institution of health. So unique were his ways of repairing and inventing things that people suggested to apply them for government patents.

Moreover, those who have known him well recall not so much only his genius but much more, his religious conduct. They are better impressed by his holiness in simplicity. One of his former priors said: "Brother Gregorio was one who never gave trouble to his superiors."

Should his holiness be traced, it could not but be attributed to his exceptional love for rosary; he was a brother of the rosary. Accounts about his love for the rosary and his efforts to promote the devotion are in hand. In 1978 he gave a rosary to a newly ordained bishop. The beads of the rosary are made out of used telephone wires. "I have nothing to give you", he said, "except this rosary. This will serve as your telephone line to heaven."

On his last birthday, Brother Gregorio brought a bag to the refectory. After lunch, just like any other good religious, he entrusted the contents of the bag to the Prior. In turn, the Prior announced that Brother was giving gifts to everybody in the community: one fifteen-decade rosary and a smaller one of five decades for each. The rosaries looked unique, strong and beautiful. They were made of the same used telephone wires. According to him, each bead would pass through his hands some ten times.

He once told the writer a curious story on how he would let the ants help him make rosaries. During occasions when there would be a celebration in the community, olives were served. After eating off the meat, the confreres would put aside the olive seeds. Brother Gregorio would then collect them. He would bring the seeds to the garden where the ants have their nest. The ants would eat then of what remained of the olives. After a few days the seeds would be clean and hence, ready for rosary making.

The writer still remembers very well the unique way Brother would join the procession in honor of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, the yearly celebration held every second Sunday of October. The event is popularly known as the La Naval de Manila, a traditional feast of over three hundred and fifty years.

Before the procession starts, which is usually attended by a great multitude of the faithful, Brother Gregorio would already prepare a pair of light but long bamboo poles. At the end of each pole, he would make a cross-like design. Then he, together with scores of other devotees who usually were people who worked with him, would stay near the image of our Lady. Every time the image would pass under the lowly placed electrical lines which run across the streets, Brother would push up the wirings so that the image could pass without hitting the threatening wirings. That was the simple but useful and meaningful participation of the Brother in the famous procession.

For fellow cooperator brothers, Fray Goyong was the model. Before assenting to any change in the lifestyle of the cooperator brothers, they would ask first whether Brother Gregorio agreed to it or not. For instance, in consonance with the spirit of the revised constitutions and ordinations of the Order, there was fit move lately to prepare the cooperator brothers for the holy order of the diaconate. Some priest-confreres would ask the cooperator brothers whether they like the idea. In response they would say, "Ordain first Brother Gregorio and we will fill follow."

The worth of Brother to the Order would be immeasurable. In one of the houses of the Order abroad, there lives a cooperator brother whom his confreres describe as "a friar who is worth three friars". In the case of Brother Gregorio, one Father would put it: "Brother Gregorio is not only worth three friars, he is worth ten friars." This only goes to show how much Fray Gregorio was valued in the community.

If Brother is worth ten friars — which is hardly an exaggeration — therefore his hands were worth twenty hands. Certainly the confreres have missed those twenty hands. Yet, there is an inner belief among the brethren that Brother will be a hundred times helpful to the Order now than when he was still alive.

Yes, Brother is gone. But there is something of him that will always linger on. The Father Provincial, in his homily at the burial Mass in Santo Domingo Church, said: "Each one of us has a little of Brother Gregorio." This "little" that we have of Brother could be none other than the memory and example of a good and faithful religious which he has left in our hearts.

That presence of what has remained of Brother in those who knew him was somehow felt by those who concelebrated or attended the Mass held in the chapel of the university in the morning of the day he was buried. There was a penetrating silence of mysterious origin which gripped the hearts of the people who came to attend the funeral Mass. That experience could not but remain unexplained.

Still, the precious presence was felt even in the cemetery at San Juan where Brother went before his death. The host of confreres, sisters, relatives and friends of Brother stood by even long after the internment rites as if they wished just to stay. Everybody simply wanted to have a final look at the fortunate wooden casket that will keep his mortal remains.

So sweet was standing near the body of Fray Goyong while listening to some of the meaningful songs sung by the confreres and the seminarians from the Central Seminary of the University of Santo Tomas: *Salve Regina* which recalled the devotion of Brother to Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary; *O Spem Miram* which recalled the promised hope of Saint Dominic; *Hindi Kita, Malilimutan* which expressed the lasting impression left by Brother in the lives of those who came to know him; and *Nearer My God to Thee* which professed the faith that Brother has gone to the bosom of the Heavenly Father.

In his room in the hospital were found many uncompleted works: unrepaired watches, unjoined rosary beads, unwelded parts of fixtures, etc. This scene could not but vividly portray to the brethren and friends a possible thing to happen — that sometime in the future, through some ways yet unknown, the genial Brother Gregorio would find means to complete the many jobs he has left unfinished...

VICENTE CAJILIG, OP.

FEATURES

a Theology of Liberation Free of Violence?

One of the most discussed theological movements during the last decades is undoubtedly the Theology of Liberation. Definitely its methodology of reflection as well as its contents lend themselves to a heated dialogue and even to a violent polemic. But the origin of this polemic would be to a certain extent the shortness of memory into which its opponents have lapsed. For the Theology of Liberation did not emerge due to the whim of some disgruntled Theologians, and less due to an arbitrary initiative of ill-disposed Christians. It originated from concrete circumstances as the logical answer to a social and ecclesial situation which urgently claimed the stand and the posture by the Christian community.

It is impossible to understand the Theology of Liberation out of its original context which was the movement towards Liberation. It is merely a Christian understanding of, or a Christian grappling with, the wider and generic movement which has gripped our society: the movement towards Liberation. This movement has penetrated practically all horizons and facets of human existence and endeavor — the personal and collective, the psychological, moral, religious, social, cultural, economic, political, etc., and has keynoted the social upheaval of the last decades. The Theology of Liberation should be construed only within this context.

In the ideological horizon, Liberation, considered both as a mentality and as a movement, has more or less consciously influenced the vast mass of our contemporaries, according to the different cultural conditions of the various groupings of people. This liberationist ideal and mentality are to a big extent the result of a new conception of man and freedom, a conception which has questioned important traditionally entrenched values, ideals, patterns and types of behavior. Marxist philosophy, psychoanalysis, existentialism, the techno-positivist mentality of our times, have been deciding factors of this cultural shift.

Geographically, the Liberation movement has made the most violent inroads into the countries of the Third World which suffer to a scandalous proportion from crass underdevelopment, dependence and oppression. This situation of the Third World countries has been most acutely conscientized in the context of Latin America, where during the last decades the aspirations to Liberation has been the object of an intense explicitation and enterprise. The Theology of Liberation has emerged in step with this progressive realization of the status of underdevelopment, dependence and oppression under whose throes the Latin American countries agonize. The Theology of Liberation has emerged as an effort of some Christian communities and of some Theologians to provide a Christian solution to these anxieties and to the search of their remedies by professedly Christian countries.

Latin America has been the recognized pioneer of this new theological system and movement. In their eagerness to release themselves from the excessive influence of European Theology, some theologians of Latin America, though mostly European-schooled, initiated an autochthonous theological reflection born from the situation of dependence and oppression prevalent in their native countries, a reflection premised from the praxis of liberation which is blooming in the life of Latin America. G. Gutierrez, H. Assman, E. Bussel, S. Calilea, H. Camara, T. Miranda, L. Boff, J. Sobrino, etc., are theologians of Liberation. In other areas of the Third World, the awakening of an autochthonous theology is starting and taking a leaf out of the outline and plans of the Theology of Liberation. But the theologians of Latin America have the distinction of being the animators who exert forceful influence in other theological quarters, stirring up enthusiasm in some but also misgivings in others. (EL Schillebeeckx doffs his hat to Latin

American Theology for its critical contribution to European Theology, as he said on the occasion of the Doctorate *Honoris Causa* to G. Gutierrez; but some quarters of the hierarchy are warning us to the pitfalls of the Theology of Liberation).

These simple introductory observations show that Theology of Liberation owes its beginning in part to factors specifically non-theological (social situations, new ideologies, new social praxis, etc.) and in part to specifically theological or near-theological elements (the internal life and praxis of a particular Christian community of a determined portion of the Church).

The Theology of Liberation began by focusing intensely whatever light the analysis and synthesis of relevant principles from the social sciences could shed on the sociological events and processes taking place in Latin America during the last decades. Since the 1950's, Latin America has been aware of how the actual transformation of the world widens more and more the breach between the "haves" and the "have-nots", between the developed and the underdeveloped countries. The greater the transformation, so is the inequality. Nevertheless, it is precisely during these years when in the Latin American countries, there started a growing belief in the feasibility of self-reliant economic development by aping servilely the development processes in the more developed countries.

However, as early as the 1960's scholarly social analysis demonstrated the effectiveness of such developmental program?, and ascertained that mere economic development does not mean progress nor attains sufficiently the ideal of Liberation. Thus emerged the theory of dependence from the in-depth analysis of underdevelopment. The root of the ineffectiveness of the developmental programs was to be found in the relations of dependence of the underdeveloped countries and the better developed ones, the relation of dependence of the periphery on the center. Underdevelopment of some countries is not a fatalistic event, but a by-product of the development of other countries. The richer countries deliberately desire and positively maintain underdevelopment, and their apparent involvement in the developmental programs of other countries are phony, make-believe efforts to mask the real situation of dependence, that is, a dependence not merely in the economic but also in the cultural realms, which thus determines the identity and the most genuine and cherished values of dependent peoples. In this social analysis, progress ceases to be viewed as a mere economic development but rather spreads out into a worldwide

process which embraces the cultural, social, economic, political aspects. Thus this new focus of development and progress is preferably christened with the more explicit and expressive term Liberation.

To categorize Latin America as a dependent continent leads logically to speak of Liberation as an ideal and as an immediate commitment. Dependence and Liberation are two correlative terms. Veritable development can come by only through Liberation from dependence. This is an ideal which has spread everywhere in Latin American countries, generating in their inhabitants a lively conscience of their proper identity, personality and right to frame their own history in their historical destiny. This lively conscience of the run-of-the-mill Latin American man or woman is at the base of this new reflection on the content and exigencies of Liberation, and has given way to an intense liberationist praxis at all levels—political, economic, social, cultural, religious, etc. Surely, the degree of this conscientization is not of equal degree in all the strata of society. But the process thereof is afoot and astir through the length and breadth of the continent, with a more and more clear-cut purpose, namely, that the very same oppressed people should themselves assume this liberating duty and should achieve it with their own resources. The "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by P. Freire has notably influenced this process of conscientization.

As the backdrop of this social analysis lurks a good dose of Marxist Philosophy and particularly the Marxist method of analysis of reality. The Theology of Liberation has shared the sociological theory of dependence and also the explanation of the actual situation obtaining presently in Latin American society, and finally, it has adopted more or less explicitly the Marxist method of analysis of reality. Latin American society is plagued with class struggle due to the head-on clash between oppressors and oppressed, between the manipulators and the manipulated, between the rich minority and the destitute majority. And according to Marxist analysis, religion has had an important contribution to this situation.

However, the Theology of Liberation insists in being truly a theological system. It aims to cross the narrow limits of social or philosophical analysis, without entirely discarding either. It enters into a dialogue with human sciences, but wants

to remain as Theology. Therefore, starting from these social analyses, but adopting as a point of reference some basic elements of biblical tradition, the Theologians of Liberation attempt to delve deep into the theological root of this situation and to explicitate the theological scope of Liberation. The ideal and commitment of Liberation encompass the best of biblical tradition, from the experience of Exodus till the Paschal mystery of Christ. Any discourse on Liberation winds up with a close encounter with capital themes of the Bible and of Theology.

Christ has freed us to enjoy freedom. He is the only and true Liberator. The root of all slavery, oppression and estrangement is sin, an egoistic withdrawal of man to himself and the breach of the communication with God and brethren. To sin is to refuse to love God and brethren. Behind any structure of injustice, at the root of any situation of slavery, oppression and estrangement lurks a sinful will, either individual or collective, a responsible will of scorning God and brethren. Hence, only Liberation from sin will make mankind authentically free and will result in life of communion with God and brethren, resolving all situations that break this Christian ideal of communion. Herein lies a specifically theological horizon of Liberation. At this same horizon, we find the Christian community as well as, concretely, the Theologians of Liberation, who have done and are doing more than merely concoct a new system of sociology or Theology, despite what many censors of this Theology charge. To view Liberation at this horizon is to situate oneself in the core of the Christian message. The probable event that socio-political manipulations may take advantage of this Christian theme does not warrant that it be glossed over.

The ideal of a communion with God and brethren professed by a Christian community contrasts drastically with a situation of sin in a predominantly Catholic continent, what with the unjust distribution of wealth, social discrimination, violation of human rights, class struggle, oppression, violence, exploitation of the weak. .. and as many social sins in a continent that preponderantly professes the evangelical values of brotherhood, communion, reconciliation, equality, freedom. This, indeed, paradoxical situation is what has stung the conscience of the Christian community to parlay the ideal of Liberation into a manifest cogency of the Christian message and into a pressing commitment of the Christian community. With-

in the context of these paradoxes must one construe the theological reflection on the Christian problem of Liberation. This reflection, born amidst the praxis of the Latin American community, enjoys the support of the basic communities as well as theologians and representatives of the hierarchy, all of whom hold that silence would amount to be an unconscious option for perpetuating the situation of sin. The fruits of this reflection have been gleaned with discernment and have been proclaimed with a note of urgency in Medellin, Puebla, etc.

Pricked by the analysis of this contrast between the preponderance of those who professed the Christian faith on one side and the situation of sin on the other, urged by the praxis of the same Christian community, some Theologians devoted themselves to the critical review of some basic concepts of Theology and endeavoured to explicitate some forgotten or overlooked aspects of the Christian message, such as: salvation and Liberation, the promise of the Kingdom and the rebuilding of the world, sin and its social dimension, Christian love and the class struggle, justice and violence, etc. To invent a new set of theological topics was beside the question. The centric topics of the Theology of Liberation are the same as those of Classical Theology.

All to do was to stress some forgotten aspects of these themes and to apply them to the specific situation of the Latin American Christian community. It entailed merely a re-reading of these themes from a new coign of vantage imposed by the historical circumstances of present-day Latin American society. In fine, one had only to open one's eyes to the situation and to the corresponding reaction and commitment from the biblical perspective of Liberation. The novelty lay not in the theme, but in the method. But more than a mere formal innovation in methodology, it is a new focus mainly of the presentation of the Christian message, especially in its practical implications. Definitely, it is the practice of the prophetic and apostolic denunciation of slavery in its entire gamut and ar act of proclamation of Liberation with all its consequences in the concrete praxis of the human and Christian community.

The centric problem presented by the Theology of Liberation is the correlation between Christian salvation and the historical process of Liberation of man, between the Christian faith and human existence, between the kingdom of God and the rebuilding of the world. In the process of Liberation as

it takes place in Latin America there are some implications of the Word of God which cannot be discovered in the intimate and private living of the Christian faith. Hence the process of Liberation is considered by a sector of the Latin American Christian community as a *locus theologicus* (a source of theological proof or argument). Liberation is a historical experience similar to that of Israel, and we must therefore re-read the prophetic and evangelical message so as to bring to light the forgotten demands of that message. The Christian message is one of Liberation. Hence, it should become a reality within the historical praxis of Liberation.

The historical experience of Liberation which biblical tradition offers is considered a pattern of presentation of exigencies implied in the theological concept of salvation. Christian salvation starts really in the historical present and embraces the whole man. It is neither a goal merely to be hoped for, nor a phase already accomplished. It is a process already started but still unfinished^ a process which will persist throughout human history. In this sense, human history either of the individual or of the race, is a history of salvation, a history of our answering *yes* or *no* to the Lord, a history of either man's openness to communion or of his egoistic withdrawal which shatters that communion. Hence, sin is the only hindrance to salvation in the life to come. It is a breach, in the historical present, between man and God and other men, an intrahistorical, personal and social reality which blocks the process of salvation and Liberation even in the present life. To stress this historical character of Christian salvation, Theologians of Liberation have preferred to use the "liberationist" language.

Salvation considered thus as a starting point or premise, the eschatological promises turn into a central criterion of the Theology of Liberation. The eschatological promises are simultaneously the motive of all liberating commitment of the Christian community, for they are already actuating in the historical present, and are also a critical factor which serves as a point of relativity for any historical advancement within the Church and society. Hence, Liberation is a never-ending historical process which shows the provisionality of every historical present, and announces the salvation yet to come. The Christian community is in a state of Exodus by its very vocation. This is the basis of the spirituality of Liberation.

This presentation of Christian salvation and of the responsibility of the Christian community in the transformation

of the world leads us necessarily to the presentation of sin in its both social and objective dimensions. The Theology of Liberation radically defines sin in terms of egoism, or an egoistic withdrawal of man to himself, which leads to the rupture of the community... Indeed, this egoism, and not the mere structural deficiencies of society, are the final root of every unjust situation, of all domination, oppression, class struggle. Sin is not merely a private and subjective reality, it has political and objective dimensions, which engender the anti-gospel situations present in Latin American society. Sin implies the domination of man by man, rendering all brotherhood impossible. Sin, which is the lack of communion with God and brethren, is objectively incarnated in unjust structures, which are oppressing and enslaving. Hence, integral Liberation from sin demands at the same time a conversion in interior and personal attitudes and a Liberation shown in "Political" liberating "beau geste" and deeds. The ethic of Liberation situates morality in the realm of really liberating deeds rather than in mere good intentions.

So far the Theology of Liberation does not meet special problems in its inner self nor special difficulties in those to whom it is destined. Its tenets are so easy to substantiate with the best biblical and ecclesial tradition, and are readily shared by other theological movements. The capital problem that confronts Theology of Liberation is how to formulate the evangelical injunction of universal Christian love within a society constantly locked in class struggle. Love of neighbor is a corollary of the love of God. Love of neighbor is a circumstanced act: it is a love towards men situated in particular circumstances; social, economic, cultural, racial, etc. Love of neighbor should be exercised nowadays within the context of a class struggle in which there is an inevitable head-on clash between oppressors and oppressed, between lords and serfs, between rich and poor. Class struggle is an undeniable fact, it is not a fiction trumped up by spiteful theologians. It is impossible to just sit on the fence in this issue. To deny class struggle is simply to opt for the class in power. But the option of the gospel is biased towards the oppressed, the enslaved and the poor. How can the universalism of Christian love be justified in this context of class struggle? It is possible only, according to the Theologians of Liberation, by decidedly taking sides with the oppressed and by reconstructing through this attitude the fraternal relations among men. It is the oppressed who can lead the oppressors to a change of heart and to become humane and

unselfish. In this perspective the Theology of Liberation reinterprets the universality of Christian love, pardon toward our enemies, the unity of the Church, etc.

This option and this commitment towards the oppressed in the context of class struggle lead necessarily to the problem of violence. This is perhaps the most thorny issue which has been posed to these Theologians, and which has roused the suspicion and antagonism toward this theological movement of Liberation. The theorists of Liberation have discovered new insights about violence, distinguishing between bloody violence and institutionalized violence, between the violence of the oppressed and that of the oppressors, between illegal and legalized violence. The problem has not been resolved with these distinctions, but undoubtedly complacent attitudes have been unmasked and the gospel will have to be re-read more objectively.

Regarding this reflection on this issue of violence, the majority of Theologians of Liberation are more sober than what their critics take for granted. They accept the problem as not easy of solution, neither do they attempt to canonize violence with the Bible in hand. They proclaim and assert over and over again the ideal of the gospel of non-violence, but they raise their voice of alarm against possible traps and political manipulations which passivity or inaction in this issue many lead to. They do not reject the spirituality of the Servant of Yahweh, but neither do they confuse it with any fatalistic or easy-going attitude among the very Christians. Without returning the blow to the attacker because he, is stronger, there always remains the choice to answer with an assertion and defence of one's own dignity and rights, saying: "If I have spoken ill, bear witness to the evil; but if well, why doest thou strike me?" (John 18:23)

FELICISIMO MARTINEZ DIEZ, O.P.

The Neo Catechumenate

By Marcos Ruiz, O.P.*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

There are diverse ecclesial movements of today which offer distinct modalities of Church, or of "Christian communities" such are to be found in the Universal Church. They are movements purporting to answer the call of Vatican II to the whole People of God towards the building of the ecclesial community, to be founded on a sincere confrontation with the Word of God, on a renewal liturgical and communitarian life, so as to be a visible sign in the world of a new brotherhood in Christ (cf. SC 35, LG 48; DV 21; DH 14; AG 1.61 15; PO 4.18).

Pope Paul VI once said that "we find ourselves in one of the apostolic and missionary moments most important in the life of the Church" (*Allocution in the General Audience* on Wednesday Jan. 12, 1977). This same Pope during the Wednesday audiences in the months of July and August of 1976 continuously dealt about what he called "the reconstruction of the Church".

The official acts of the last two Synods of Bishops of the Church, to wit, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Catechesi Tradendae* are eminently missionary documents which intend to carry forward as far as feasible what was being rendered into practice of the acts of Vatican II in what it had of ecclesial and pastoral council.

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In what they have of genuine and valuable content, such ecclesial movements or communities that we shall introduce here, are no other but an attempt to answer to the clarion call of the Church of today, which acknowledges the need which the modern world has of the Christian witness. Thus we must understand globally these renovating movements, though it behooves us to take into account the peculiar character of each one of them. In treating about each and any of them we shall follow an outline, according to the following subtitles:

1. Origin;
2. Identity;
3. Initiation or catechumenate;
4. Objectives;
5. Theological bases;
6. Evaluation.

THE NEO-CATECHUMENAL COMMUNITIES

I. *Origin*

This movement called "Neo-Catechumenate", or "Neo-Catechumenal Movement", or "Neo-Catechumenal Communities" originated in Madrid, Spain. Its founder is a young man — Kiko Arguello. Being of a family of means, and when approaching 30 years of age, he felt a very strong call from Jesus Christ that led him to a change of life and to his dedication to the preaching of the Gospel, which for him is fundamentally the preaching of the Good News of the love of God. Later he used to say: "Though wretched and unworthy, I felt myself loved by Christ. The rest had love for me when I was worth something, when I was a good student, when I was of use, when I gave or I was productive ... But Christ has loved me without any interest, even being a sinner and unfaithful to Him."

Kiko, in his eagerness to make Christ known, addressed himself first to the poor in Palomeras, a suburb of the big city of Madrid. There he started his preaching of the Word of God among the poor in the slums, interspersing his talks with the guitar in hand as accompaniment to songs he himself composed inspired from Holy Scripture. Soon the fruits of this simple and not too formal preaching were evident. Kiko himself described it thus: "With a great surprise we witnessed the Word, which taking flesh among the poor who received it with cheer, gave birth to a *Community* of prayer, together with a

Liturgy so surprising a reaction of many brethren who, though full of sins and frailties, were blessing the Lord who set his eyes on them. By this method during the period of three years, we saw before our own eyes the opening of a true way toward the gestation of faith, a sort of catechumenate, which gradually gave rise to a Church, making fraternal communion to be a reality, and giving way to a love in a dimension surprising to all, because it was a dimension of death for the enemy, the dimension of the Cross."

The way of life of that small community of poor people was turned into a sign which attracted to the faith many persons, especially those without faith or those with faith but severed from its practice.

Some pastors who witnessed this auspicious event took steps to introduce it into their respective parishes. Monsignor Casimiro Morcillo, then Archbishop of Madrid, supported the initiative of Kiko and of the pastors. And thus gradually there were arising in many parishes of Madrid communities of this kind, in different surroundings, and always under the prime initiative of the pastor, and in perfect communion with the Church.

From Madrid the movement spread to Barcelona and other dioceses of Spain. Already in 1977, there were 450 communities, spread over 200 parishes in about 20 dioceses. Today they are much more in number.

In 1968 Kiko made a journey to Rome with a letter from Monsignor Morcillo recommending him to the Vicar of Rome Angelo Cardinal Dell'Acqua (died 1972). And in this same year these neo-catechumenal communities began to rise in Rome, starting from the Parish of N. Signora del SS. Sacramento e dei Martiri Canadesi. From Rome it spread over the whole of Italy, and in 1977 they were more in number than those of Spain: more than 600 communities distributed in 300 parishes in about 100 dioceses. Kiko was received in audience by Pope Paul VI and by the present Pope, and this honor contributed to the spread and increase of such communities throughout the world but specially in Italy, despite the difficulties that such neo-catechumenal communities met from both the laity and clergy.

The neo-catechumenate is spread presently in all continents, whether it was brought by itinerant missionaries, both priests and lay persons, in teams of three members, sent and supported by their respective communities. According to a survey in 1977

the communities ascended to 2,000 in some 800 parishes in 42 nations. Since then they did not cease increasing in number, and today probably they are twice as many. They are found in several dioceses in the Philippines, and a calculated guess is that there are at present more than 80 such neo-catechumenal communities in the breadth and width of our country since the movement reached our shores in 1975.

2. *Identity*

As an institution, these communities are cut to the same pattern, and substantially employ the same method for its establishment everywhere. This means that, while taking high stock of the little group with all its advantages *vis-a-vis* the big throng, the movement does not give free rein to personal inventiveness. As communities they are warm, affectionate, inviting, and in them every person counts and is counted. But it is bedevilled with some dose of "bossism" by the directors or bellwethers of every community, and there exists in every community, a certain "authority" which at times could be too strict. They do not respect the ecclesial institution, but they integrate it and incorporate themselves into it by way of the parish. As small groups, they tend to be in themselves "anti-institutional" or non-hierarchical, but in truth they enjoy a solid internal structure which they have by gradual experience found to be of a necessity.

According to the animators of these communities, this is not another "movement of Church" but merely that of "living the Church" in its dimension of real or interpersonal communion. Once established in the parishes, the neo-catechumenal communities aim to animate and invigorate the Church, to renovate without destroying it, and without inventing any novelty. It amounts to making the parish a "big community out of small communities" which thus can bridge the gap between the ecclesial institution in force (symbolized by the parish) and the form of ecclesial life desired by Vatican II when it spoke of the Church as "community" or as "people of God". Hardly can a well-knit community spring from thousands of parishioners. Thus the parish should be organized as a federation of small communities.

In the neo-catechumenal communities there is no exception of persons. Their members may hail from all social classes, or every community. Once they have listened to the preaching of the *Christian kerygma* or Good News of Salvation tendered

gratuitously by God in Jesus Christ, a community is organized around the hearing of the Word of God, and the celebration of the Eucharist and other moments of encounter to encourage all present to the living practice of Love and of Unity — as tokens of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world. These communitarian groups are centered in the Paschal Mystery. They are "celebration groups" solidly based on the Bible and the Liturgy. They do not directly entail a socio-political commitment as a community, though of course every member of the community, reckons with the practical dimension of faith and to it tailors his life as he progresses in his Christian conversion. Among the members of the community there comes naturally the mutual help spirit through the communion of their goods. In practice, the common commitment is to be ready to the evangelization or proclamation of the Christian kerygma in other places of the globe.

3. *Initiation or catechumenate*

The neo-catechumenal communities are well grounded on the Bible as the Word of God, or the word of salvation which God addressed historically to mankind and the dead center of which is the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

As its very name implies, the emphasis in these communities is in their being a "neo-catechumenate", in the sense of a "pastoral of evangelization and an on-going catechesis for adults, to form small communities within the present structure of the parish, and in communion with the Bishop." Indeed, catechumenate in this context is as "a wide-range and systematic process" rather than a loose and periodic series of catechesis, or catechetical instructions, for adults.

This neo-catechumenal process is grounded on the acceptance and living practice of faith received gratuitously by man who should correlate to it by means of prayer. Hence, preaching is paramount and the hearing of the Word is the fundamental act towards conversion. Conversion itself will be substantially "the acceptance of the gift of God in Jesus Christ" to whom man responds with a change of life which is thus, instead of being a result of his initial effort, the fruit of the very same gift or grace of God which acts directly on the individual. Thence these communities acknowledge that the Word of God should be understood "according to the spirit, as an in-depth wisdom rather than with the dialectics of reason". The Word is efficacious and should sooner or later re-echo in

the life of the individual. And for this purpose we must give the Word space and time so that it will germinate in the believer and will transform him.

Before organizing a neo-catechumenate in a parish, this plan is threshed out with the parish priest and with others who exercise leadership in the parish, explaining to them the profound meaning and the advantages that it offers as an aid in the enduring catechesis of adults and for the long-range renewal of the parish. Once the pastor has been sold on the idea of neo-catechumenate, the program is announced in the different Masses of a Sunday. The catechetical instructions about it will be imparted by a team of persons — a priest and several lay persons, who come as extension workers from a community already in operation.

The catechumenal process has the following stages:

a. *The announcement of kerygma stage*; this is a period of three months during which the Christian kerygma is preached to those who report to the catecheses held twice a week. Such catecheses are organized around Christ's Paschal Mystery, into which the catechumen is introduced gradually to a series of themes based on the History of Salvation. Through such preaching, Jesus Christ is offered as a gift of God and the only means of salvation of today as of always. Christ is the Lord who by dying in us, effects the death of the "old man in us"; and by rising to life within us, creates the new creation in faith, hope and charity, effecting the communion with God and with the brethren, not excluding our own enemies. Such catecheses are ever based on the tripod of Word, Liturgy and Community.

This period of catecheses winds up with a "live-in together" for three days by which the community is established. There is an election of a "responsible" (for its success) and other co-workers, whose role is merely that of service to the brethren and the coordination with other communities. The pastor is also constituted as the "presbyter" of the community, also in the context of service, and as the link with the Bishop. These and other responsibilities are all regarded as connoting "services", inasmuch as all are conscious that the true animator of the community is the Holy Spirit and its authentic pastor is Jesus Christ. The community thus constituted, animated and directed "graduates" into the pre-catechumenate.

b. *The pre-catechumenate*. — During two years, without the presence of catechists any more, the community will go

through a process by which each and every one should try to test his faith in close contact with a brother. The community holds two meetings per week: the first of which is for the celebration of the Word, the themes of which revolve around biblical texts chosen in advance; and the second meeting on every Sunday revolves around the Eucharist. The agenda in either meeting is prepared by teams of five or six members. Moreover, the community meets again once a month on a Sunday for the "living together" during which there is a free exchange of impressions, the life-style of the community is discussed, and prayer is the order of the day. Through these encounters in the meetings of celebration and "living together"; all are being trained to listen to the Word of God; and in the «neunter of brother with brother, both are actually making the Church. All discover that faith is not something away from real life, all experience that loving one's neighbor is not always a "cinch", and, in fine, all discover that faith, love toward neighbor and the new life in Church are possible only through the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the lone victor over death, and he alone is the giver of new life.

The two years more or less over, the catechists who had preached the kerygma to the community com© once again to prepare the neo-catechumens for the first scrutiny for promotion to the catechumenate. In a retreat of three days, everybody meditates profoundly on the evangelical demands of "leaving everything for the Kingdom", on the "narrow gate", "carrying the cross" to follow Christ radically. They come out convinced that they cannot believe by themselves, that faith is not merely a set of "do's and don'ts", nor the outcome of our efforts: rather it is a gratuitous gift of God that is given us through Baptism and through the catecheses that should precede it (in an adult). The Church is for all the members of the community as a Mother that begets one by one her children to the faith. This retreat winds up with the celebration of the "pass", presided over by the Bishop or a representative of his, who will stress the first sacrifices of the journey that will lead to the renewal of Baptism. Then the neo-catechumen also expresses his desire to enter into the catechumenate, ready to allow himself to be possessed by the Spirit of God, as St. Paul understands it, in order to enter into a new life toward which Jesus Christ offers him a hand.

c. *The J>ass to the catechumenate*

After the first scrutiny, a period of two years is started which is called "pass to the catechumenate". The community

continues delving deeper into other meaning of a conversion to God, by accepting Jesus Christ, who is transmitted through the tripod which supports all ecclesial life: the Word, Liturgy and the communitarian experience. The method employed with the Word undergoes a little change: it consists in the study of the important moments of the History of Salvation, such as the period of the Patriarch, the time of Moses, the settlement in the Promised Land, etc., until the definitive establishment of the Reign of God in the world through Jesus Christ and his Church. The weekly celebration of the Eucharist is continued but on Saturdays in the afternoon. More and more is the action of God felt inside the community, to which the Holy Spirit does not cease showing in what the new life in Christ consist of.

During this time the brethren of the community become ever aware that the major hindrances to the new life of communion in Christ are the idols of one's own personal life, such as, above all, money, one's own career or profession, one's own particular loves. These factors gradually take over the whole man whom they oppress and enslave. On the other hand, the neo-catechumen, upon being aware that his life is enslaved, as that of almost any man, by these idols, also becomes aware that he is impotent to free himself from them by himself alone. Thus he has recourse to Jesus Christ, living in his Church, who by his Resurrection has been constituted as the Lord of all powers and of all the idols of the world. It is He who tells us: "Whosoever does not renounce all his goods cannot be my disciple." But he too is who "exorcises us" in order to set us free from those powers by the superior force of his Spirit, and thus turn us into his disciples.

Thus, these two years of neo-catechumenal journey wind up with a second scrutiny for the definite pass or transition into the catechumenate, in which one should make public renunciation of all the idols of the world, and of the forces of evil. Then, as a sign of the desire to follow Christ as his only Lord, the neo-catechumens are urged to part with some of their properties (cf. Luke 14:33).

d. *The Catechumenate properly so-called*

This phase or stage lasts for three years. It is the most important phase, and during it comes to flower and fruition the complete spiritual formation of the catechumens. They are trained in both personal and communitarian daily prayer, in the spirituality of praise and Christian thanksgiving. This period is characterized too by the simplicity of life in the

abandonment of everything that could hinder the complete dependence on God and trust in him alone. To help the neo-catechumens at this really difficult point, there are several prayers. Kiko says regarding this point of neo-catechumenal journey: "After the old man in us has been enlightened during four years by the action of the Holy Spirit, we enter into a period in which we experience the action of Jesus Christ which liberates us, helps us to conquer the earth, which is under the power of seven nations more powerful than we are, to wit, the seven capital sins. During the catechumenate faith seems to be a change by which we are sustained and aided by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The community goes on with the celebration of the Word and the Eucharist and the intense enhancement of the brotherly communion. The celebration of the Word revolves around biblical figures such as Adam, Abel, Abraham, Melchisedech, etc. The communion of the Eucharistic bread is considered now as the total acceptance of the will of God. And the brotherly communion takes flesh mostly in the acts of mercy to needy brothers. At this height of the neo-catechumenal climb there begin to appear the different charisms in the community: in the "responsible" as deacon, the catechists who preach the gospel, the itinerant prophets, the widows, the virgins, etc. The community gets involved in the different parish services and activities, mostly through cooperation in evangelization and catechesis.

During the first of these three years of catechumenate, the neo-catechumens are trained in the prayer of the Psalms, of which a Christian fresh interpretation is made in the light of Christ and of the Church. Towards the end of this first year, a special celebration is held for the distribution to each one of the Psalter, a prayerbook each one will use everyday, particularly for the prayer of Lauds in the morning and Vespers in the afternoon, such prayers being recited in common, whenever possible.

The second year of the catechumenate is characterized by the reflection on the Apostles' Creed. During this year will be held the *traditio et redditio symboli* as was done in the primitive Church. With a view to the Creed not to be merely a mental confession of faith but also a reality in flesh for the neo-catechumens, such commit themselves during this year to visit the families in the parish and give testimony to the faith, inviting each and all to conversion. During the Lent of this year, during the daily recitation of Vespers in the parish, every

neo-catechumen gives a public witness to his faith, and then and there the Creed is proclaimed. On Palm Sunday all of them receive, when possible from the hands of the Bishop, the palms as symbol of the witness they have to give to Christ, for whom they must be ready to offer themselves in sacrifice even to martyrdom.

During the third year, the celebration of the Word revolves on the distinct articles of the Christian Creed, and the members are trained further and more intensely in prayer that culminates in the acceptance of the Lord's Prayer. God becomes the center of the life of every neo-catechumen, who should give an authentic witness to this fact within the family circle and with his co-employees. The will of God, as manifested by what happens to him in daily life turns out to be his daily and staple bread. Prayer he cannot live without. His life becomes oversimplified, the old man in him is gradually transformed, and the world acquires a new meaning in his vocabulary. All these take place without fits and starts, as a matter of course, thereby the presence and operation of God in the life of the neo-catechumen become a living reality. The teaching and transmitting of faith to the young in the family and the family prayer in common spontaneity becomes a need, in accord with the commandment of biblical tradition (Deut. 6:7) and with the genuine praxis of the Church.

e. *The election*

This is the penultimate stage of the neo-catechumenate. It is the most committed and difficult, both for the catechesis proper to it and for the demands of a special manner of living. It lasts for nearly two years. About this stage Kiko says: "The members of neo-catechumenal community are at this point called to live a priesthood with a spiritual cult in a temple not built by human hands; to lead a life of spirituality, of thanksgiving, of continuous Eucharist, as if they were Kings or Prophets in the biblical history that they re-enact among the nations. Their mission is to be the People of God, before the eyes of the world, the sacrament of love which God has towards men, particularly the evildoers and sinners. Indeed God, Jesus Christ, is the one and only who loves his enemies, who bore with Judas, who does not resist evil. Whosoever receives his spirit loves as he does, does not resist evil as he did not resist; they are like lambs being carried to the slaughterhouse every day, putting up their lives for the world in a spiritual and rational cult which we are called upon to offer at the altar of our own per-

sonal life-history. Thus, while in us there is death, in this generation may life be and in plenty." Thus the brethren who by the tenor of their lives are well disposed to carry on these designs of the Most High, are presented as candidates for the "election".

The transition from the catechumenate to the election takes place within a liturgical celebration, during which one's own name is inscribed into the Book of Life (Luke 10:20). By this ceremony it is meant that they accept fully all the commitments and responsibilities of Christian life. The door is made "narrow". But after seven years of journey, the neo-catechumen is fully aware of the presence of God in his own life, who helps and encourages him. He knows that he is different from other men, because God, though he loves all men, has deigned to separate him for a sublime mission: to be a Christian in the midst of his own generation.

f. *The renewal of the baptismal promises*

This is the final stage of the neo-catechumenate, about which Kiko says: "Having reached this last stage, the neo-catechumens are persons who live continuously in the spirituality of the journey, and thus are aware that they are pilgrims; happy in the 'to-day' of God and in the realm of our Heavenly Country."

Fot¹ them Jesus Christ risen from the dead is the only Master of their lives. On the other hand, they experience that the different fruits of Baptism are all gratuitous gifts of God, that survive the march of time through the Church, which would reawaken them in the hearts of believers through the practice of the catechumenate.

To wind up, may we quote again Kiko, who explains the results of this catechumenal experience in the neo-catechumenate in the following words: "It is well-nigh impossible to count the miracles that are continuously passing before our eyes; persons who have left their worldly life of sin, such as adultery, robbery, violence; lives completely sunk in the abyss of crass atheism, crass egoism, floundering marriages salvaged; broken homes that Christ has mended; strayed youths who have found true meaning and purpose of life; the perfect understanding among people of different ages, social classes and cultural levels. Thus

is fulfilled that Word: 'There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these should be written, not <"ven the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written'" (John 21:25).

4. *The Objectives of the Neo-catechumenate*

As a matter of principle, the neo-catechumenate is addressed to adult baptized persons, and is proposed to them as a way of faith and of authentic conversion. It is also open to the unbaptized specially in countries in which the Church is missionary in the main. The principal purpose of the neo-catechumenate is to offer to the Church of today a pastoral of evangelization and of enduring catechesis of adults. In fact, it is the "re-evangelization" of adults that it aims at. It leaves ecclesial structures alone and it is organized within the Parish and in perfect communion with the Pastor and Bishop. One modern authority on Pastoral has defined the neo-catechumenate as "a post-baptismal journey of deep conversion, divided into various stages, during which Christian life is explored in its purity and fullness in order to live it with the splendor that is due in the Church. It is a concrete design for baptized Christians to relive in the present milieu the experience which the Church of the first centuries let its catechumens to undergo" (G. Tevni).

The neo-catechumenate does not aim to become an ecclesial movement whose purpose would be to carry out a concrete and specialized activity inside the Church. Its purpose is merely the conversion of the believer to Christ and the formation of the *Ekklesia*, or *ecclesial community*. This cannot be in its roots the fruit of a personal effort, but of the Holy Spirit, which gradually realizes this task in every believer who is near to other members of the group which he joins to form a community. To live in a community and to make a Church, it behooves us to love one's neighbor, thus dying to the ego, which is not possible except through the Spirit of the Risen Jesus Christ, the only victor over death. And this is specially true when the issue is to love one's enemy, which is to love in the dimension of the cross, which is how Jesus Christ loved and commanded us to do. This love, this way of life is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is tantamount to saying that the Church is fruit of the Holy Spirit and is supported in her journey by the Holy Spirit, which is the gift of the Risen Christ to his very own.

Under the action of the Holy Spirit and in the progressive measure of one's conversion and of the gift of God, the community will arise in love and unity. Then the community, as a new presence of the Risen Christ in the world, starts out to attract others, as a missionary beacon. Its ultimate aim is to be "light", not only for the baptized parishioners whose faith is in embers or who are not practising it, but also for the unbaptized and atheists. The neo-catechumenate, therefore, aims to form Christian communities which may "reconstruct the Church in our day" (Paul VI), and may be a beacon of a missionary Church which gives witness of her grown-up faith through love in the dimension of the Cross (cf. Jn. 13,34-35) as well as of the unity in the dimension of the Trinity (cf. Jn. 17:21).

5. *Theological Groundwork*

If the neo-catechumenate aims merely "to build the Church" in and among those who accept to join it, the theological groundwork of the neo-catechumenate should be the same foundations or bases of the Church. The Church is that "new reality", a fruit of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of the Risen Christ, who begets new men, men "born again of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:4-5). The Church is as a mother who delivers new children through the Power that Jesus has stored in her, the Holy Spirit, as Mary gave birth to Christ by the power of the same Spirit. In this manner Mary is the image of the Church.

The Church has this power through the Word or Good News that she announces, always accompanied by the Holy Spirit, who makes it fruitful in the willing listener, as Vatican II eloquently says (D.V. 12). The power of the Spirit resides also in the sacraments of the Church, specially the *Holy Eucharist*, full presence of Christ who died and rose from the dead. Finally, the power of God is conspicuous in the new life of the community formed by those who, overcoming their egotism, over all kinds of death, love one another in the dimension of *the Cross*.

Thus we may say that the principal theological bases of neo-catechumenate are: the *Word*, the *Eucharist* and the *glorious Cross*.

In the neo-catechumenate the fullest value and importance is given to *the Word*. The Word is no less than a *Person*, it is God himself who speaks to-day as he spoke yesterday. The

word is a seed of life (Mt. 13:19) that contains in itself life (cf. Deut, 32:47), and sprouts in the personal and communitarian history and thus builds the Church, which is the tree of the Kingdom of God (cf. Mc. 4:26-34). For this reason the Scriptures are not used within the neo-catechumenate with a merely speculative slant as if for mere scholarship, but with, a *sapiential dimension*; it is prepared, celebrated, turned into prayer of faith, and then put into practice. Thus the Word gradually attracts and converts the faithful, and builds within him the new man, and in stride builds up the community. That is why the privileged place for listening to the Word and to understand it in its salvific content is the meeting place of the same community gathered in faith around Christ and around Christ's representatives — the Bishop or presbyter.

The *Eucharist* holds the center of the communitarian life in the neo-catechumenate. It is the privileged place of the presence of God, who thus turns into companion and food of the journey for the members of his People. The Word acquires its full force at the point of the eucharistic celebration, and serves as the inspiration mainly of the prayer of the community, and during the celebration of the Eucharist the community can best be called and act as "ekklesia". Also during the same eucharistic celebration all the members of the community are aware of the salvific love of God that continues passing, re-enacting the *Pasch* of Resurrection amidst his people, offering each one and all together the gratuitous gift to his life and his allegiance, saving them from all the situations of death and giving them life in Christ. Thus the Eucharist is mainly Thanksgiving.

The neo-catechumenate affirms absolutely that the birth and growth of the new man is not the fruit of a moralistic or voluntaristic *ism*, but of the Spirit of Jesus Christ Risen from the dead, the lone victor over death. To be born again means to die to the old man, to egotism, and to enter into a process of emptying oneself of one's defects and to love one's neighbor, the enemy not excluded. This is the love in the *dimension of the Cross*, a love which Christ practised and wanted to be practised by his disciples, to whom he said: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). Thus in the neo-catechumenate the Cross occupies a paramount place. It is the symbol of the deep love of God, a gratuitous love, that does not recoil before sin, but rather gives him back to all mankind. Only God loves thus, and reveals this love in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. The disciples of Jesus are called to embody

a community in which love should supplant egotism, life should supersede death, to be before the world and in every generation a sign of the face of God, of the infinite love of God or of the very God who is himself Love (I John 4:8). This capacity to love to the death is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, who strengthened Jesus to embrace death which is the condition for the resurrection; and the same Holy Spirit, who give this power to love even unto death to the disciples of Jesus.

6. *Evaluation of the Neo-catechumenate*

It is not an easy task to assess the worth of the neo-catechumenate, because there are scarcely any communities who have undergone the whole length and breadth of its program, and because any one can be familiar and conversant with only one community, that one with which he is involved, so as to be able to render his critical judgment of any value. This difficulty notwithstanding, we may attempt to give an opinion about this experience in the Church during our times. We shall do it according to a point-by-point synthesis.

Values — The neo-catechumenate rediscovers the Christian *kerygma*, from the proclamation of which the whole process of conversion begins. This rediscovery of the *kerygma* necessarily paves the way to evaluate and esteem highly the Scripture as Word of God and as History of Salvation, whose center is the Paschal mystery of Christ. The Bible will then be the core of Christian spirituality and the *delightful or sapiential food* of the believer.

— It should be assessed in the Church as People of God or Community, the building of which requires the catechumenal journey or process. However, rather than build the Church the neo-catechumenate aims to "rebuild" it, in accordance with one of the directive pastoral letters of Pope Paul VI and of the two last Synods of Bishops. In fact, the Church of today endeavors to recuperate its own identity as "Christian community" or more exactly, it is striving to reorganize itself into "Christian communities" of individual men rather than of masses or throngs.

— The neo-catechumens soon become fully aware of the reality of sin which invades every man and influences the historical march of his life. This fact is due mainly to the rapport established among the members of the neo-catechumenal community.- In this manner there is a special slant in the inter-

vention of Christ in their lives through the gift of the Holy Spirit, which accompanies gospel preaching and the Sacraments, and which animates Christian love. Thus, one realizes that conversion and Christian life are absolutely a gift of God, with which man collaborates in his sanctification. The reverse would lead us to the error of voluntarism, that is, to make oneself accountable of the responsibility implied in not receiving the gift of God which is never denied to any man who looks for it, and less when he looks for it in the Church through which the plan of salvation is carried out and going on.

— It is most appropriate to take stock of the need of evangelization today, even inside the Church itself, which according to *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, even an evangelizer should continue being itself evangelized. In the Church of today, there is a transition from a pastoral of "sacramentalization" to that of "evangelization". The faith of many baptized persons, including and even mainly adults, is an infantile one. The neo-catechumenate intends to mend this predicament, offering a way or course of evangelization and permanent catechesis of adults, within the normal or existing pastoral structures of the Church such as the parishes and dioceses. This point is indeed worthy of praise and support.

— Finally, in every Christian community that rises within the neo-catechumenal movement the first to be sanctified is the presbyter. His charism as "presbyter" is immensely enhanced, both as servant of the Word of God and as liturgist and animator of the community. In due course there appear other charisms in the other members of the community, mainly in the "responsible", the catechists, the psalmists and other servitors. Above all they are becoming more and more rooted into the community. The presbyter soon becomes aware that he is not alone and that he is not the factotum of the Christian community, as in the immediate past he was regarded to be. This is a signal advantage for the presbyter, if he should only exploit it. The soul of the community, of the Church, is the Holy Spirit, which stirs up the different charisms in it, and actuates them as necessary. The whole community becomes conscious of being a "priestly people", as the order of the priesthood or presbyterate is one of the many charisms or ministries that are distributed in this portion of the People of God.: ... ;;

Negative values:

— The first negative value or risk in this type of association is the "bossism*" of some members and the passivity and lack of critical sense in others. However, this is a risk present in the majority of reformatory movements or groups throughout the whole history of the Church, and much so whenever their founders or animators were generously charismatic. This can be a signal risk in the neo-catechumenate, which may press many faithful of today, particularly those who are tinged with Christian militancy, to readily reject this method of catechesis of adults. Indeed, one of the main reasons why the neo-catechumenate is not accepted in some quarters is this of excessive "directivity" or dictation.

— The neo-catechumenate may come into conflict also with the traditional pastoral structures of Church, mainly in the parish level, specifically with the pastor and the other clerics in general. This happens when the neo-catechumenal experience is not explained well so as to be regarded as a "parallel" Church instead of an essential pastoral action or program that should invigorate the parish: The catechesis of adults. Indeed the neo-catechumenate, understood and practised in-depth, will call for a reassessment of many points in the present ecclesial structures, but it accepts fundamentally the Church as it has evolved through its whole history. This conflict or crisis is even an asset in the Christian experience, inherent to the evangelical conversion. But it may become, too, a negative value when it does not proceed from the preaching of the Word of God, and no heed is paid to the process of conversion to which the Word submits both persons and structures in every generation or period of the Church.

— Sometimes we hear the objection raised that the neo-catechumenate does not lead to "social commitment". This may be true, if we admit that the catechesis given to a Christian group should be oriented toward social action in the sense of "to a group as group". The neo-catechumenate does not, and should not, aim at this. But indeed it should aim at the integral Christian conversion which will make him fulfill his responsibilities in the world which the Christian has as person and even as member of a group. The danger lies in confusing "social action" with "presence in the world", especially when the former might be inspired in the idea that makes society prevalent over the person. The neo-catechumenate speaks of the "integral conversion" which is ever a personal fact and demands a slow

maturing process. The risks, nevertheless, lurk at this juncture, and could compromise this movement of the Church when ideas are not expressed with exact precision, or there is not enough vigilance over the Christian praxis to which such ideas lead.

— A word about the length or duration of the neo-catechumenate. In principle, we may take for granted the provided or fixed period of time. However, some authorities on pastoral matters, after careful analysis, have come out that its duration is excessively long. They base their contention on the fact that not even the catechumenate of the primitive Church was that long. But this is very hard to prove. Yet it may be said that the time factor results a negative factor in the neo-catechumenal experience, because in such a matter as the Christian experience of conversion one cannot speak of duration. God, though he defers to the normal laws and processes of human nature, has not submitted his grace to nature. Thus the matter of time or duration of the neo-catechumenate is under question, and it should not be a straight-jacket criterion which may not be changed in favor of experience.

Conclusion

The neo-catechumenate, be it an ecclesial movement as some outsiders describe it, or as an essentially pastoral action within the ecclesial pastoral as its members aver, is certainly an "event" that cannot be ignored within the post-conciliar Church. As has been shown in this article, it aims at the "re-evangelization" of the Church and its "re-construction" as a community. It situates modern man before the transcendental dimension of his life, to offer him a gracious exit from so many anxieties due to the materialistic and consumerist society, which, despite all its efforts to enhance comfort and to expand the luxuries of life, is deeply steeped in egotism and finally, death. The neo-catechumenate, we believe, digs into the essentials and basics of the human problem: Who am I? What is the meaning of life? Above all what is the dimension of death? Only in Christ and his mystery can the right answers be found to these questions. He continues to live in the Church. But the Church needs to follow a way of delving deep into the mystery of Christ as man progresses and aims to understand himself. This is the permanent catechesis of grown-ups.

John Pad II to the International Council for Catechesis

Your Eminence,

Venerable Confreres in the Episcopate,

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. First of all, I thank Cardinal Oddi for his courteous and appreciated words. I address my welcome and my cordial greeting to him and to all of you gathered here. I am pleased to mention along with him the Superiors and Officials of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, the Members of its special Pastoral-Catechetical Office and all the members of the International Council for Catechesis, convened here in Rome from faraway countries and from various ambiances. I like to recall immediately a beautiful statement made by Bishop Saint Ambrose, who proclaimed as *angels* those who are committed to bringing the word of God and evangelizing men: "One cannot keep silent, nor can one deny; one who announces the kingdom of God and eternal life is an angel": *Non est fallere, non est vegare; angelus est qui regnum Dei et vitam aeternam annuntiat* (*De Mysteriis*, I, 6). Indeed, you have come here to the centre of the visible Church to bring your qualified contribution to the solution of very important and serious problems regarding evangelization and catechesis, which is in the statutory aim of the Council itself.

For my part, I am more than pleased by your presence and am immensely grateful to the Lord, who gives me the opportunity to express some considerations regarding the nature, the responsibility and the aim of catechesis.

** Delivered by the Holy Father to the International Council for Catechesis on 15 April 1983 and published in L'Osservatore Romano, May 30, 1983.*

Divine power of the word itself

2. The works of this session of the International Council for Catechesis on its various proposed themes: "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church" and "*Schema doctrinae Christianae*" ("The schema of Christian doctrine"), have undoubtedly emphasized that without a precise and profound religious instruction and formation it is impossible to expect a sincere and generous practice of Christian life from the faithful. This must be said first of all for a familiar and salutary habit of frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In fact, if catechesis is necessary for the sacraments in general, it is nmch more necessary for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, whose perceptible element, that is, the matter of the sacrament, is constituted precisely by the acts of the penitent.

More than the examination, the discussion of the second subject of your conference, "*Schema doctrinae Christianae*" will enhance, if not the necessity, at least the great opportunity for clear and sure synthesis of the fundamental truths of the faith, which must be transmitted and taught to all the faithful in an explicit and sure manner, keeping in mind the very spirit of the Second Vatican Council. It is necessary to stress how what catechesis does is not man's experience, be it merely in community, but the word of God, which reveals the divine mysteries and the supernatural destinies of man. The Apostle John proclaims loudly: "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, ever at the Father's side, who has revealed him" (Jn. 1:18). And the Letter to the Hebrews states at the beginning: "In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our fathers through the prophets; in this, the final age, he has spoken to us through his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). The Apostle Paul wonders: "But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach?" (Rom. 10:14). From this it follows that it is not enough to listen to the word of God, but that it is necessary to hear God himself who is speaking, be it even through the human tool of communication: "*Omnis homo annuntiator Verbi vox Verbi est*" ("Everyone who announces the Word is the voice of the Word"), proclaims St. Augustine (*Sermo* 288, 4). The proclaimer of the Word, the preacher and the catechist, therefore must not only bring the word of God integral and alive, but he is called to communicate also the divine power of the word itself, inasmuch as he does not speak on his own, but as moved by God: "We at least are not like so many who trade on the word of God.

We speak in Christ's name, pure in motivation, conscious of having been sent by God and of standing in his presence" (2 Cor. 2:17).

3. It is known that our Lord Jesus never wrote anything; nor did he command anyone to write, but he entrusted his word as a divine deposit to living men, to the living Church, to preserve it and announce it (cf. First Vatican Council, Constitution *De Fide Catholica*, c. 4; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10). The Church therefore is the natural guardian and the responsible interpreter for divine revelation, which it must preserve, interpret and announce to; all men according to the explicit divine mandate (cf. Mt. 28:19).

Whoever has the mandate of evangelization and the keys, to interpretation is responsible for the correct and fruitful transmission of doctrine, the awareness, knowledge and wisdom of which must increase and progress continuously, but always, as St. Vincent of Lerins affirms, "*in sua dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia*" ("in its exact nature, namely, in its dogma, in the same sense and the same meaning") (*Commonitorium*, no. 28).

Concretely it is the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, and the Pope, the successor of the Apostle Peter, who have the great mission of the care of the doctrine of the faith and of the evangelization of the divine message of salvation. In this regard, the tasks and competences of the individual Ordinaries, of the Episcopal Conferences, and of the Holy See itself are clearly established in the Third Book of the New Code of Canon Law, and as far as the preparation and publication of catechisms are concerned particularly in Canons 775 and 827.

„ Undoubtedly catechesis is the first and most exacting task of priests, who must be the most immediate and generous workers of evangelization. However, I would also like to recall here • the proper and irreplaceable responsibility of parents in the religious instruction and formation of their children because, as already stated another time: "Family catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis" •. (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 68).

An act of the Church, at the service of faith

i 4. Your reflection has dwelt furthermore on another fundamental aspect of catechesis, that of its *contents*, which some-

times can be the source of difficulty and tensions, considering the multiple implications of the problem.

Catechesis is an act of the Church, which is born of faith and is at the service of faith; it guides and sustains man in his new life in the Risen Christ. But faith is sustained on reality, it lives on vital contents which are expressed in the various professions of faith. Catechesis therefore must have a vital bond with these contents. To transmit, explain, and make integrally alive the realities expressed in the Symbol of faith is the task of catechesis, which is authentic and Christian when it transmits the faith lived by the Church, in continuity and fidelity, when it is a living word and not an abstract idea, when it makes an effort to give the faithful simple and solid certainties, such as to illuminate and transform individual and collective life.

It is precisely this characteristic of Christian catechesis — being a living word — which allows us to resolve the problem of the relationship between content and life. In fact, ideologies and great modern myths often succeed in mobilizing and in exciting great masses, but their inevitable result is manipulation and not rarely the destruction of dignity, of freedom, of life itself, because it deals with doctrine and with formulas at the service of an intent to dominate, whereas the word of God is a communication of life, it is a personal relationship with him, it is a foundation of man's dignity. In a world dominated by anonymity, this wonderful and unique dignity of man becomes an opportunity for a personal and unique vocation which puts man, with his full creativity and responsibility, into God's plan. Catechesis helps discover and nourish this vocation of every man and thus bases the believer's identity on his service to society, which is that of witnessing to the Life and to the Truth and of showing the Way. Faith, in fact, is an act of supreme human freedom which opens itself to the gratuitous initiative of the revealing God and which gives itself definitively to Christ the Redeemer with loving awareness, thus assuming the true Christian identity.

5. Beloved, know that your work is very close to my heart. On you, in fact, depends in great measure the efficacy of the Christian message, which is destined to bear fruit in the daily life of the baptized. Therefore, it is my duty to remember all

of you to the Lord in prayer, that he may illuminate your minds, strengthen your wills, enrich your efforts. The renewal of catechesis is truly to be considered a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church (*Catechesi Tradendae*, n. 3). And, in addressing my word of encouragement to you, I intend to address myself to those who share with you the responsibility for research and experimentation, as well as to all parents, catechists and teachers, who humbly and joyfully carry out the catechetical apostolate at home, in the parishes, in groups.

May the Lord amply bless you, while I am happy to impart my Apostolic Blessing to all of you, to your collaborators, and to those who in various ways will benefit from your precious works.

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II FOR "WORLD MISSION" DAY

23 OCTOBER 1983

Venerable Brothers and Beloved Sons and Daughters of the Church!

1. World Mission Day acquires a very special importance this year from the celebration of the extraordinary Jubilee of the Redemption. In announcing it, I recalled the exhortation that I had addressed to the world at the beginning of my Pontificate: "Open the doors to Christ!" And in fact, the Jubilee is a strong invitation to conversion and to reconciliation, an appeal to become ever more aware of the grace of Baptism, and to adhere generously to the Gospel, which is the proclamation of Redemption and of salvation for all men.

Reminding every Christian of the riches that the Redemption brought to the world, the Jubilee, for that very reason, acquires an important missionary significance. It becomes a renewed appeal for the evangelization of those millions of persons who, 1950 years after the redemptive Sacrifice of Calvary, are still not Christian, and in suffering or in joy, cannot invoke the name of the Saviour, because they do not yet know it.

If, therefore, we want to be authentic Christians, we cannot but desire fully to share the marvellous gift of the Redemption with these brethren, too. In other words, the relationship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ, far from being simply an individual relationship, is a relationship that involves all of humanity and is therefore seen within an unequivocally missionary dimension.

Christ is Redeemer of all men, he died for all, he gave himself as a ransom for all (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:2) and calls each of us not only to personal reconciliation, but also, to be the instrument of redemption for those who are not yet redeemed: "Go... and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19-20).

A sublime honour this, but also a solemn imperative that questions our conscience on the greatest commandment of the Message of Christ: "Love one another as I have loved you" (cf. Jn. 15:12, 17).

Is not the Redemption perhaps the practical realization of that design of love that Christ wanted us to carry on? Therefore, the more that we will have worked and laboured to communicate the saving Word of Christ himself and the fruits of the Redemption to our brothers, the more we will be able to say that we love the brethren. Would that each of us would make his own the words of the Apostle: "For the love of Christ impels us!" (2 Cor. 5:14).

As I wrote in the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee Year, "The profound meaning and hidden beauty of this year that the Lord enables us to celebrate is to be seen in the rediscovery and lived practice of the sacramental economy of the Church, through which the grace of God in Christ reaches individuals and communities. Furthermore, it must be clear that this special time, when all Christians are called upon to realize more profoundly their vocation to reconciliation with the Father in the Son, will only reach its full achievement if it leads to a fresh commitment by each and every person to the service of reconciliation, not only among all the disciples of Christ but also among all men and women. It must also lead to a fresh commitment to the service of peace among all peoples" (*Aperite Portas Redemptori*, 3).

To enter, therefore, into the spirit of the Jubilee Year means to be immersed in the missionary spirit, to turn not only to the depths of one's own heart, but also to all those who are our brothers and have the right to know Christ and to enjoy the riches of his heart, "dives in misericordia".

2. This year's World Mission Day, therefore, is in full harmony with the theological and pastoral content of the Extraordinary Jubilee. I repeat with a heart full of solicitude: "Open, rather, open wide the doors to Christ!" Let us go to the Saviour, let us take him to all men! Let us take him with the attracting and convincing force of the Holy Spirit, invoked and obtained with missionary prayer!

Let us take him, uniting our daily sufferings, even the most humble and hidden, to the great sacrifice of the Cross, in order to render them precious and to give them a redemptive value for our brothers.

Let us take him, sustaining with our solidarity, with our appreciation, with our multifarious assistance, those generous souls, who with the most complete detachment labour at the advance frontiers of the Kingdom of God for the proclamation of the Gospel.

I turn to young people in a special way, to young people who are the hope of the Church, who are my hope.

May they direct their enthusiasm, the exuberance of their energies and of their sentiments, their ardour and their daring, to the holy cause of the missions. From far-off India where he announced the message of salvation, didn't St. Francis Xavier perhaps think of his numerous contemporaries, students of the University of Paris, affirming that if they had known the immense needs of the missionary world, they would not have hesitated to join him in the spiritual conquest of the world for Christ?

To young people, therefore, I say: Do not be afraid! Do not fear to abandon yourselves to Christ, to dedicate your life to him in the generous service of the highest of ideals, that of the missionary ideal. A fascinating commitment, full of activity, awaits you.

3. In like manner, I desire that all the faithful would allow themselves to become involved and to bring their personal contribution to the great movement of "*missionary cooperation...*" which in the Pontifical Missionary Societies finds the qualified instruments that are most adapted and most effective for promoting the pioneering work of the Gospel both spiritually and materially (cf. *Ad Genres*, 38).

But so that believers may be fully conscious of the inevitable need of their collaboration, it is indispensable that they be sensitized to the problem by those to whom the most important task of missionary animation appertains, that is, by priests and by religious.

Animation on the part of the leaders of the People of God is indispensable because a concrete awareness on the part of the faithful of the problem of evangelization, and therefore their commitment in the area of cooperation, depends on this. A commitment, so much more necessary and urgent when one considers that missionary activity, which also includes the indispensable construction of churches, schools, seminaries, univer-

sities, social assistance centres, etc., for the religious and human promotion of many of our brothers, is greatly conditioned by many difficulties of an economic character.

And for actualizing this programme of thorough sensitization, and for organizing the network of universal charity, to what better structures can one resort than the Pontifical Missionary Societies?

I have been informed that in recent years, "Centres of Missionary Animation" are being established in many countries. I strongly recommend these initiatives, so useful for a theological, pastoral, spiritual deepening of the missionary doctrine. I will personally have the joy of inaugurating the new headquarters of one of these centres, the International Centre of Missionary Animation (CIAM), at the Pontifical Urban University, so dear to me.

On World Mission Day, therefore, the Church, Mother and Teacher, solicitous for the good of all, extends her hand through the Pontifical Societies mentioned above to gather aid from men of good will.

To offer this generous assistance is an obligation, it is an honour, it is a joy, because it means to contribute to bringing the inestimable benefits of the Redemption to those who do not yet know "of the unfathomable riches of Christ" (cf. Eph. 3:8).

The new Code of Canon Law, too, which dedicates an entire section of Book II to missionary activity (Canons 781-792), explicitly sanctions the obligation of all the faithful to collaborate — each according to his possibilities — in the work of evangelization, conscious of his own responsibility which stems from the intrinsically missionary nature of the Church (cf. Canon 781). Thus, a juridical recognition is accorded to missionary cooperation which, as Canon 791 declares, will have to be promoted in all the dioceses according to these four basic directives: the promotion of missionary vocations; the necessary assistance of priests for missionary initiatives, above all for the development of the Pontifical Missionary Societies; the celebration of World Mission Day; the annual collection of material assistance for the missions, to be sent to the Holy See.

4. I sincerely desire that all the forces of the Church, of the People of God, be mobilized in this difficult hour that humanity is experiencing, an hour that is so full, yes, of threats, but

which is also the pledge of hope; may they draw renewed spiritual strength from this Holy Year of the Redemption, so that the announcement of the Gospel may reach the Peoples and the Nations of the earth in ever greater breadth and depth.

Finally, I express my gratitude to all — priests, religious men and women, the laity — whether they be at the vanguard or in the diverse sections of the Church, who with the greatest variety of activities, efficaciously contribute to the spread of the Kingdom of God. To them, and to all those dear to them, I cordially impart the Apostolic Blessing, pledge of heavenly favours.

From the Vatican, 10 June, Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the year 1983, fifth of the Pontificate.

IONNES PAULUS PP. II

Pope Speaks to Religious and Secular Institutes*

Revered Brothers and Beloved Sons and Daughters!

1. I thank you for your presence and I express to you my joy for this meeting, and my gratitude for the work that you do to inspire and foster consecrated life. The evangelical counsels, in fact, are a "divine gift which the Church has received from her Lord and which she ever preserves with the help of his grace" (*Lumen Gentium*, 43), and therefore, what is done in the Congregation on behalf of their profession is extremely sound and valuable.

The plenary assembly which you are concluding today was held along this line of inspiring and fostering consecrated life. You have taken into particular consideration the identity and the mission of those institutes which, because of their distinctive mission *in saeculo et ex saeculo* (Can. 713. par. 2 — New Code), are called "Secular Institutes".

It is the first time that one of your plenary assemblies has dealt with them directly: therefore it was a timely choice, which the promulgation of the new Code has inspired. The secular institutes — which in 1947 received ecclesial recognition with

* *Pope's Address to Plenary Assembly of Sacred Congregation for Religious and the Secular Institutes, 6 May 1983 published in L'Osservatore Romano, May 30, 1983.*

the Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater* issued by my predecessor, Pius XII — now find in the Code their rightful place on the basis of the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council. In fact, these institutes are intended to be faithful expressions of that ecclesiology which the Council reconfirms when it emphasizes the universal vocation to holiness (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, Chap. 5), the inherent tasks of the baptized (cf. *Lumen Gen~Hum*, Chap. 4; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*), the Church's presence in the world in which she must act as leaven and be the "universal sacrament of salvation" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 48; cf. *Gaudium et Spes*), the variety and the dignity of the various vocations, and the "particular honour" which the Church pays towards "total continence embraced on behalf of the kingdom of heaven" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 42) and towards the witness of evangelical poverty and obedience (*Ibid.*).

Outpouring of grace

2. Quite rightly your reflection dwelled on the constitutive, theological and juridical elements of the secular institutes, keeping in mind the formulation of the canons dedicated to them in the recently promulgated Code, and examining them in the light of the teaching which Pope Paul VI, and I myself with the discourse of 28 August 1980, have confirmed in audiences granted them.

We must express profound gratitude to the Father of infinite mercy, who has taken to heart the needs of mankind and, with the life-giving power of the Spirit, has undertaken in this century new initiatives for mankind's redemption. Honour and glory be to the triune God for this outpouring of grace which the secular institutes are, and with which he manifests his inexhaustible benevolence, with which the Church herself loves the world in the name of her God and Lord.

The newness of the gift which the Spirit has made to the Church's everlasting fruitfulness in response to the needs of our times is grasped only if its constituent elements in their inseparability are well understood: the religious and the secular; the consequent apostolate of witness, of Christian commitment in social life and of evangelization; the fraternity

which, without being determined by a community of life, is truly communion; the external life-style itself, which is not separate from the environment in which it may appear.

Evangelical radicalism

3. Now it is necessary to know and make known this vocation that is so relevant and, I should say, so urgent, the vocation of persons who consecrate themselves to God by practising the evangelical counsels and strive to immerse their whole lives and all their activities in that special consecration, creating in themselves a total availability to the Father's will and working to change the world from within (cf. Discourse of 28 August 1980).

The promulgation of the new Code will surely allow this better knowledge, but it must also urge pastors to foster among the faithful an understanding which is not approximate or yielding, but exact and respectful of the qualifying characteristics.

In this way, generous responses to this difficult but beautiful vocation of "full consecration to God and to souls" (cf. *Perfectione Caritatis*, no. 5) are aroused: a demanding vocation, because one responds to it by carrying the baptismal commitments to the most perfect consequences of evangelical radicalism, and also because this evangelical life must be embodied in the most diverse situations.

In fact, the variety of the gift entrusted to the secular institutes expresses the various apostolic aims which embrace all areas of human and Christian life. This pluralistic wealth is also shown in the numerous spiritualities which animate the secular institutes, with the diversity of the holy bonds which characterize various modes of practising the evangelical counsels and the great possibilities of their incorporation in all areas of social life. My predecessor, Pope Paul VI, who showed so much affection for the secular institutes, rightly said that if they "remain faithful to their vocation, they will be like an experimental laboratory in which the Church tests the concrete modes of its relations with the world" (Paul VI, Discourse to the International Congress of Secular Institutes, 25 August

1976). Therefore, lend your support to these institutes that they may be faithful to the original charisms of their foundation recognized by the hierarchy, and be alert to discover in their fruits the teaching which God wants to give us for the life and action of the entire Church.

Secular Institutes and the local Churches

4. If there is a development and strengthening of the secular institutes, the local Churches also will derive benefit from this.

This aspect has been kept in mind during your plenary assembly, also because various episcopates, with the suggestions given with regard to your meeting, have pointed out that the relationship between secular institutes and local Churches is worthy of being deepened.

Even while respecting their characteristics, the secular institutes must understand and adopt the pastoral urgencies of the particular Churches, and encourage their members to live the hopes and toils, the projects and concerns, the spiritual riches and limitations with diligent participation; in a word, the communion of their concrete Church. This must be a point for greater reflection for the secular institutes, just as it must be a concern of the pastors to recognize and request their contribution according to their proper nature.

In particular, another responsibility rests on the pastors: that of offering the secular institutes all the doctrinal wealth they need. They want to be part of the world and ennoble temporal realities, setting them in order and elevating them, that all things may be brought into one under Christ's headship (cf. Eph. 1:1). Therefore, may all the wealth of Catholic doctrine on creation, incarnation and redemption be given to these institutes that they may make their own God's wise and mysterious plans for man, for history and for the world.

True esteem and deep encouragement

5. Beloved brothers and sons and daughters! It is with a sentiment of true esteem and also of deep encouragement for the secular institutes that today I have taken the opportunity

offered me by this meeting to emphasize some aspects treated by you during the past few days.

I hope that your plenary assembly may fully achieve the goal of offering to the Church better information on the secular institutes and helping them live their vocation in awareness and fidelity.

May this Jubilee Year of the Redemption, which calls everyone to "a renewed discovery of the love of God who gives himself" (Apostolic Bull, *Aperite Portas Redemptori*, no. 8) and » renewed encounter with the merciful goodness of God, be particularly for consecrated persons also a renewed and pressing invitation to follow "with greater freedom" and "more closely" (*Perfectae Caritatis*, no. 1) the Master who calls them for the pathways of the Gospel.

May the Virgin Mary be a constant and sublime model to them, and may she always guide them with her motherly protection.

With these sentiments, I gladly impart my intercessory Apostolic Blessing to you here present and to those enrolled in the secular institutes throughout the world.

CANON LAW

REMOVAL AND TRANSFER OF PARISH PRIESTS

(New Code of C. L., cc. 1740-1752)

The above-mentioned canons which regulate the subject-matter indicated in the title of this article, are the last and closing canons of the new Code. They embody Section 2, of Part 5, "About the Manner of Proceeding in Administrative Appeals and in Removing and Transferring Parish Priests," of Book 7, the last Book of the Code, the general title of which is "About Procedures."

In the previous Code this subject-matter was a subheading of Part 3 of Book 4 on "Procedures," and was organized under the title "The Method of Proceeding in Expediting some Affairs or in Applying some Penal Sanctions," detailing seven procedures treated in as many titles, to wit: 1. The removal of irremovable parish priests; 2. The removal of removable parish priests; 3. The transfer of parish priests; 4. Procedure in the care of a parish priest who does not comply with the law of residence; 5. Procedure against concubinary clerics; 6. Procedure against pastors negligent in the fulfillment of their parochial duties; and 7. Procedure in imposing the penalty of suspension from informed conscience (*ex informata conscientia*).

The procedures used to be called *administrative*, or *disciplinary* or *gubernatorial*, because they did not conform to strict judicial patterns, though they imitate many points in judicial hearings.

The procedure of suspension *ex informata conscientia*, which was of very rare incidence and previously was limited only to very grave cases and under strict conditions, has been abrogated in the new legislation or new Code. The others indicated in the above enumeration which are punitive fall under canon 1341 and 1342 in regard to the procedure and under canons 1395-1396 as to the sanctions for concubinaries or for those who break the law of residence; and for those who do not perform their duties, this is one of the causes indicated in can. 1741, 4°, as sufficient reason for removal, inasmuch as it is a breach of a grave obligation (Can. 533, § 1 & 543, § 2, 1°, Cf. can. 550, § 1, in what pertains to Parochial Vicars).

In the new canonical discipline or new Code there is no more room for the distinction between removable and irremovable parish priests, this distinction having been abrogated by the Conciliar Decree *Christus Dominus*, which says (n. 31) :

"Now the parish exists solely for the good of souls. Wherefore the bishop should be able to provide more easily and effectively for vacant pastorates. To this end all rights whatsoever of presentation, nomination, reservation, — excepting the right of Religious — and where it exists, the law of concursus whether general or particular are to be suppressed.

"Pastors should enjoy in their respective parishes that stability of office which the good of souls demands. The distinction between removable and irremovable pastors is to be abrogated and the procedure for transferring and removing pastors is to be re-examined and simplified. In this way the bishop, while observing natural and canonical equity, can better provide for the needs of the good of souls."

Moreover, it should be recalled at this juncture that the Conciliar Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* expresses the Council's vehement desire for the establishment in the dioceses of a common fund for the decorous remuneration of the clergy and of all others who serve in the Church, and for the furnishment of their needs in case of old age or sickness. Expressly the Council enjoins (n. 20) :

Special importance ought to be given to the office fulfilled by sacred ministers. Therefore the so-called system of benefices should be relinquished or at least so reformed that the place of the benefits, or the right to revenue from the endowment attached to an office, would be held as secondary, and the first place in law would be given to the ecclesiastical office itself. From this it should be understood as ecclesiastical office
' whatever ministry conferred in a stable manner that is to be exercised for a spiritual purpose."¹

¹ About the benefices there is only one canon in the new Codex, to wit: "In regions where benefices strictly so-called still exist, it behooves the Conference of Bishops to regulate such benefices with opportune norms in accord with, and approved by, the Apostolic See, so that the revenue, and whenever possible the endowment itself of the benefice, be assigned gradually to the institution indicated in can. 1274, § 1." (Can. 1272)

The removal of a parish priest, when deemed necessary, is always prompted by the requirements or needs of the parish from where a parish priest is removed; the transfer, on the other hand, is for the purpose of a greater good of souls or usefulness of the Church in the parish or assignment to which the transferred parish priest goes.

In either case the fundamental and primary reason is the good of souls which is above any and every other right or interest: "Let the welfare of the people be the supreme or final law" (*Salus populi suprema lex esto*).

*The manner of Procedure in the removal
of parish priests*

"Can. 1740. — When the ministry of some parish priests, due to some cause, even without his grave guilt, becomes harmful or merely ineffective, he may be removed from the parish by the diocesan Bishop."

It is not a question of *privation* of office, as a sanction for any transgression or misbehavior of the parish priest. That might happen to be the reason that renders his ministry ineffective or even harmful, but the reason for his removal is not a punishment, it is a provision for the welfare of the souls. It is clear in the letter of the law, allowing the removal "even without grave guilt" of the parish priest.

There may be sundry *causes why one should resign*. Sufficient to invite a parish priest to resign is any cause that renders the ministry of such parish priest harmful or just ineffective for the good of the souls, even without any guilt of his own.

And to illustrate, the Code in canon 1741 mentions five causes, which certainly do not exhaust all possible causes:

"Canon 1741 — The causes for which a parish priest may be removed legitimately from his parish are *mainly* the following:

1° his manner of behavior which brings a grave detriment to the ecclesiastical communion;

2° his inexperience or unskillfulness, or a permanent weakness of mind or body, which renders the pastor inadequate to perform his duties;

3° the loss of good opinion or esteem among the upright and worthy parishioners, or the aversion against the parish priest, which either reason is not foreseen to cease within a short time;

4° the grave negligence or violation of the parochial duties which persists even after due warning;

5° the bad administration of temporal goods with grave harm to the Church, whenever another remedy there to is not javailable."

These five mentioned causes (except the first one) were also indicated in the previous Code; only they are expressed more concisely in the new. (Code of 1917, can. 2147)

Cause mentioned in n. 1° is something new; Cause n. 2° in the new Code was n. 1 in the Code of 1917; causes in the old Code numbered 2, 3 and 4 are summarized under n. 3 in the new Code.

Cause n. 4 in the new discipline is what the previous Code considered a motive for procedure against priests who are negligent in the fulfillment of their parochial duties. (Cf. Code cf. 1917, cc 2182-2785)

The *competent authority* is the diocesan Bishop, and those who in the law are considered equal to him equiparantur), to wit, the territorial Prelates and Abbots (formerly called Prelates and Abbots *nullius*), the Apostolic Vicars and the Apostolic Prefects, (cf. cc. 381 § 368)

[In regard to the competent authority for removal of a parish priest, it may be questioned whether the one who assumes the government of the diocese *sede impedita*, and/or the diocesan Administrator *sede vaeante* has the power to remove parish priest when there is cause for removal?

Both of them can appoint parish priests, but only after the completion of one year of the impediment or vacancy of the See. Besides, canon 428 § 1 states: "*Sede vaeante nihil innovetur*": The See being vacant, let nothing be innovated. And it should be noted that the removal from office, is of more gravity than the conferring of it. Besides that, Can. 134 § 2. states: "What in the canons is nominally attributed to the dio-

cesan Bishop regarding the executive power is to be understood of the exclusive competence of the diocesan Bishop and of those who in canon 381, § 2 are considered equal to him, excluding the Vicar general and the episcopal vicar, unless there is special mandate." Now the diocesan Administrator, and the one governing the diocese *sede impedita*¹, are certainly not considered equal to the diocesan Bishop.

But they "are bound by the same duties and have the same powers of the diocesan Bishop; except those that by the nature of the question itself, or by law are excluded". (Canon 342 § 1 and 343) Nowhere in the Code is excluded from this general rule the power of removal of parish priests, when there is just cause for it; neither is it excluded by the nature of the question. And in those circumstances is also true the principle that "*Sakis animarum suprema lex esto.*"

It is therefore my opinion that the aforementioned diocesan Administrator, or regent of the dioceses, had the power for removal of parish priests if the case warrants it. It must be however admitted that the vacancy of the See, or its impediment, normally are of short duration, and hardly would be urgent need to act before a new Bishop or Administrator with full powers is appointed.]

Two Consultor parish priests must intervene in these cases as assessors to the Bishop: "If it should be shown ... that there exists the cause indicated in canon 1740, the Bishop will discuss the matter with two parish priests selected from the group stably organized for this purpose by the presbyteral council upon proposal of the Bishop" (Can. 1742 § 2).¹

The presence of a Notary is necessary for official recording of the proceedings. It is not expressly stated in the canons of this Title, as it was in the old Code (Cf. CIC 197, can. 2142). But we must not forget that the removal had to be done observing the established juridical procedure, that the parish priest

¹ Here is a clear reference to an "institutum" in the diocese, of which I could not find mentioned in the Title "*De organizatione interna Ecclesiarum parochialium*", in Part II of Book II *De Populo Dei*.

In the old legislation the assessors to the Bishop in the procedure were two synodal judges; Consultor parish priests had to intervene in the removal process only when an *inamovibile* pastor presented for the *second time* arguments against his removal.

must be informed, *ad validitatem*, of the cause and arguments for his removal, and the safest means for informing, for accuracy and precision, is to do it in writing. Besides, the removed parish priest has the right of "recursus", or appeal, to the immediate highest authority, and documentation of the proceedings will have to be sent to the Superior.

The Procedure

The circumstances that may require removal of the parish priest may come to the knowledge of the Bishop in many ways: from complaints of parishioners, the report of the Vicar Forane, the findings during the pastoral visitation, etc. It might also be necessary to have some additional and prudent investigation, before initiating the procedure.

1) "If it should be shown by the finished investigation that there exists the cause indicated in canon 1740 [that the ministry of the pastor is ineffective, or harmful], the Bishop shall discuss the matter with two parish priests selected from the group organized for this purpose by the presbyteral council" (can. 1742, § 1).

2) "If afterwards he should see fit to proceed to the removal, he shall persuade paternally the parish priest concerned, having beforehand indicated, *for the validity* of the procedure, the cause and arguments for his removal, to resign within a period of 15 days" (Can. 1742 § 1).

The parish priest, after the invitation:

- a) might comply with the request of the Bishop, and renounce to the parish; or
- b) allow the 15 days to pass, without giving a reply to the invitation to resign; or
- c) impugn the proposal, adducing arguments against the motive and reasons alleged by the Bishop.

a) // *the parish priest resigns:*

3) he is permitted to resign "plainly and simply", or may do it "under condition, provided the condition may be legitimately accepted, and in fact is accepted, by the Bishop" (Can. 1743).

4) — 5) *ut infra* nn. 6) — 7)

b) "*// the parish priest does not reply*" within fifteen days:

3) "the Bishop must reiterate the invitation [in writing] extending the available time for the reply" (can. 1744 § 1).

4) "if it be known to the Bishop that the parish priest received the second invitation, but did not reply though he had no impediment to do so,

— or if the parish priest would refuse to tender his resignation, without adducing any motive.

the Bishop should issue the decree of amotion" (can. 1744 ? 2).

5) — 7) *ut infra*, nn. 6) — 8)

c) "*// the parish priest should impugn*" the cause adduced and its reasons, by countering with arguments that are considered insufficient by the Bishop, *to act validly*:

3) The Bishop "shall invite him to put in writing, after having inspected the records of the case, his defensive allegations and his proofs to the contrary, if any" (Can. 1745, 1°);

4) "after that, having completed the instruction, if it be necessary, the Bishop together with the parish priests mentioned in canon 1742 § 1 [*supra*, n. 1], unless others should be appointed in lieu of them due to their inavailability, should ponder the matter" (Can. 1745, 2°);

5) "at last he should decide whether the parish priest should be removed or not, and at once issue the decree on the question" (can. 1745, 3°).

6) "Once the parish priest has been removed, the Bishop should provide for his needs, either by assigning him to an office, for which he may be fitted, or by giving him a pension, as the case may suggest and the circumstances may allow" (Can. 1746).

7) "The removed parish priest should:

a) abstain from further exercising parochial office.¹

b) as soon as possible leave the parish house.

¹ "Illegitimate retention of an office, after having cease in it or being deprived of it, is considered as usurpation" of the office, which should be punished with a just penalty (Can. 1381).

- c) and should entrust everything pertaining to the parish to him who would have been entrusted by the Bishop with the parish" (Can. 1747 § 1).

However, "if it be the case of a sick parish priest who cannot be transferred elsewhere from the rectory without a great inconvenience, the Bishop may allow him the use, even exclusive, of the parish house, while the need lasts" (Can. 1747 § 2).

- 8) "If an appeal has been raised, while the appeal is pending the Bishop cannot appoint a new parish priest, but should provide meanwhile through a parish administrator" (Can. 1747 §3).

Transfer of Parish Priests

As stated before, the reason or cause for the transfer of a priest from his parish is always one of positive worth, to wit, the greater good of the souls or a greater service to the Church in the new assignment to which the priest is transferred.

Canon 1748 presupposes that the parish priest to be transferred is administering fruitfully his parish; if it were otherwise, the question would be one of removal. But because the priest is considered capable of obtaining greater fruit for the souls and the Church in other assignment, a transfer to this other office is considered by the Bishop of the diocese.

The competent authority to propose and decide the transfer is the same as in the case of removal: the diocesan Bishop, and those who are considered by the law equal to him.

However, in this matter my opinion is that the Administrator of the diocese *Sede vacante*, and the one assuming the government *Sede impedita* cannot transfer a parish priest, because of the law "*Sede vacante nihil innovetur*". For the removal of a parish priest there might be occasions of urgency because of the good of the souls; that kind of urgency is not present for a transfer.

The Consultor parish priest will intervene, depending on the answer of the priest to be transferred to the first invitation of the Bishop.

The Notary is also necessary, and all the actuations must be recorded in writing by him.

The Procedure

When "the good of The souls or the need of the Church demands that a parish priest be transferred from a parish which he administers fruitfully to another parish or another office or ministry" (Can. 1748) :

1) "The Bishop should propose in writing the transfer to the priest, and try to persuade him to accede for the sake and love of God and the souls" (Can. 1748).

2) The parish priest may:

a) right away accede to comply with the proposal, or ask for some time to think it over, and finally decide to yield to the intentions of the Bishop;

b) or resolve to object to the proposal.

a) // *the parish priest accepts the proposal:*

3) The Bishop issues the decree declaring the parish vacant.

4) The Bishop gives the nomination or appointment to the priest for the parish or office to which he is transferred.

b) // *the parish priest does not intend to accept the proposal*¹:

3) He must explain his reason in writing (Can. 1749).

(The Bishop may accept the reasons as valid, or may judge that he should not desist from his purpose)

4) If the Bishop should judge that he should not desist from the proposal, he should ponder together with two parish priests chosen as established in canon 1742 § 1, both the reasons in favor and against the transfer (Can. 1750).

5) If the Bishop is still convinced that the transfer should be made, he should reiterate to the parish priest the paternal exhortation to accept the transfer (Can. 1750), giving a fixed time to answer.

¹ Under the previous ecclesiastical discipline, the irremovable parish priest could not be transferred, if he refused to; the removable parish priest could be ordered to be transferred "if the parish *ad quam* was not of a notable inferior category" (CIC 1917, Can. 2163 § 2).

6) If the priest still refuses to accept, and the Bishop deems the transfer must be made, he shall issue the decree of transfer, including the provision that, after the lapse of the fixed period of time the parish will *be* vacant (Can. 1751).

7) That period of time having expired without result, he shall declare the parish vacant.

8) — 9 as in the case of removal nn. 7), 8), observing canonical equity, and never losing sight of the welfare of the souls, "which in the Church always must be the supreme law" (Can. 1752).

APPENDIX

The parochial vicars (coadjutors)

They are appointed freely by the diocesan Bishop (Can. 547) and by the diocesan Administrator (Can. 427 § 1; cf. Can. 414). They are obliged to reside within the parish (Can. 550).

Their office is not for a determined period of time, or for an indefinite time, but for a duration according to the prudent discretion of the competent authority (Cf. Can. 193). Consequently, their removal (or transfer), there being a just cause, should be regulated by Canon 193 § 3 and 4.

Religious parish priests and coadjutors

As in the old Code (CIC 1917, Can. 454 § 5, and Can. 447 § 1) they are always removable at the discretion (*ad nutum*) either of the Bishop or the Religious Superior, with the only obligation of either of them to inform the other (Can. 682 § 2). This procedure applies also to parish priests who are members of apostolic societies (Canons 538 § 682 § 2, 738 § 2, 1742 § 2).

BERNABE ALONSO, O.P.

CASES AND INQUIRIES

1. APPOINTMENT OF AN ASSISTANT VICAR

I am a member of a religious Institute. The Church of our religious house is a parish. Its parish priest or pastor and three coadjutors belong to our Institute. Lately the parish priest, sixty years old, underwent a serious operation after which he had to take a long vacation in his own country. The religious Superior then requested one of the coadjutors, other than the senior, to take over and act as the pastor of the parish. I believe that the senior coadjutor should have assumed the administration of the parish, and so exchanged views with the Superior, who answered that his reason for having appointed not the senior coadjutor but another is that the latter knows the dialect better and is liked by the parishioners. Was this procedure correct according to the law of the Church?

A Religious Coadjutor

Canon 475 of our present (1917) Codex states that "if a pastor has been incapacitated to carry out the duties of his office because of old age, mental infirmity, blindness or other permanent affliction, the local Ordinary shall give him an assistant vicar to take his place..., reserving the right of presentation to the religious superior in the case of a parish entrusted to religious."

The procedure, therefore, to follow in the case presented by our consultant is clear. When the pastor became incapacitated due to the operation, the religious Superior should have presented to the local Ordinary one of the assistants or vicars to be appointed as vicar-in-charge of the parish during the illness of the pastor. Its institution proper belongs to the local Ordinary, not to the religious Superior whose competence is only to present the person to be instituted as vicar-in-charge.

The 1917 Codex does not consider seniority in this case as a reason for being appointed as vicar-in-charge of the parish. The choice is left to the Superior for the presentation and to

the local Ordinary for the approval. This case is different from the vacancy of the parish when, before the appointment of the vicar econome, the senior vicar has to assume the administration of the parish (can. 472).

The new Codex considers the vacancy of the parish and the incapacity of the pastor in the same canon, and in both instances the seniority among the parochial vicars is regarded as the decisive factor to take over automatically the administration of the parish during the incapacity of the pastor or during the period before the appointment of the parochial administrator. It is the senior by appointment (not by age) who will take over the administration of the parish (can. 541).

In view of the foregoing, we have to say that the religious Superior could not appoint a substitute for the sick pastor. It is the diocesan Bishop who may appoint him upon the recommendation of the religious Superior.

2, PRE-MARITAL INVESTIGATION

Our parish priests are oftentimes very busy and they cannot attend to prospective spouses, as required by Canon Law;. In my parish many of the couples are already married before the judge and often living together. Before their civil marriage they underwent an investigation already according to the Civil Code. If they got married civilly, it is clear that they were capable to marry, otherwise they would not have been allowed to. Can these couples not be dispensed from the investigation and banns required by the Church before the canonical marriage? The marriage in church will be as a ratification of the civil marriage already performed. The dispensation from the investigation would mean a great relief to our parish priests.

A New Parish Priest

The answer to the question posed by our consultant is in the negative. The parish priest may never omit the canonical investigation and the publication of the marriage just because an investigation was already done before the celebration of the civil marriage. The reason is obvious.

The impediments established by the Church for a canonical marriage are different from the impediments established by the Civil Code for a civil marriage. If some impediments seem to be identical, their interpretation and extension are different. For instance, the impediment of antecedent and perpetual impotence is regarded by the Church as a diriment impediment, which renders marriage invalid, while the Civil Code regards such impotence as an impedient impediment only, rendering marriage not void from the beginning, but voidable. The impediment of adoption, which in the past has been identical in both legislations, will be different when the new Codex takes effect on November 27, 1983. The lack of freedom or defectus marital consent is considered differently too. Thus, marriages contracted with defectuous consent are considered valid, though voidable, by the State, while the same are considered null and void by the Church.

Not only the foregoing difference in the impediments should make any parish priest refrain from relying on the previous investigation conducted according to civil laws, but also the difference in the way of conducting the investigation itself must discourage a pastor of souls from being satisfied with the results obtained in the civil pre-marital investigation. All parish priests know only too well what kind of investigation is at times done in order to get the marriage license. Quite often this is obtained without any investigation at all. It is public knowledge how fixers operate even within the City Hall premises, as long as the future spouses can come across.

The Church's law on the contrary, is very particular on how, when and by whom the pre-marital investigation is to be conducted. Undoubtedly there is also much room for improvement in the way such investigation has often been conducted by our parish priests. At any rate, it is an obligation imposed by the Church's law upon the parish priest who has the right to solemnize the marriage and his responsibility, according to the common opinion of the commentators on the matter, is grave and serious.

In view of the foregoing differences, the pre-marital investigation conducted according to the Civil Code can by no means be accepted by the parish priest as sufficient reason to omit the investigation imposed by the Church.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

DOCUMENTATION

CREATION OF THE OFFICE OF MODERATOR CURIAE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA*

1. DECREE CREATING THE OFFICE OF MODERATOR CURIAE

Considering the complexity of the particular Church of Manila given to our care — the great number of people, the variety of conditions, and the equally many ministries and other ecclesiastical offices we have established to effectively shepherd the faithful in the Archdiocese of Manila, we, by virtue of our authority as Archbishop of Manila, hereby create and establish the OFFICE OF MODERATOR CURIAE, in accordance with the provision of Canon 473, n. 2.

Furthermore, we approve and confirm the functions and lights of this office and the rights and duties of the person of the Moderator Curiae as enumerated in the hereunto attached document.

This decree is hereby ordered circularized throughout the Archdiocese.

Given in Manila, this 15th day of June 1983.

f JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila

Msgr. Josefino S. Ramirez, V.G.
Vicar General and Chancellor

* Published in *Vademecum* (Official Bulletin of the Chancery of the of the Archdiocese of Manila) Vol. 1, no. 3, July 1983. Our staff hopes that these documents will serve as models for other Archdioceses in the country.

II. RIGHTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MODERATOR CURIAE

General Functions

1. To oversee the work of the members of the Curia in the task entrusted to them (Canon 470, n. 2) ;
2. To coordinate, monitor, evaluate the work of the Ministries.

Specific Functions

1. To meet regularly with the directors of the Archdiocesan ministries and/or members of the Curia for purposes of coordinating the work of the various offices and ministries;
2. To require from the Archdiocesan offices/ministries reports on the status/progress of their work;
3. To visit, from time to time and as the need arises, the offices of the Archdiocese and the ministries;
4. To see to it that the programs of the ministries and Archdiocesan offices are in accord with the general Archdiocesan thrusts and objectives.

Other Functions

1. To prepare the Archdiocesan Quinquennial Report to Rome;
2. To prepare the draft of decrees creating new parishes and vicariates and study their territorial boundaries;
3. To prepare and update the Archdiocesan directory;
4. Other duties that may be assigned by the Archbishop of Manila.

Rights

The Moderator Curiae is an ex-Officio member of the College of Consultors, Archbishops' Council, Presbyteral Council, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Finance and Investment Council.

III. THE MODERATOR CURIAE IN THE NEW CODE

Canon U73

n. 2 — "Ipsius Episcopi diocesani est coordinare actionem pastoralem Vicariorum sive generalium sive episcopalium; ubi id expediat, nominari potest Moderator Curiae, qui sacerdos sit oportet, cujus est sub Episcopi auctoritate ea coordinare quae ad negotia administrative tractanda attinent; itemque curare curiae addicti officium sibi commissum rite adimplet."

n. 2 — "Nisi loco rum adjuncta iudicio Episcopi aliud suadeant, Moderator Curiae nominetur Vicarius generalis aut, si plures sint, unus ex vicariis generalibus."

Main Points

1. The appointment of a moderator curiae is facultative, i.e. whenever such is advantageous (ubi id expediat) ; the same was, however, obligatory in the draft.

2. Qualities of the moderator curiae — He must be a priest. He may be the vicar general or one of the vicars general if there are many.

3. Functions of the moderator curiae:

- a) To coordinate under the authority of the bishop, those tasks which concern administrative matters;
- b) To see to it that the other members of the curia duly fulfill the office committed to them.

IV. APPOINTMENT OF MODERATOR CURIAE

In our desire to make more effective the administration of the Archdiocese of Manila, and having created the Office of Moderator Curiae whose principal purposes are the coordination of tasks which concern administrative matters, and the overseeing of the other members of the Curia, in line with the provision

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of Canon 470, n. 2, we hereby appoint Most Rev. LEONARDO Z. LEGAZPI, O.P., D.D., Moderator Curiae of the Archdiocese of Manila, for a period of three (3) years.

We give the appointee, whose standing, doctrine, prudence and other qualities we judge to be sufficient for a cooperator in the pastoral government of the Archdiocese, all the faculties, rights, privileges which by Canon Law, Diocesan Statutes, and approved customs are declared inherent to the office.

Given in Manila, this 15th day of June 1983.

f JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila

Msgr. Josefino S. Ramirez, V.G.
Vicar General and Chancellor

CREATION OF THE NEW DIOCESE OF BANGUED

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM
DEI AD **PERPETUAM** REI MEMORIAM

Cum Decessoris Nostri Romani Pontifices Praelaturam Banguedensem aliasque quae infra memorantur condiderunt quasi Insulas Philippinas novis Ecclesiis stellantes, eo profecto consilio ducti sunt, ut postquam Praelaturae illae ad maturitatem turn fidei turn disciplinae pervenissent, in dioecesium formam, quasi adultae aetatis Ecclesiae, redigerentur. Quod cum feliciter factum sit, sive foederatarum Ecclesiarum auxiliis, sive Missionariorum labore, quorum operam laudamus, eademque Praelaturae iusta iam firmitate polleant petiit Conferantia episcopalis Insularum Philippinarum ab hac Apostolica Sede, ut ad gradum atque dignitatem diocesium eveherentur. Nos autem, rati hoc bene cedere posse populis illis, admotis precibus concedendum esse arbitramur. Qua te audito quid Venerabilis frater Noster S. R. E. Cardinales indicarent, qui Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis praesunt, haec statuimus. Praelaturas Banguedensem, Ibanam, Iliganensem, Kidapavanensem, Malai-balaiensem, Marbelianam, Sancti Josephi de Antiquonia, Bayombongensem in dioecesis formam redigimus iisdem cum nominibus atque finibus quibus nunc cognominantur atque finiuntur. Item Sedes episcopales illarum, eadem erunt quae nunc, praelaticiiis templis ad cathedralium dignitatem evectis, cum iuribus debitis. Conditas Ecclesias iisdem metropolitanis Sedibus subicimus, quibus ad hunc diem subiectae fuerunt Praelaturae; similiter Episcopos Metropolitanis. Narum autem mensae episcopales coalescent sive Curiarum emolumentis singularum, sive fidelium collationibus, sive bonis, si quae sunt, quae ad mensas praelaticias pertinuerunt, pro rata parte nempe. Ad hoc, in unaquaque dioecesi Canoniarum Collegium condatur per alias Litteras Apostolicas; quod tamen dum fiat, Consultores dioecesani deligantur, qui Episcopo assint consilio opera. Ad novarum Ecclesiarum regimen quod pertinet, administrationem, electionem Vicarii Capitularis, Sede vacante, similia, normae Iuris Canonici ad amussim sequantur. Pariter de Seminariis struendis de iisque moderandis leges iuris communis observentur, ratione habitatum Decreti Concilii Vaticani II — Optatum Totius — turn praescriptorum Sacrae Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica.

In novis dioecesis vocationes ecclesiasticae summo studio curentur; ita ut suo tempore lecti iuvenes Romam mitti possint ad Collegium Pontificium Philippinum philosophia sacraque theologia imbuendi. Tardem Venerabilis fratres qui in praesentia Praelaturas regunt, iam omnes Episcopos ordinarios earundem nominamus, priore vinculo absolutos, cum iuribus iustis, excepta dioecesi S. Iosephi quae vacat. Ceterum, haec omnia Venerabilis frater Bruno Torpigiani exsequenda curabit, vel quern ipse legaverit, modo virum in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum, factis scilicet necessariis potestatibus — Re vero acta, documenta exarentur, atque sinceris exemplis as Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis quam cito mittantur rite subscripta ac sigillo impressa. Contrariis nihil obstantibus. Datum Romae apud S. Petrum, die quinta decima mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentissimo octogesimo altero, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a Publicis Eccl. negotiis

f Sebastianus Card. Baggio
S. Congregationis
pro Episcopis Praef.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

ad perpetuam rei memoriam. Ad fidelium Christi bonum consequendum Summi Pontifices per saecula sine intermissione suum gravissimum officium esse duxerunt aptas ecclesiasticas circumscriptiones distribuere et definire; quorum vestigia Nos insistere curamos. Cum igitur sacrorum Antistites ecclesiasticae provinciae Caebuanae, audita Philippinarum Insularum Conferentia Episcopali, ad unum omnes a Sede Apostolica postulavissent ut distractis nonnullis ab eadem provincia portionibus nova constitueretur ecclesiastica provincia Palensis appellanda, Nos cognita favente sententia Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigliani, Archiepiscopi titulo Mallianensis et in Insulis Philippinis Apostolici Nuntii, et audito consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostorum S.R.E. Cardinalium negotiis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis praepositorum, petitioni putavimus esse assentiendum, rati eiusmodi concessionem in animarum utilitatem esse cessuram. Earn obrem, quorum intererat vel sua interesse praesumentium suppleto consensu, Apostolica Nostra potestate quae sequuntur statuimus et decernimus. Dioecesim Palensem ab ecclesiastica provincia Caebuana, seiungimus et sedem metropolitanam facimus, iuribus et privilegiis ornatam, quibus ceterae archiepiscopales sedes ad normam iuris communis utuntur. Ei autem suffraganeas dioeceses assignamus: Calbayoganam et Baronganensem et Catamarniesem, quas a provincia ecclesiastica Caebuana separamus. Palensem insuper pro tempore Antistitem archiepiscopali dignitate decoramus et gradu Metropolitae insignimus, datis iuribus et privilegiis atque oneribus et obligationibus impositis, quibus ceteri Metropolitae et fruuntur et obligantur iuxta sacrorum canonum normas. Qui denique in praesentia est Episcopus Palensis, Venerabilem Fratrem Ciprianum Urgel Villahermosa, ad dignitatem archiepiscopalem promovemus et Metropolitam creamus, congruis et privilegiis, oneribus et obligationibus donatum et obstrictum. Haec perficienda committimus Venerabili Fratri Brunoni Torpigliani, factis ei necessariis et opportunis facultatibus etiam alii ea delegandi, modo in ecclesiastica dignitate constitute. Re vero acta documenta conficiantur, quorum sincera exempla ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis primo quoque tempore mittantur, rite signata et sigillo impressa. Contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quintodecimo mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo secundo, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a Publicis Eccl. negotiis

fSebastianus Card. Baggio
J. C. pro Episcopis Praefectus

HISTORY

VIII. THE DOMINICANS: FOUNDERS AND BUILDERS OF TOWNS IN PANGASINAN (1588 - 1898)

10. MANGALDAN

Its location, etymology and acceptance by the Dominicans

Mangaldan is the third town which the Dominicans founded in Pangasinan.

It lies on a vast plain in the northern part of central Pangasinan, about two miles from the gulf of Lingayen. It is bounded on the north by the town of San Fabian, on the south by the town of Santa Barbara, on the east by the town of San Jacinto, and on the west by the town then (now the city) of Dagupan.¹

According to Father Suarez, the name Mangaldan etymologically comes from the root word *alar* or *alad*, which, interposed between the particles *mang* and *an*, results in Mangalaran or Mangaladan. By omitting, however, the penultimate *a*, in conformity with a special modality of word formation in some Filipino dialects, it becomes Mangaldan. Its root *alar* or *alad* stands for stockade or palisade. Thus says Father Magno in his *History of Mangaldan*: "Considering the fact that Mangaldan existed is a ranch in its beginnings, the copious presence of bamboo fences in the place could have given rise to the town's appellation, which, accordingly, justifies Father Suarez's version."²

After having been separated from Calasiao, to which it originally belonged as a "visita", Mangaldan was accepted by the Acts of the Provincial Chapter of 1600 as a full-pledged "Vicariate" under the advocacy of the great Dominican saint, Thomas Aquinas, and was provided with its first Vicar in the person of Father Pedro de Ledesma, with Father Tomas de Castellar as his assistant.³

i RAFAEL SISON MAGNO, *Mangaldan* (1600-1898), Dagupan, 1981, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3; SUAREZ, *Op. tit.*, fol. 106.

³ *Acta Capitulonim Provincialium, etc.*, Vol. I, p. 34.

Founders and Vicars of Mangaldan

Although some author? consider Father Juan Martinez, later martyred for the faith in Japan, as the founder of Mangaldan, however, without doubt its real apostle was Father Pedro de Soto, a scholarly and saintly religious who, being Vicar of Calasiao, often extended his missionary activity to the region that lies to the northeast. He was besides an active and powerful personality as was needed to soften and bring under the sweet yoke of the Gospel the fierce inhabitants of that area.⁴

Conspicuous among them was a certain Casipit, who had opposed the preaching of the Gospel with all his might and main. However, once converted and christened Pedro, he became a meek lamb and a model for the other converts, such as his wife, named Gracia in baptism, his three daughters and •a large household of relatives and slaves.⁵

Some of the Vicars of Mangaldan carved for themselves a niche in the hall of fame of this town such as the following Fathers: Juan de San Jacinto, (1604-1606, 1608-1610) the founder of Manaoag and an indefatigable wayfarer for the sake of Christ, who found the plains of Pangasinan too narrow for his zeal and thus extended his apostolic action as far as the Caraballo mountains; Tomas Gutierrez (1623-1625) and Juan de Arjona (1641-1643) who together even dared to cross these mountains and reached the Ituy valley (i.e., the present towns; of Aritao, Dupax and Bambang) ; Juan de Santo Domingo (1676-1677), a man of sterling virtue and later the founder of the Beaterio de Santa Catalina in Manila; Lorenzo Cosgaya (1714-1715), the "Cicero" of the Pangasinan dialect and author of a *Pangasinan-Spanish Dictionary*; Fernando de Santa Maria, who authored a small book on homemade medicines and medicinal herbs of the Philippines; Cristobal Ausina (1755-1757), called *Maquinon principe* by the townspeople due to his princely bearing and pompous behaviour; Salvador Tapias (1763-1765) in whose time the uprising of Pangasinan took place, and during which, when the Shepherd left for Asingan, his flock fled to the hills; Jose Torres (1825-1831), who completed a famous irrigation dam and made some exploratory trips to the mountains of Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet, as we shall soon relate in separate paragraphs; Jose Misa (1831-1843), an enthusiastic promoter of public works and a tireless defender of the interests and rights of his flock; and to cap it all with the most remarkable of their

* ADUARTE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

o *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

all, Ramon Fernandez, (1843-1860) a tireless builder in all directions and the best physician of his time in the Philippines, as acknowledged by even professional doctors.⁶

Buildings

From its very start Mangaldan seems to have had a church of fairly good dimensions, as evinced by the three retables that Pedro Casipit donated for as many altars.⁷ The succeeding church, made of brick, must have been built sometime in the 17th century, for, as Father Mora attests, it was already very old in 1804.⁸ It consisted of three naves, although its walls were rather low. The adjacent belfry was of good architectural design. However, this second church gave way to a new one, when Father Lorenzo Martin (1809-1822) started from the very first year of his incumbency to raise new pillars for a new church of brick, which eventually underwent some changes, repairs and improvements, and served the townspeople in good stead for their religious gatherings for almost a century. But the violent earthquakes of March 16, 1892 razed it to the ground. Then, provisionally, Father Miguel Llambi, (1888-1898), who would turn out to be the last Dominican Vicar of Mangaldan, erected an elegant wooden "camarin" (a barn-like structure) for the divine worship, and a convent of light materials for himself. Unfortunately both were put to the torch by the revolutionaries in 1898.⁹

The convent, begun in about 1747 during the tenure of Father Fernando de Santa Maria, similarly underwent a number of changes and improvements through the years. During the years 1809-1812 its partition walls were demolished by Father Lorenzo Martin so as to enable the people to hear Mass in it while the construction of the church was going on. Father Jose Misa added to the convent a wide "volada," that is, a roofed gallery that ran alongside the whole facade, fronting the town plaza. Besides, he built a terrace, a stable for horses under it

« SUAREZ, fol. 207.

•> ADUARTE, p. 77, col. 2.

s MORA, *Op. tit.*, fol. 119.

» GONZALEZ, *Op. Cit.*, p. 52; the churches with three naves in Pangasinan in the year 1869 were those of Dagupan, Calasiao, Salasa, Gerona and Mangaldan, all — in the opinion of Father Suarez — wanting in artistic merit and ill-fitted too as parochial churches (Suarez, 106).

Slid a dovecot (*palomur*). The fabric of the convent suffered also extensive damage as an aftermath of the violent tremors of 1892.¹⁰

A protector of the natives

Without any official obligation or designation, many missionaries undertook and discharged out of charity and zeal for the salvation of souls the role of "protectores de Indios." One of them was Father Jose Misa. For once, he defended his flock from the abuses of the soldiers attached to the Commission then stationed in northern Pangasinan to protect the interests of the Tobacco Monopoly from the contraband of the Igorots. "But what immortalized him," asserts Father Suarez, "was a famous lawsuit which he brought on *Alcalde Mayor* Lila and even against Father Tomas Riera, parish priest of Santa Barbara, in order to keep for Mangaldan the waters of a dam which he had constructed. However, unable to bear the heavy burden of injustices and moreover wanting the support of the townspeople of Mangaldan, at last he and Father Ramon Fernandez, then pastor of Manaoag and his friend, exchanged parishes in 1843."¹¹

Roads and bridges

All we have to say about roads in Mangaldan is that, according to our historical sources, the road leading to San Jacinto was straightened and shortened by Father Jose Torres, and the road that connected Mangaldan with Santa Barbara was started in 1775 at the face of the opposition of the townspeople themselves.

However, on bridges, rather on the single bridge we can say that it was constructed in 1845 on the Angalacan river through the joint efforts of Father Ramon Fernandez and *Alcalde Mayor* Lila, both of whom did not spare expenses to make it very solid and durable. However, its central span was soon afterward washed away by an impetuous flood. It had been made from the best timber of the province at a time when very good wood abounded in Pangasinan, and some Spaniards con-

¹⁰ SUAREZ, *Op. Cit.*, fol. 107.

«*Ibid.*

versant with the art of making bridges willingly had lent a helping hand.¹²

Irrigation projects

Mangaldan has been without doubt one of the richest agricultural towns in Pangasinan due to its vast and well irrigated rice fields. And it was the privilege and glory of its Dominican Vicars to have laid down the foundations of its present prosperity by planning, digging, building and maintaining irrigation ditches and dams.

At the close of the 18th century we find Father Gabriel de la Riva (1798-1799) already starting to dig a ditch for irrigation purposes, which was later continued by his successor Father Jose Rodriguez (1799-1809). Some years later, in 1822-1825, Father Pedro de la Rama began to build a dam on the Tolong River, and Father Jose Torres continued and completed it, so that in 1829 the waters began to flow towards the town rice fields and, through an additional canal, the waters continued to flow as far as the road leading to Dagupan.¹³

Father Misa, successor to Father Torres, plastered the dam with masonry and, in order to supervise the work more closely, built a spacious house right there. In the year 1850 the dam, either due to defective construction or perhaps to the excessive pressure of the waters at the start of the rainy season, collapsed, thus creating havoc and foreboding economic disaster to the Mangaldanes (the people of Mangaldan) who were already used to pin on it their hopes for plentiful harvests. All of them, headed by their most active Parish Priest, Father Ramon Fernandez, worked so feverishly in its reconstruction or rather in the construction of a new one, that in two months it was completed.^{14*}

Mangaldan a frontier town

The towns of Mangaldan as well as of San Jacinto, Manaoag and San Fabian were situated at the frontier, that is, they were situated close to the mountains where lived through the 17th

¹² The flood that swept away this bridge which was believed to be the strongest in the whole of Pangasinan was the result of a continuous downpour which lasted for more than thirty hours, that is, from the evening of Tuesday, *infra octavam* of the feast of the Rosary, October, 1845, to the early morning of Thursday (Suarez, 211).

w/6id.

w SUAREZ, *Loe. cit.*

and a good portion of the 18th centuries the Aetas and Igorots who were often at odds with the people of the lowlands. In the early years of evangelization, these predatory enemies seemed to have had the upper hand over the poorly armed and often cowed Christians. However, in later years, the Christians, armed with guns and well trained in their use, either decimated or pushed their enemies further into the mountain fastnesses. Some of the latter were converted to the faith and gradually were absorbed into the mainstream of the religious and socio-political life of the lowlands.

Regarding Mangaldan, we have come across one incident only of this confrontation, when between the years 1857 and 1859, the Mangaldanes and their Christian allies of the Buquig engaged the mountaineers in battle; but the extent and results of this encounter are not known to us.¹⁵

Missionary excursions to the mountain tribes

It is known that Father Jose Torres made several missionary expeditions to the highlands northeast of Mangaldan in order to explore the possibility of founding permanent missions there. Of such exploratory journeys (*entradas*) only two have been recorded: the first is when Father Torres accompanied Don Jose Maria Peiiaranda, a Spanish government official and explorer, to the mountains situated northeast of San Nicolas; and the other was an excursion to the nearer mountains of Benguet. Father Torres himself left us an account of the latter which we thus paraphrase in a nutshell:

Upon invitation of Guillermo Galvey, a Spanish military officer famous for his repeated expeditions into the fastnesses of the Cordillera, Father Torres made himself ready to accompany him to the highlands that are now the site of the City of Baguio and Trinidad valley. Their departure was set for February 28, 1931, and the rendezvous was the small barrio of Balasbas.

After some days of fruitless waiting for Galvey, Father Torres decided to go in alone with his faithful Filipinos and some Igorot guides. First he visited the ranches of Ayoship and Lebang, then scaled the summit of Mount Banaoag. After going down its slopes, he traversed extensive pinelands, crossed

is *Ibid.*

several tributaries of the Agno river and reached Mount Akupan, famous for its gold mines, which the Igorots scarcely knew how to exploit.

Finding no traces of Galvey's presence anywhere Father Torres decided to return to Mangaldan by the northwestern route. In doing so, he went through the valleys that today circumscribe the city of Baguio, passed by Irisan and Cagaling, forded the Bancatoy river which empties into the China sea, and arrived at the hamlet of Tabao within the jurisdiction of Agoo. Always going on foot, he skirted the slopes of Mount Santo Tomas, finally reaching Mangaldan, where he died two months after his return as a result of the hardships that he endured throughout such difficult journey across the mountains.¹⁶

Some interesting miscellanea

Although not purely pertaining to the Church or the Dominican Order, the following data or items about Mangaldan are a relevant contribution to Philippine Historiography: — Father Jose Quiros (1770-1782) was the first Dominican Parish Priest of Mangaldan to be conferred the canonical institution according to Canon Law and the Laws of the Spanish Royal Patronage for the Indies. — In 1776 the foundations of the municipal building were laid. — A general census was made also during this same year. — In 1784 the Tobacco Monopoly was extended to Mangaldan. In this same year Mangaldan was involved in litigations with some towns here and there. — In 1785 Captain General Jose Basco y Vargas visited Mangaldan on his way to Vigan. — An epidemic of smallpox raged in 1788 in Mangaldan. — The compulsory planting of coconut trees was ordered in this same year. — In 1791 Father Dalmacio Mones (1790-1798) laid the foundations of a new school, later described by Father Mora as made of brick and as a school of the first order. — In 1801 a special tax on cocks was extended to Pangasinan. — In 1803 tax was levied on wine. During this same year there was a persistent drought and a big plague of locusts. As a result in 1804 there was a great famine in Mangaldan. — In 1805 the first conscription of soldiers was imposed. — The following year of 1806 it rained without let-up during a whole month, and

i« TORRES, JOSE, O.P., "Relacion de la subida a los montes de los igorotes, situados al norte de la provincia de Pangasinan, verificada por el P. Jose Torres en 25 de febrero de 1931," MS, in APSR, Section "Pangasinan", Vol. 6, Doc. 28, fols. 190-191.

vaccination against smallpox was performed for the first time in Mangaldan. — In 1822 an epidemic raged in the town and brought many people to the grave. — Father Torres, its Parish Priest, lost his way in the forest and came across an enormous crocodile.¹⁷

Populations statistics

The population of Mangaldan grew at a slow pace in the 17th century, at a faster rate through the 18th century, and by leaps and bounds in the 19th, as can be seen in the following figures:

1621.....	700 tributes or souls"
1751.....	5,763 souls, not counting small children ^{1"}
1798	6,455 souls ²⁰
1848.....	12,951 souls ²¹
1875.....	16,763 souls ²²
1896.....	15,571 souls ²⁸

As we saw in the statistics of San Carlos and Calasiaio, and now we observe in those of Mangaldan, there was a downtrend in their population in the closing years of the 19th century. Perhaps it was due to a number of epidemics and to an occasional famine which scourged the province at that time and forced many people to migrate.

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i«Cfr. APSE, MSS, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 4, Doc. 1, fol. 1.
i» "Informe at Rey nuestro Senor," ano. 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelanea," Vol. 3, fol. 8.
2«Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. II, Dec. 20, 1798, fol. 1.
21 "Revista Catolica," loc. cit.
22 Estado de almas .. ., 1815.
23 Estado de almas . . ., 1896.

PRIESTHOOD:

A LIFE COMMITMENT

By His Excellency

Most Rev. Jose Sorra, D.D.
Bishop of Virac

A man thought to be dead was taken by his friends for burial. When the coffin was about to be lowered into the grave, the man suddenly came to life and began to bang at the lid of the coffin.

The coffin was opened; the man sat up. "What are you doing," he asked the assembled crowd. "I am alive. I am not dead."

His words were met with stunned silence. Finally, one of the mourners said, "But my friend, both the doctors and the priests have certified that you are dead. They are the experts who could hardly be wrong."

So the equally stunned man lay down again to die again; finally, with all solemnity he was duly buried.

Friends, if the man has finally died, he must have died from severe shock or from massive heart attack, which might have been caused by an unresolved "crisis of identity" — that is, whether he was truly dead or alive; or, if you wish, call it a deep-seated "crisis of faith" — tearing the poor man apart between reality and unreality, but only to give in and accept unreality solely on the strength of the word of "human expert".

My dear Graduates, the theme you have chosen for your graduation exercises this morning is: Commitment Of Oneself To A Choice in Life. You surely couldn't have chosen a more unpopular and more questionable topic than your "life commitment" frowned upon in our time and age by the so-called progressive "theologian experts". "Conditional or optional commit-

ment" would have been more "realistic", more romantic a topic and certainly to the delight of those who seem to attach more value to what they call "self-focusing" and "self-fulfillment" in the religious life. As you all know, commitment always demands a cost, a passion, a dying. And it is rather hard today for our "progressives" to want to pay the price.

"Theologian Experts" vs. Church's "Human Exigencies"

Over the past 15 years or so to date, some of our 'theologian experts' from economically-rich but morally bankrupt countries have been questioning the validity and wisdom of the Church's teaching and insistence upon the *irrevocability* of a person's life commitment to his freely chosen calling—whether in marriage or in the priesthood or religious life.

1) Some do assert that one's decision to commit oneself for life in marriage, priesthood or religious life "becomes a prison in which many suffocate to death". The difficulty, they say, of an irrevocable commitment lies in man's "human incapacities and the impossibility of man or woman to control his or her future".

2) Another "theologian expert" wrote to present what he called "theology of abandonment" for the priesthood. He advocated that the "obligation of fidelity" to one's priestly commitment should be placed second only to the "fluctuations of the life-situation and man's self-development".

In other words, one's commitment might be modified if one discovers other desires or possibilities, as circumstances entice him to shift to another kind of work. It may remind you of your studied "situation ethics" which you may have evaluated and found ethically wanting.

3) Accordingly, the experts' followers have proposed that an ideal type of priestly or religious commitment is one that may be for life *for some* but "optional" for some others—meaning: "optional celibacy", "optional poverty" or "optional obedience". Just as what they would say, "eating the cake and having it too". Besides, as if these religious vows were an end in themselves rather than simply a means to a fruitful life commitment; or, as if these vows were the real thing signified instead of being merely a *sign* of one's total availability for the Kingdom.

But what is our answer to all these?

An elephant was enjoying a leisurely dip in a jungle pool when a rat came up to the pool and insisted that the elephant get out of the pool.

"I won't," said the elephant. "I'm enjoying myself and I refuse to be disturbed."

"I then insist you get out this very minute." said the rat.

"Why?" inquired the elephant.

"I shall tell you that only after you are out of the pool," said the rat.

"Then, I won't get out", retorted the elephant.

But then he eventually gave in. He lumbered out of the pool, stood in front of the rat and said, "Now then, why did you want me to get out of the pool?"

"To check if you were wearing my swimming trunk," said the rat.

Friends, it is infinitely easier for an elephant to get into the trunks of a rat than for God with His plans to fit into the heads and designs of our "theologian experts".

And this thing called "vocation" was from the beginning the idea and plan of God, and comes from God. Accordingly, this "calling" and how it must be responded to should depend primarily upon His plan and pleasure, and not upon the convenience and caprices of man.

Christ or the "Experts"

That man does not have control over the future need not worry him; after all God, who has called him, is the master of the future as well as of the present, and is not subject to any human limitations. Moreover, what the individual cannot see cannot go unnoticed by God. With His call is the guarantee of the covenant: "And behold I am with you every day until the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

And Jesus has assured his followers that "things that are impossible for men, are possible for God." Certainly, Christ does not call his disciples to impossible commitments. Besides,

with His call He also gives through His grace the sufficient spiritual strength. As St. Paul testifies: "In him who is the source of my strength I have strength for everything" (Phil. 4:13). Also, in spite of the obvious weaknesses of the apostles, Christ just the same called them, and amazingly all of them—with the only exception of Judas who trusted more the word of his economic experts—witnessed with their lives to their Master.

Similarly, if this business of God's call and man's response is God's and its realization depends more on God than on human experts, then one's life commitment cannot be one's coffin or death-trap. And by way of analogy, the "identity crisis" mentioned earlier in our story is no more than what it all boils down to — a "crisis of faith" — which may have been an authentic faith and trust in the Word of God until some "theologian expert" did tamper with it, spoiled it and brought crisis to the faith of the man and finally death.

And to the theologian with his "theology of abandonment" for the priesthood which makes the "obligation of fidelity" modifiable and subject to the ups and downs of man and his life-situation, our Lord had this stern warning: "Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

Finally, that witnessing to one's life commitment through the vows be made optional is indeed a gross misunderstanding of the meaning and motivation behind the "apostolic commitment" of a Catholic priest or religious to the person of Christ for life as differentiated from a "job or ministerial commitment" of a married non-Catholic minister in the service of his church. And this we shall discuss in a short while.

Irrevocability of the Call of Commitment

Jesus defended voluntary celibacy that is assumed for the Kingdom when He said: "... there are different reasons why men cannot marry; some, because they were born that way; others, because they have been deliberately made so; and others do not marry for the sake of the Kingdom. Let them who can accept this teaching do so" (Matt. 19:12).

In the same way, when the Master called the rich young man to follow him, he clearly presented the condition: "Go, sell

all that you possess, give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven" (Mark 10:21). The selling and giving up of the goods signifies a definite detachment required of the young man by Jesus.

Apostolic Commitment

Shortly before the renowned Jesuit theologian psychologist, Fr. Francis Parisi died in July 1978, I had invited him to come to my diocese to help us priests and bishop make our annual retreat. (Some of his confreres said that he died because of that retreat. We must have been the most difficult "psycho cases" he had ever had in his life.)

Anyway, this saintly priest-psychologist, who has spent practically all his priestly life helping out seminarians, sisters, priests and bishops understand and live their life commitment to their sacred calling spoke to us on the real meaning and motivation of some three kinds of commitment, namely "Spare-time Commitment, Job Commitment and Life Commitment".

1) Spare-time Commitment. A married man, he said, who is committed for life to his family which he supports through his job, may assume one or another work in his parish on a part-time basis. His, therefore, is a part-time commitment to the apostolate.

2) Job Commitment. A sacristan, a married deacon or a married protestant minister earns and supports his family through the services he commits himself to render to his parish or church. His is but a ministerial or job commitment.

3) Life Commitment. The Apostles, however, once called by Jesus "left everything and followed him" (Lk 5:11), dedicating their entire life following and witnessing to Christ, the Good Shepherd "who lays down his life for his sheep" (Jn. 10:11). Theirs was a life-time commitment primarily and *personally* to Christ.

Christ's personal choosing and calling of his first apostles is what Father Parisi called "apostolic vocation" which equally demands "apostolic commitment" — which means an "irrevocable life commitment". In other words, Christ demands of his followers a total gift of person. He wishes that the person

abandon *everything* to follow him. And Peter expressed this exigency of the call very clearly when he told Jesus: "Behold, we have left everything, and we have followed you. What can we expect from it?"

Jesus said to them: "I give you my solemn word... everyone who has given up home, brothers *or* sisters, father or mother, wife or children or property for my sake will receive a hundredfold and inherit everlasting life" (Matt. 19:27-28). Accordingly, Christ calls a person to a commitment to Him personally in Faith (Jn 6:8) — "... everyone who has given up home, brothers and sisters, etc. for my sake" — and not to specific ministerial functions (full-time or part time) or to a status, or even less to the privileges that such status might afford.

Hence, the motivation of a seminarian or religious, whose vocation is to commit himself for life to the person of Christ, should not be as if what is expected of him is a job or status commitment (to be a school administrator, a canonist-lawyer, a diocesan economist with an MBA, or to be a monsignor or bishop); otherwise, said Father Parisi, one might develop the mentality or attitudes of becoming professionals with degrees, or merely church functionary, ambitioning a successful self-fulfilling priestly career.

But if denied the realization of these, he might end up nursing a wounded ego and later become another victim of the psychological crisis called "identity crisis" — a patented "crisis epidemic" by seminarians, religious and clergy seeking its cure perhaps in "sabbatical leaves". But why all this?

My dear Brothers in Christ, when the Master calls you, He then wishes that you respond by committing yourselves freely, totally and irrevocably to *His person* for life.

If then your answer is "Yes", then His next wish is to be able to move in and live in you. But then, is there a room for Him in the inn that is you?

If not much as yet, then He allows everyone of us — yes, you — to hold and put yourself right in your hands so to speak, scraping off and emptying it of whatever might be crowding Him out: material, sensual, worldly attachments and ambitions — just like those of His first disciples.

Only when you have honestly allowed Him an exclusive room in you that Christ comes in and accepts your commitment that now is total and for life.

It was only after the apostles had become less selfish, less worldly and no longer ambitious but totally committed to Christ towards the end of His earthly mission that He gave them a job order: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

Brothers, like the dead-living man of the story, we have got to lay down over again, and die over and over again — if we wish to commit ourselves freely and totally to Christ; but unlike the man, we will surely live as a buried seed — not on the strength of the word of "human experts", but on the life-giving Word of Christ.

My dear Graduates, my prayerful congratulations. And may the Lord call and choose you all to the Priesthood. Thank you.

HOMILETICAL NOTES

By

Fr. Angel Aparicio, O.P.

November 1, Solemnity of All Saints

Readings:

Apoc. 7:2-U. 9-1U: I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of every nation, race, tribe and language.

1 Jn. 3:1-3: We shall see God as he really is.

Mt. 5:1-12a: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Apoc. 7:2-k. 9-1W- The First Reading describes the number of the saints. How many? "A hundred and forty four thousand" (twelve is a sacred number, the number of the tribes of Israel; this symbolic number given by the author of Apocalypse represents the whole people of Israel) plus "a huge number, impossible to count from every nation, race, tribe and language."

1 Jn. 3:1-3: St. John, in the Second Reading, describes the true Christian as one who is not merely "called" Son of God but one who is really Son of God. The Christian bears the same title as Jesus Christ Himself because he inherits what God has in store for us. Jesus already enjoys this inheritance and those who died in Him share also in it. This will also be the destiny of all of us if we follow their example.

Mt. 5:1-12a: The Beatitudes are narrated in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. A comparison even if superficial shows the differences of approach and the intention of each evangelist:

- Matthew's Beatitudes are presented in a catechetical and moralizing way; they are a formula for the good life, and they promise heavenly rewards.

-Luke has in mind a more socializing and eschatological view; he speaks of material conditions in this life to be reversed in the next world.

-Luke says "Poor", "hungry", "persecuted", "those who weep"...

Matthew concretizes "Poor in spirit", "hunger of what is right", "Pure in heart" ...

-Matthew has eight beatitudes, Luke four, and four maledictions ...

-Both are a prophetic proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Not all exegetes coincide in their understanding of the Beatitudes as "conditions" for entry into the Kingdom of God. But these must be interpreted more as moral conditions than simple sociological conditions because the mere fact of being poor or hungry does not entitle one to enter into the Kingdom of God; the mere fact of being rich does not exclude one from the Kingdom. "Poor", "poverty", in the Bible are words used to describe not only destitution of material goods, but the humility and trust in God of a helpless man.



Everyday the Church celebrates the feast of a particular saint: one day is the feast of the Blessed Virgin, another the commemoration of one of the Apostles, or martyrs or any other saint who excelled at any of the Christian virtues:

- St. Francis of Assisi is admired for the simplicity of his life and his total renunciation of all kinds of possessions.
- St. Dominic and St. Ignatius of Loyola for their commitment to the Church.
- St. Thomas Aquinas for his complete dedication to the study of truth.
- St. Monica, a model of virtuous mother, for her prayers for the conversion of her son.
- St. John Vianney, a parish priest in a small town, for his love for his parishioners.
- St. Martin de Porres, St. Theresa of Avila.
Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz ...

The list goes on through the whole year; and every day we commemorate one of these extraordinary individuals whom the Church presents as our models.

But, one might rightly say, the year has only 365 days, and even if we could remember two or three or five or more saints every day, the list would be limited. Yet, to the question — How many saints are there in heaven? one could answer with the words of God to Abraham: "As numerous as the stars in heaven". Or as today's First Reading from Apocalypse says: "A huge crowd which no one could count, from every nation, race, people and tongue".

"Thanks God," we could exclaim with joy! "Thanks God," we should repeat today one and a thousand times, because the Church gives us the occasion to rejoice in that marvelous miracle of uncountable numbers of fellow human beings enjoying already the presence of God.

If so many people were able to make it to sanctity, then it must be very easy to get there, we could further question. When Jesus was asked this same question, he answered that it is not so easy as we think, "the gate is narrow, he says — the way is taxing; we have to strive hard and persevere to reach the goal.

What to do to become a saint? It looks very simple: To apply for it, it is not necessary to produce our biodata, no special qualities are required, or a particular grade or age, or appearance; it is an open competition, open to everybody: old, young, man, woman, Filipino, Japanese...

In today's Gospel Jesus presents his program for sanctity: the Beatitudes are our guideposts to heaven (the word "blessed" or "happy" which is used in each of the Beatitudes is a very special word. The Greek word for blessed is *makarios* which is also used to name the saints; for instance, they say "Makarios Luke", i.e., St. Luke; "Makarios Peter", i.e., St. Peter...). Jesus calls blessed, saints, happy, the poor in spirit, those who puffer for His sake, those who weep, those who love justice, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers, the persecuted because of justice. This is the program, easy to understand but difficult to put into practice.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Riches easily make one proud; the successful man soon forgets that everything comes from God. The poor, by contrast, easily keep compassion, they remember their dependence and so are blessed. (The Hebrew word which stands for "poor" would mean more accurately: "the man who, because he has no earthly resources whatever, puts his whole trust in God").

"Poor in spirit": Poverty, of itself, is not a good thing, it is not a blessing. We must be careful to think that the first point in the program does not call actual material poverty a good thing. Jesus would never have called blessed a state where people live in slums and have not enough to eat, and whose health deteriorates because conditions are all against it. "That kind of poverty is what the Christian Gospel aims to remove" — says William Barclay. The poverty which is blessed is the poverty of spirit, when a man realizes his own utter lack of resources to meet life, and finds his help and strength in God.

This is the poverty practiced by Jesus. Many have followed on his steps; we call them blessed, happy: these are the saints.

Blessed are the sorrowing for they shall be comforted.

These saints are those who accept their own sorrow with resolve and make it an obligation.' These are the men and women who voluntarily share their neighbor's pain. They could have avoided it, they could have said, "It is not my business, I have enough troubles of my own".

But like Jesus, they close to the sorrows of their fellow human beings; we call them blessed, happy: these are the saints.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

Meek is the opposite of aggressive. The meek are not harsh, not self-assertive, not covetous, not trampling by brute force. Others claim their rights, but the meek are concerned about their duties. Others seek revenge ... the meek, forgive*ness.

Christ was meek and humble at heart. Many men and women have imitated him in their simple lives; we call them blessed, happy: these are the saints.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful for they shall

obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Sons of God.

There are people who are always in trouble. Wherever they are, they either get involved in quarrels, or cause quarrels between others.

The work of peace is a task of reconciliation between groups and men at odds. It knows that there can be no real peace until men are reconciled with God. It abstains from proba- tion, moves with gentleness and pleads in love.

Peacemaking is also a preventive task. If poverty embitters the masses of men and thus tends to war, the peacemaker enlists "to banish unmerited poverty. If insecurity or maladjustment in toil makes a man fractious in his home, the peacemaker strikes at the root of the problem. At times he thus seems to be a troublemaker. Actually, he is curing the disease instead of merely solving the symptoms. His fundamental work is always to reconcile men with God, for as long as men are at odds with God they are at odds with themselves and with their neighbor.

Christ in His cross reconciled us with God and with one another; many men after Him have struggled to bring peace among men; we call them blessed, happy: these are the saints.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

We are not living in a time of martyrs. But persecution awaits the honest politician, the tradesman who will not compromise for profits, the teacher who cleaves to truth...

Jesus was persecuted, he was put to death. He said that the disciple is not above his master; but to all those who had been persecuted or are being persecuted for his sake he promised happiness, the Kingdom of God; we call them blessed, happy: these are the saints.

The beatitudes reveal the secret of happiness, they are a program for sanctity. The greatness of the beatitudes is that they are not wistful glimpses of some future beauty; they are not even golden promises of some distant glory; they are triumphant shouts of bliss for a permanent joy that nothing in the world can ever take away.

Today we rejoice with those who thought that this program was possible to accomplish. We think we cannot imitate them, but in fact we are very close to the saints. They were men and women, old and young, rich and poor... frail like us. They walked the same paths, they had the same problems, they suffered the same temptations. What makes them saints is that they view all these with the eyes of God. Many of them we never knew, but a few have been close, very close to us: our mother? one of our neighbors?...

In the feast of all the saints we rejoice because it is possible to become a saint, because some of our loved ones are already saints. May their lives be an example for us to follow and may their intercession help us in our efforts.

November 6, 32nd Sunday

Readings:

2 Mac. 7:1-2.9-14: *The King of the world will receive us into life eternal at the resurrection.*

2 Thess. 2:16-3:5: *May the Lord strengthen you in everything good that you do or say.*

Lk. 20:27-38 (or 20:27.34-38): *He is not a God of the dead, but of the living.*

The First Reading and the Gospel deal with the theme of the resurrection of the dead. The response to the responsorial psalm repeats the same idea.

2 Mac. 7:1-2.9-14: This passage is part of the story of the martyrdom of the seven brothers. This is the first time that in the Old Testament faith in the resurrection is clearly stated: the martyrs, by virtue of the creative power of God, will be raised to a new life; their torturers may snatch their lives but God who is the giver of life will restore it to them in a new form. This was the hope of these seven martyrs and their mother in the midst of their tribulation.

2 Thess. 2:16-3:5: After talking about the Parousia, and refuting the false ideas that some members of the community of Thessalonica had about it, Paul draws out some of the positive consequences of his announcement:

— God will comfort and strengthen His faithful.

- Christians may be tempted but not beyond their powers of resistance.

Lk. 20:27-38: The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. They came to Jesus with a case that would put him to ridicule should he not accept their reasoning. Jesus exposed their ignorance by making use of their own arguments:

- *Their ignorance of the Scriptures:* they do not know the Scriptures to which they are referring ("Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is God, not of the dead but of the living; for to him all men are in fact alive").
- *Their ignorance of God Almighty:* they do not know the power of God who being the creator is capable of creating a life different from earthly life. Marriage is an earthly institution necessary for life here; the children of God will enter a new life in which marriage is not necessary.

There are rabbinic arguments whose force we cannot appreciate, because we reason in a way different from that used by the people of the time of Jesus. But there are two realities affirmed here:

- That there is life after death.
- That its quality is different from life on earth.

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Just a few days ago, we all have visited the cemeteries to "pray" for our beloved departed. What is the meaning of that? A homage? A remembrance? A tradition?

The commemoration of the dead brings back to our memories some of the most perplexing questions: what is the meaning of life, suffering, evil, death...?

The individual looks for clues that will help him to solve this personal problem that becomes more urgent as he grows up in age. Philosophy searches for a solution to this riddle of human life. Religions also have tried to solve this problem.

The constitution *Gaudium et Spes* formulates this question thus: "It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt. Man is tormented not only by pain and by the gradual breaking-up of his body but also, and even more, by the dread of forever ceasing to be. But a deep instinct leads him rightly to shrink from and to reject the utter ruin and total loss of his personality. Because he bears in himself the seed of eternity, which cannot be reduced to mere matter, he rebels against death."

The answers are not uniform:

- *The materialists*, like the Sadducees of today's Gospel, think that everything starts and ends here on earth. Human life, they say, has neither before nor after, just the present moment. Consequently, since this life is all they have they will try to get from it as much as possible.
- For *the optimists*, all problems that beset human life will one day be solved; medicine will be able to eradicate suffering, psychology will do away with all the human dilemmas, sociology will find a balance that will level the present differences. Man will one day manipulate his own life. He will not anymore be at the mercy of the external elements.

And yet, as the *Gaudium et Spes* constitution says- "All the aids made available by technology, however useful they may be, cannot set his anguished mind at rest. They may prolong his life span; but this does not satisfy his heartfelt longing, one that can never be stifled, for a life to come."

In other words, human attempts fail to provide a satisfactory answer for the longings and anxieties in the heart of man. Faith comes to our help: "While all imagination surrenders faced with this problem, the Church, instructed by Divine Revelation, declares that man has been created by God for a happy future." This was the belief of the martyrs. This conviction gave them courage to face the torments: "It is my choice to die at the hands of men with the God-given hope of being restored to life by him" — exclaimed the fourth of the brothers while he was maltreated.

God takes seriously man and his life. If he has given him life it is not to take it away, as when one gives a toy to a child to play with. God has given to man a beginning and he wants that he will bring it to maturity, to perfection, to happiness. The destination of man is "beyond the miseries of this life". Human life cannot be satisfied with only the things of this world.

The Sadducees did not believe this; they even ridiculed the possibility of life after death. Life had treated them quite well, and so they imagined that if there would be another life it should be similar to this one. Jesus suggested to them that things might be different, that actually things are different.

Death entered the world through sin. It has not been a mistake of the architect who miscalculated his work. Rather, the workers did not observe the plans of the architect. But the situation is not hopeless, it can still be corrected. In the person of Jesus Himself God has given us a guarantee. "For God has called man, and still calls him, to cleave with all his being to Him in sharing forever a life that is divine and free from all decay. ^Christ won this victory when He rose to life; for by His death, He freed man from death."

The Holy Mass is a token of that life. The Mass teaches us how to love God and to love one another. We are there in the presence of God. One Sunday after another accustoms us to be *in* the presence of God. Life after death is just that, living in ~~the~~ presence of God in harmony with one another.

November 13, 33rd Sunday

Readings:

Med. 3:19^20a: For you the sum, of righteousness will shine out.

2 Thess. 3:7-12: Do not let owwymw have food if he refuses to work.

Lk. 21:5-19: Wcdch out; don't be fooled, the end is near.

The end of this world and the beginning of a new one: *tliis* is the theme common to the First Reading, the responsorial psalm and the Gospel. The Second Reading shows the attitude of people who think that the present situation is going to change *uaA* prefer to wait and see what *win* happen than to put themselves to work to make things better.

Mai. 8:19-2&a: Malachi is the last prophet of the OT. The last section of the Book (in which our passage is found) takes up the topic with which the book started, viz., that Yahweh still loves Israel, notwithstanding the fact that appearances seem to tell against a belief in such *Jove*; furthermore it assures the

pious that their labors have not been in vain; for in the day of Yahweh, which is near at hand, Israel's saints will experience the protection of Yahweh's fatherly love, whereas the wicked will perish.

Was there any ground for encouragement or hope? Our prophet makes no effort to demonstrate the validity of his hope for the future or to point out signs of the coming of the Kingdom. Faith comes not by reason. He contents himself with the ardent affirmation and reiteration of his own firm conviction.

2 *Tkess.* 3:7-12: This section contains the solution to a problem in some of the early Christian communities: "the case of the idlers".

Word has come to Paul orally and by letter to the effect that an idle minority are begging and troublesome, some of them refusing to obey his orders. The case having become acute, Paul orders the majority to take severe measures against the idle minority. Insisting, however, that the delinquents are brothers, and surmising that the majority have not always dealt tactfully with the excited idlers, Paul is careful to explain just why he gives the command, and to have it understood that the discipline, being intended for reformation, is to be administered in love. In fact, his attitude throughout is not that of an apostle exercising his apostolic authority but that of *ti* brother appealing to brothers in the name of a common authority, the liofa J&sus Christ. Paul believes that his word will suffice; but he contemplates the probability that a few of the idlers will persist in their stubbornness:

- First he reminds them of himself as an example of industry, how he worked to support himself when he was with them, so as to free them from any financial "burden on his account. He also reminds them of the fact that though he, as an apostle, was entitled to a stipend, he waived that right in order that his self-sacrificing labour might serve as an example to them of industry.
- Next he justifies the present command by stating that the instruction to the idlers is but a repetition of what he had repeatedly commanded when he was with them.

Lk. 21:5-19: Jews still, go to the wailing-wall in Jerusalem to pray. That is what is left of the magnificent temple built by Herod the Great.

When Luke wrote his Gospel (c. 70-80) the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem had already taken place. This passage is what the experts call a "prophecy ex eventu", that is, Luke is projecting the situation of his own time into the life of Jesus. (Of course, Jesus foresaw the eventual ruin of the Jewish people and its holy city Jerusalem).

In the world, at that time, there was much unrest: earthquakes, wars, famines, the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius ... Many people thought all these things were signs of an impending catastrophe, the end of the world. Some Christians (for instance those of whom St. Paul talks in his letter to the Thessalonians) wrongly thought that the second coming of the Lord was near. St. Luke in his Gospel is telling the Christians to endure whatever difficulties may come with a spirit of fortitude, and to think of the Lord Himself who faced grave trials with a strong spirit and hope.



There has always been much useless argument and speculation about the end of the world. When it will be and what it will be like. Jesus told those who asked him this same question to open their eyes and see the true meaning of things; the world is an open book. He says, for instance, "From the fig-tree learn its lesson, as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near". The fig-tree in Palestine was the most common of the fruit trees. And yet men could read the seasons in it. Jesus is challenging us to also read the meaning of our lives in our most common experiences :

- Wickedness always brings strife, and strife carried to the point of despair can bring the end of an age.
- Greed has brought hatred and robbery.
- Envy brought Cain to kill his brother.
- Lust moved David to commit the most abominable crime of cowardice.

There are penalties for those who are stubbornly blind to Jesus' warnings. But the image of the fig-tree is not a tragic one. It is an image of spring. Surely Jesus did not choose the example of a springtime tree without intent to bring us hope.

On the other hand, the images used in today's Gospel to portray the end of the world are descriptions of things that

happen at all times; rumors, dramatic political shiftings, rising of fanatic leaders claiming to have the solution to all problems, wars and revolutions... Indeed, the long record of mankind is the record of its blindness, casting about forever like a man groping in the dark, laying hold now of philosophy, now of law, today of science, tomorrow of the machine, fumbling up and down, whispering, "Are you he that should come, or should we look for another?"

The apostles and the early Christians read in the death of Jesus the end of the world: it was accompanied by earthquakes; darkness, breaking of the veil of the Temple, abandonment of his closest friends who lost their faith. And, in fact, the death of Jesus Christ brought about the end of a world, of the old world, and the beginning of a new one. It would be ridiculous and at the same time unchristian to make calculations and try to put a date for the end of the world. In this regard, we have to remind ourselves of what happened in the recent past to those people who took refuge at Tagaytay thinking the end of the world was about to take place. Everybody laughs at them now.

We are already in a new world, the old has passed away. This is a time full of joy and expectation. God has already sent his angels (*angel* means messenger, missionary; we all can be God's angels) to gather his elect from the four corners of the earth. The Christian knows by faith that God is a factor in the world, today and tomorrow; that He will act redeemingly in human history; that the conquest of evil comes not of our wit and muscle only, but of God's continuing sovereignty.

November 20, Feast of Christ the King

Readings:

2 Sam. 5:1-3: "You shall be the leader of Israel."

Col. 1:12-20: "He made peace by his death on the cross."

Lk. 23:35-48: Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

The three readings coincide in the central theme of today's feast: the kingship of Christ. The first, taken from the second book of Samuel, presents the anointing of David as king of Israel. David will become the symbol of kings. He was an extraordinary man: shepherd boy, warrior-hero, resourceful lover, bandit, chieftain, poet, king, sinner, penitent, indulgent

father, faithful friend, founder of an eternal dynasty! Down through the centuries he remained *the* king of Israel, the measure of all subsequent kings. Whenever things went wrong for the people of God they would look backwards to King David with nostalgia.

In the second reading, the apostle Paul paraphrases a liturgical hymn (probably belonging to the early Christian Liturgy of baptism). It contains two strophes: the first (vv. 15-17) state the kingship of Christ over the whole creation. The second (v. 18) expresses His sovereignty over the new creation or redeemed world. This kingship is now realized through the Church of which Christ is the Head. Christ is King, then, not only by right of pre-eminence but also because He has received "the power, the honor and the glory" in His resurrection.

The Gospel insists upon the same thing. Christ is King. But it also shows how different this king is from the kings of earth: He is crowned with a crown of thorns; His throne is the cross. It was with a set and deliberate purposes that the authorities crucified Jesus between two known criminals. It was deliberately so staged to humiliate Jesus in front of the crowd and to rank him with robbers. His disciples abandoned Him; the authorities mocked Him. Only one of those who were crucified with Him acknowledged his kingship and asked Jesus: "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom."



Today we celebrate the feast of Christ the King: we proclaim Christ King of the world. We accept Christ as Our King.

One of the accusations wrought against Jesus at His interrogation before Pilate was that He claimed to be King. That is why Pilate asked Him: "Are you the King of the Jews?" And Jesus answered: "My Kingdom does not belong to this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. No, my Kingdom does not belong here! Nevertheless, I am a King. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose."

Thus, the first conclusion is: the Kingdom of Jesus is not a, visible kingdom that can be pointed out in this or that place. And if the Kingdom is not visible, the kingship is also not visible; it is spiritual.

The ideas of Jesus are clear, but the people has not understood so. In fact, almost everybody were misled in their appreciation of the true Kingship of Jesus Christ.

- When the Magi came to Bethlehem to pay tribute to the "born king of the Jews", — the Bible tells us — King Herod was disturbed upon hearing it because he was afraid that somebody was born who would be a menace to his own kingship. This, says the Gospel of Luke, is reason why he ordered the massacre of the Innocents.
- The Jews of the times of Jesus were oppressed by a foreign power, and were expecting a kind of king who would liberate them, of that oppression. When they read the Scriptures every Sabbath in their celebrations, this hope was enkindled by the fact that the prophets of old had predicted also that liberation. It would be, they imagined, like in the times of the great King David. The new David, the new king would first crush all the enemies ... When Jesus came, claiming to be the true descendant of David, the king expected since long time ago, the Jews felt disappointed, and more than that, they grew angry at Jesus, angry to the point of killing Him.

There are many instances in the Gospels that reflect this contrast between Christ's Kingship as conceived by Jesus and our ways of conceiving it. On one occasion, John the Baptist who had heard about Jesus, when he was in prison, sent some of his friends to ask Him: "Are you the king we are waiting for?" And as an answer, Jesus told them: "Go back and tell John what you hear and see: the Wind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer are relieved, the dead are brought back to life, and the good news is preached to the poor. How happy is the man who does not lose faith in me."

The true nature of Jesus' kingship had been misunderstood. Jesus was born a King, and died a King. But His cradle was not a golden one, as is the case with the kings of earth, but a manger: and His first visitors were not the ambassadors of the nations but a group of poor shepherds. And His mansion was not a palace. On one occasion after He finished one of His sermons, two enthusiastic young men approached Him and asked "Sir, where do you live?" and Jesus answered them; "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head". As if saying: Think twice. Following me is not very promising from a human point of view.

And His appearance was not very kingly either: They put a scarlet robe on Him; then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on His head, and put a stick in His right hand; then they knelt before Him and made fun of Him "Long live the king of the Jews", they shouted.

And if he is a King, He must have a kingdom, although St. Paul, in the second reading, says that this kingdom has no territory. In the New Testament there are many illustrations of the kingdom of Jesus or the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of God — he said on one occasion — is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown, it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.

Jesus is saying: The arrival of the Kingdom is imperceptible. It is not easily seen, as it is with the mustard seed. Many will miss it due to its smallness. But those who do not fail to notice it and take the necessary steps to enter it will feel free, loved, forgiven ... the kingdom will expand in their hearts until, like the big tree, it can receive many people in it...

The kingdom Christ brought to man is a kingdom of love, justice, holiness, grace, peace, truth, life. The whole of Christ's teachings consist in that: explaining what he means when he says He is a king, and inviting men to pay alliance to Him as the real ruler of that kingdom:

- In the Sermon on the Mount, in His instructions to His disciples, and in all His addresses and sermons to the people, Christ speaks only of the things that divide men and prevent them from being at peace with God and with each other, thwarting their entrance into the Kingdom of God.
- All the parables are a description of what the kingdom of God is, and an explanation that only by removing all obstacles that prevent us from loving God or our fellow men, can we enter it.
- All the commandments are reduced to this: love and peace with God and with our neighbor. With the fulfillment of this commandment the life of men will be such as every human heart seeks and desires: all men will be brothers; every one will be at peace with others under the kingship of Christ.

Men will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Then the kingdom of God will have come. Then the proclamation of Christ as king will be true not only in itself, but also for all of us; then we will exclaim with the prophet:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind: to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people."

We are all willing and eager to see all these become a reality in our lives. It would be possible if those who want to run first and become rulers of others would do it in the same way that Jesus did.

We disregard the lowly appearance of the kingdom of God; we are scandalized by the claim of Jesus of ruling from the cross and, as the apostles, we feel compelled to escape, or as the others we even feel tempted to mock Jesus. Only those who will have the attitude of the good thief will be able to see in Jesus crucified a true King. They will hear the same beautiful words "I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise."

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ANNOUNCEMENT

To Men Formators of the Philippines

The Tenth Annual Convention of Men Formators sponsored by the National Coordinating Committee of Formators (NCCF) will be held on October 24-28, 1983. Venue of the convention is at Our Lady of Good Counsel Cursillo House, F. Torres St., Davao City.

The convention has as its general theme "A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to the Formative Process." It aims to provide formators the knowledge and application of the different possible ways of deepening one's relationship with God through the different dimensions of human personality structure. Among the resource speakers lined up for the forthcoming convention are: Most Rev. Patricio Alo, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Davao, Most Rev. Angel Lagdameo, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Cebu, Rev. Fr. Peter Arguillas, MSC, and Rev. Fr. Benny Calpotura and his Team.

The NCCF Board is composed of the following: Bro. Domingo Lanuncia, OFM Gap—Brotherhood, Fr. Val Daigdigan — College, Fr. Bill Abbott, SJ — College, Fr. Bernardine Leones, OFM — Novitiate, Msgr. Ramon Arguelles — Theology (vice-chairman), and Fr. Vicente Cajilig, OP — Theology (chairman).

Preparations for accommodations are being undertaken by a special committee composed of priests-formators in Davao City. It is therefore requested that formators who want to attend the convention but have not yet signified their intention communicate before the 10th of October to:

FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

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