

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CRISIS:
ITS IMPACT ON
CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

Paul Zwaenepoel, C.I.C.M.

**POLICIES AND OPERATIONS
OF NON-PROFIT PRIVATE
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

Atty. Sabino Padilla Jr.

**THE CHURCH WANTS
MINOR SEMINARIES TODAY**

Jesus Ma. Cavanna, C.M.

THE CODE & THE COUNCIL

Arch. Jerome Hamer, O.P.

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF THE CBCP ON THE NEW CODE
OF CANON LAW**

Bruno Torpigliani, D.D.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

- 2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CRISIS: ITS IMPACT
ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION

FEATURES

- Atty. Sabino Padilla Jr. 5 POLICIES AND OPERATIONS OF NON-PROFIT
PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
- Rogelio Nacorda 10 THE CASE OF TAX INCENTIVES FOR EDUCA-
TIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES
- Synod of Bishops 14 MESSAGE ON RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE
IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH
- 17 INTERVENTIONS OF ASIAN BISHOPS IN THE
1983 SYNOD
- Antonio Mabutas, D.D. 27 PASTORAL APPROACHES IN THE MINISTRY
OF RECONCILIATION
- Jesus Ma. Cavanna, C.M. 31 THE CHURCH WANTS MINOR SEMINARIES
TODAY

DOCUMENTATION

- Sacred Congregation 37 INSTRUCTION ON LITURGICAL FORMATION
for Catholic Education IN SEMINARIES
- Augustinus Card. Casaroli 63 ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF OZAMIS
65 APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. TEODORO BUHAIN
66 APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. FRANCISCO
SAN DIEGO
- Sac. Cong. pro 67 RESPONSA AD PROPOSITA DUBIA
Doctrina Fidei

CANON LAW

- Bruno Torpigliani, D.D. 70 EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CBCP
ON THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW
- Arch. Jerome Hamer, O.P. 73 THE CODE AND THE COUNCIL

CASES AND INQUIRIES

- Excelso Garcia, O.P. 75 A PERPLEXED MARRIAGE CASE

SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

- Pablo Fernandez, O.P. 78 SEBASTIANA DE SANTA MARIA

HISTORY

- 86 DOMINICAN TOWNS IN PANGASINAN

HOMILETICS

- Benito Vargas, O.P. 96 HOMILETICAL GUIDELINES
(January-March 1984)
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EDITORIAL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CRISIS: ITS IMPACT ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The country is in the worst economic crisis today. In a matter of nine months, there have been two sets of devaluations, or what the government euphemistically calls "peso readjustment". These have brought down the value of the peso by 19.9% in June and by another 27.3% in October. Needless to say, these wrought havoc on the prices as the rate of inflation climbed up to two-digit figures.

For over a decade now the government has promised assistance and support to the private sector of education which includes the Catholic institutions of learning. But ever since, this sector of private education has been beset by financial problems for which no solution is in sight and which affect administrators, teachers and students in the Catholic schools, colleges and universities.

Inflation equally affects school supplies, equipment and the like as it affects the basic consumers' items. The resultant rise in the cost of operations in order to comply with the government mandated minimum wage and living allowance has given a bleak future to Catholic education. Expenses have gone up at a faster pace than the possible 15% limit increase of fees in our private educational system. Administrators of Catholic schools find it difficult to balance on one hand the necessary wage increment for a decent salary of teachers and keep on the other hand the tuition fees within the reach of the masses who like to attend Catholic education.

The country's 402,763 teachers, like the rest of the consumers have been adversely affected. But even before the cur-

rent economic crisis, teachers have already occupied a low rank in the economic strata. In a survey conducted by the Philippine Normal College Research Center in 1981 on the income and expenditure pattern of six representative faculty members (from Assistant Instructor I to Assistant Professor V), it was found that all incurred dissavings. Yet a close look at the expenditure items shows that the composition are basic necessities. In another survey in 1982 by the Teacher Center of the Philippines on the salaries of private school teachers, the monthly salary of full-time starting instructor at tertiary level was reported to be within the range of ₱518 to ₱1,512.

With most of the teachers acting as breadwinners, it is no small wonder how their families can survive given the meager income. The Center for Research and Communications has disclosed a ₱1,924 per month poverty line in 1982. This has been updated by the Philippine Normal College Research Center to be ₱2,381 per month for a family of six in 1983. Claims that majority of the teachers are living below the poverty line are therefore difficult to dismiss.

The increasing restiveness of the teachers as seen by the series of mass actions to dramatize their demand for decent wages has caught the nation's attention. Despite government threats that substitute teachers will be enlisted, public school teachers in Cebu pushed through with their strike while their counterparts in Manila marched to the streets this week. Finally teachers have debunked the myth that they are the meek and uncomplaining public servants, an image they have long projected. They have now gained the strength to voice out their disappointment about their miserable plight.

Catholic education in general is equally subject to the fact that faculty members do not get the salary they deserve. Yet education is highly revered in Philippine society. As such, teachers are expected to fulfill varied roles as educators, as substituted parental authority and community leaders. Theirs is

the noble task of molding the minds of our youth, a noble profession becoming increasingly undignified by economic conditions. Our leaders should wake up to the reality that teachers can render better service if they are reasonably happy, secure and are adequately paid than when they are saddled with financial worries. Unless they are given decent wages, we can expect deterioration in the quality of teachers as they busy themselves moonlighting and taking odd jobs selling insurance, memorial plans or PX goods instead of enhancing their skills.

Lastly, the press reported a 40% decline in student enrollment for the second semester of this schoolyear at college level. This is largely due to the fact that higher education becomes a luxury for which the average student cannot pay anymore. At elementary level the government spends roughly P700 per year per public elementary student and only P15.96 per student in the private sector. Student fees have sometimes gone up in the Catholic school system to an extent that the system cannot cater any more within the reach of the middle and low income group. This would really frustrate the aim of Catholic education to reach out to everybody as Catholic means universal.

PAUL ZWAENEPOL, CICM

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RANILO TRILLANA

BERNARDITO AUZA

CHRISTINE PAGUIO

FEATURES

Policies and Operations of Non-profit Private Universities and Colleges

By Atty. Sabino Padilla, Jr.

The term "non-profit private university or college" or "non-profit corporation" is a common term in tax law. The word "non-profit" means, not that the institution does not earn a profit or net income, but that any profit or net income it may make does not inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual. In other words, a "non-profit" institution may have net income without destroying its character as such, in the same manner that an institution organized for profit does not cease to be such simply because it fails to make a profit. Indeed, we may go farther and say that a "non-profit" institution should make a profit to maintain its existence. As Justice Roberto Concepcion very aptly observed in *Jesus Sacred Heart College v. Collector of Internal Revenue* (95 Phil. 16, at 21) :

"Needless to say, every responsible organization must be so run as to, at least insure its existence, by operating within the limits of its own resources, especially its regular income. In other words, it should always strive, whenever possible, to have a surplus."

A "non-profit private university or college" is invariably organized as a non-stock corporation whose articles of incorporation or bylaws provide that its net income shall not inure to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual. This class of educational corporation is to be distinguished from the university or college organized as a stock corporation, the stockholders of which have a right to, and indeed expect to receive, the net income or profits of the institution.

Since both the non-profit educational institution and the educational institution organized for profit may have net income from its operations, the question that comes to mind is whether both are to be accorded the same tax treatment.

Before Martial Law, there was a fundamental difference in the tax treatment of non-profit educational institutions vis-a-vis

6 BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

the educational institution organized for profit. Sec. 27(e) of the National Internal Revenue Code then exempted from income tax any —

“(e) Corporation or association organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, athletic, cultural or educational purposes, or for the rehabilitation of veterans no part of the net income of which inures to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual...”

On the other hand, by clear implication, an educational institution organized as a stock corporation was subject to income tax just like any other business corporation.

After the series of amendments of the Tax Code under Martial Law, that basic difference in tax treatment of non-profit educational institutions and educational institutions organized for profit was obliterated. The corporation or association organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes, no part of the net income of which inures to the benefit of any private stockholder or individual is no longer to be found in sec. 27(e) of the Tax Code. Instead, sec. 24(a) of the Tax Code now provides that —

“Private educational institutions, whether stock or nonstock, shall pay a tax of ten percent of their taxable net income from the operation of the school, related school activities, and on their passive investment income consisting of interests, dividends, royalties, and the like: Provided, however, that dividends received by a private educational institution, whether stock or non-stock, from a domestic corporation shall be subject to the inter-corporate dividends tax under subsection (e) hereof.”

This removal of the income tax exemption of non-profit educational institutions came shortly after the 1973 Constitution removed the real estate tax exemption of all educational institutions. But as some sort of consolation prize to private education in the Philippines, the present Government provided in the last paragraph of sec. 30(a) that in addition to the usual business expenses deductible from gross income “private educational institution, whether stock or non-stock, shall also be allowed to deduct during the taxable year when they were incurred

expenses for the expansion of school facilities to be determined by rules and regulations issued jointly by the Departments of Education and Culture and Finance."

At this point, let us pause and reflect on all these developments.

Was there really a need to equalize the income tax treatment of non-profit educational institutions and educational institutions organized for profit? Stated differently, is there a fundamental, or at least a substantial, difference between a non-profit educational institution and one organized for profit so that a difference in tax treatment is called for? Lest I be misunderstood, let me state that I have no objection to giving educational institutions organized as stock corporations preferential tax treatment. As a matter of personal opinion, I believe private education plays such an important role in national development that the government should be subsidizing instead of taxing private education, since it relieves the government of a burden it would otherwise have to bear. But I should like to focus on a narrower issue.

When a stock corporation has net income, such net income, after payment of income tax, is available for distribution to its stockholders. How about a non-profit educational institution? When it has net income and has paid the income tax thereon, can the difference be distributed as a dividend to its members? The answer is obviously no. To distribute such net income after tax would run counter to the very character of the corporation as a non-stock, non-profit institution. Such net income will have to remain within the corporation, to be used for its corporate purposes. But if the government does not consider this difference fundamental or at least substantial, in framing tax policy, why not allow non-profit educational institutions to convert themselves into stock corporations, considering that most of these non-profit educational institutions are instrumentalities of other entities such as religious orders and congregations and dioceses?

Perhaps this point will become clearer if we reviewed the basic structure of a non-stock corporation and its relationship to the religious order or congregation that created it as part of the Order's apostolate in education.

The basic structure of a non-stock corporation is simple enough. It is organized by at least five individuals. These individuals, also known as incorporators, become the first mem-

8 BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

bers of the corporation, and also its first trustees. Later on, other individuals may be admitted as members of the corporation in accordance with its bylaws. These members control the corporation; they meet usually once a year to elect from among themselves the trustees of the corporation; the trustees manage the corporation and appoint its officers.

This structure is similar to the structure of a stock corporation where the stockholders elect from among themselves the directors of the corporation and these directors, as a board, appoint the officers of the corporation and manage its affairs. But unlike a stock corporation where a stockholder has as many votes as he has shares, the typical non-stock corporation is composed of members who have only one vote each.

This basic structure of the non-stock corporation indicates that it is an independent or autonomous unit or entity. And yet we know for a fact that most of these non-stock corporations are organized by other entities such as religious congregations. How then does fact jive with legal fiction?

When the Father Provincial asks five members of the Order to form a non-stock, non-profit educational corporation to provide Catholic education in a particular area, this corporation is intended to be the instrumentality or vehicle by which the Order would carry out its educational apostolate. Indeed from the very start, this non-stock, non-profit educational institution would be completely dependent upon the Order for its continued existence. The Order supplies the physical plant and facilities of the University or College; the Order supplies the key personnel to run it; the Order invariably has to provide funds for its operations at least in the first few years of its existence.

And yet, from the strictly legal point of view, that non-stock corporation exists independently of the Order. As we said earlier, that corporation would be controlled by its members, who elect its trustees, who in turn manage it and appoint its officers. To put it bluntly, these members of the non-stock corporation could very well tell the Father Provincial not to interfere or meddle with the affairs of *their* corporation. And if the Father Provincial should assign as Rector a Priest who happens to be *persona non grata* to the members of the corporation, that would-be rector would be out in the cold, since the members and trustees of the corporation would simply decline to elect him as a member or trustee of the corporation.

How then does the Order insure that this non-stock corporation, intended to be its instrumentality, does not become a break-

away satellite or a lost command? The answer is: with some prudence and foresight in drafting the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the non-stock corporation. Specifically, (1) the articles of incorporation should expressly state that the corporation is an instrumentality of the Order and that upon dissolution, its net assets would go to the Order; (2) the by-laws should state that the Father Provincial and his consultants are ex-officio members of the corporation, that membership in the corporation is limited to members of the Order, that a member of the corporation ceases to be a member when he leaves the Order or ceases to be a member in good standing of the Order as certified by the Father Provincial, and finally, that the Board of Trustees may admit new members only upon written recommendation of the Father Provincial. With these provisions in the articles of incorporation and the bylaws, I think you will agree with me that the danger of a breakaway satellite or a lost command is eliminated.

So much for control devices over non-stock corporations. What are the significant relationships or ties between the University and the Order?

1. The Order may own the land and even the buildings that comprise the physical plant and facilities of the school. The Order either allows the school free use of these facilities or leases them to the school at a rental agreed upon by the school and the Order. This fee or rental, called "facility use" in most financial statements of non-profit educational institutions, is an expense of the school and income of the Order, and is subject to 5% withholding.

2. The Order may extend loans or subsidies to the school. To the extent that the Order extends loans to the school at interest, the interest is an expense of the school and income to the Order.

3. The Order invariably assigns members of the Order to key positions in the school. Since these members of the Order assigned to the school constitute a religious community that requires food, clothing and shelter, it is only proper that the school provide an allowance for the religious community. In most financial statements, this allowance is denominated "imputed services." I personally prefer the term "allowance for the religious community." Here a little explanation is in order. As you know, the religious assigned to a particular apostolate is not supposed to receive a salary. Any amount given to him by

(Continued on page 16)

THE CASE OF TAX INCENTIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Taxation, as some commentators say, is one of the ways or means by which private funds are transformed into public funds. In return for the taxes received, the government provides the citizen with general benefits such as security and protection to person and property and the promotion of those various schemes which have for their object the welfare of all.

The promotion of education as a vehicle for the attainment of the general welfare is one of the fundamental duties of the State towards its citizenry.

Left alone, the Philippine government cannot discharge this obligation exclusively, because of limited resources. It is therefore, a laudable and commendable act on the part of the private sector in establishing educational institutions, thus aiding and assisting the government in fulfilling one of its basic commitments to its citizens.

In effect, in the field of education at least, private funds (without being transformed into public funds) are utilized for necessary public purposes. Ideally therefore, all private educational institutions should not be levied any income tax.

INCENTIVES TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In the Philippine setting however, private educational institutions are looked upon as business enterprises where profits or gains may be derived by them and by their stockholders and members; hence, are subject to income tax. They are not however, taxed like an ordinary corporation. As an encouragement to achieve improvements in educational facilities and expansion of educational activities, P.D. No. 305 which was issued on October 2, 1973, grants the following incentives:

1. *Special corporate tax rate*

"Private educational institutions, whether stock or non-stock, shall pay a tax of ten per cent of their taxable net income from the operation of the school, related school activities, and other passive investment income consisting of interest, dividends, royalties and the like; Provided, however, that dividends received by a private educational institution, whether stock or non-stock, from a resident or foreign corporation shall be subject to partial exclusion of intercorporate dividends under Section 29(c) of this Title, under the condition imposed in the said subsection".

Hence, private educational institutions are levied a 10% tax on income instead of the corporate rates of 25% and 35%.

2. *Expenses allowable to private educational institutions*

"In addition to the expenses allowable as deductions under paragraph (1) of this subsection (*Business expenses*), a private educational institution, whether stock or non-stock, shall also be allowed to deduct during the taxable year when they incurred expenses for the expansion of school facilities to be determined by rules and regulations issued jointly by the Departments of Education and Culture and Finance".

The above-quoted provisions of PD 305 respectively amended Sections 24 and 30 of the National Internal Revenue Code.

ACQUISITION OF CAPITAL ASSETS

There is no doubt that private educational institutions are allowed to deduct from their gross income, expenses incurred in acquiring capital assets which are for the expansion of school facilities, such as buildings, furnitures and fixtures, laboratory equipment, etc. This expense is considered as an ordinary business expense necessary for the operation of an educational institution. Hence, as regards private educational institutions, they are granted an additional allowable deductible expenses, more than that as are allowed ordinary corporations.

FURTHER DEDUCTION FOR DEPRECIATION ALLOWABLE

Private educational institutions after claiming as expense their acquisition cost of the capital assets for the purpose of expanding school facilities can further deduct from their gross income, depreciation on these capital assets. When PD 305 amended Section 27 of the Tax Code, Section 30(f) (on depreciation) of said Tax Code was not accordingly amended, precluding educational institutions who have already claimed as expense said capital assets from claiming the usual depreciation thereon. It is clear therefore, that the intent of the President in issuing PD 305 was not to disallow private educational institution from claiming further deduction for depreciation. If it were the contrary intent, said Section 30(f) of the Tax Code could have been easily and correspondingly amended.

It cannot be denied that under the 4th WHEREAS of PD 305, private educational institutions are given incentives in order that they will be encouraged to channel their profits or surplus towards the acquisition of properties that will improve their educational facilities and expand their educational activities which we quote as follows:

“WHEREAS, in order to achieve improvements in educational facilities and expansion of educational activities, the reinvestment of profits or surplus necessary therefrom should be encouraged”.

SITUATIONAL INSTANCES IN THE TAX CODE WHERE CHOICE PRECLUDES OTHER OPTIONS

For clarity of the above-contention, it is pointed out that under the Tax Code, when a choice is made by a taxpayer, such choice precludes him from invoking other options. To cite a few:

1. Take the case of taxes paid to foreign countries. When the taxpayer opts to deduct said taxes paid from his total global income, he is no longer allowed to further avail for himself tax credit against his income tax liability.
2. When a taxpayer chooses his method of accounting he can longer be allowed to change to another method as a matter of right.

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2. When a taxpayer chooses his method of accounting he can longer be allowed to change to another method as a matter of right.

3. When a taxpayer chooses his system of depreciation, he cannot shift to another system as a matter of right.

The Tax Code therefore, is emphatic that when a taxpayer is given an option, other options can no longer be availed of.

This is not the case in regard to private educational institutions who claim as deductible expense the acquisition cost of capital assets acquired and who later on claim depreciation on the said assets. It can be further pointed out that the deduction claimed for expansion of school facilities is in addition to, not in lieu of the allowable expenses under business expenses among which is the deduction for depreciation expense.

CONCLUSION

We, therefore, conclude that in the case of private educational institutions there is no prohibition to claim for depreciation expense capital assets which have been claimed as deduction under the nature of expansion of school facilities.

ROGELIO R. NACORDA

SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

MESSAGE

The human heart cries out unceasingly to be freed from its anguish and to find fulfilment.

Assembled from all parts of the world, we the Bishops of the Synod, together with our Holy Father, are one with you in your pain and in your hope.

With sadness we have considered those evils in our world which are denying people the possibility of true liberation and the fullness of human life. In particular we deplore and condemn:

— the deprivation of human rights and attacks on the freedom of individuals, on the life and liberties of the powerless;

— the obstacles to religious freedom which prevent believers from fulfilling their duties and carrying out their tasks;

— all racial discrimination;

— warlike aggressiveness, violence and terrorism;

— the building up of arsenals of both conventional and especially nuclear arms and the scandalous trade in all weapons of war;

— the unjust distribution of the world's resources and those structures whereby the rich become richer and the poor poorer.

In our world injustice abounds and there is little peace. Yet hope can never be extinguished. In the depths of this suffering, the human heart never ceases to long for life and love.

And yet the human heart is divided and sinful. From it have sprung too often the cruelty and injustice of our society.

The Word of God speaks to mankind about its pain and its hope. It calls us to repent and to turn back to God. The Word of the Lord at the beginning of His ministry of reconciliation is addressed to believers and unbelievers with a special urgency in this Holy Year: "Repent and believe the Good News" (Mark 1:15).

That Word calls us to repentance and a change of heart, to seek forgiveness and so be reconciled with the Father. The plan of the Father for our society is that we should live as one family in justice, truth, freedom and love.

The Word of God will lead us into the mystery of God's love for us and so to an understanding of the Gospel precept of the Lord to love God in return and our neighbor as ourselves. Then, together with the whole Church, we share the mission given to us by Christ to create a civilization of love by healing, reconciling and making whole a divided and broken world. But first of all, as Christians, we ask forgiveness for our failures and sins, the causes of many divisions.

Pastors and people together carry out this mission in the name of Christ. Like Him we identify with the poor, the suffering, the oppressed, with all humanity. The whole world must become increasingly a reconciled community of peoples.

The Church, as sacrament of reconciliation to the world, has to be an effective sign of God's mercy. It is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially, that we celebrate and receive God's forgiveness and know His healing love. The Sacrament restores and deepens personal friendship with God and frees us for His service.

Furthermore, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, together with faithfulness and patience in bearing the trials of daily life are all necessary for growth in personal holiness.

To this generation the Holy Spirit speaks with remarkable force. It is a call to radical spiritual renewal and to unity in faith. The Second Vatican Council makes clear what must be done to fulfill God's plan for His people in our time. To carry out this mission we have to be one in mind and heart. Within our own Church we call for greater harmony. We urge all the baptised to discover together the way forward to visible unity

by abandoning themselves to the truth of the Gospel. We shall collaborate with other religions and persons of good will for the good of humanity. We do not make this appeal in our own name: "we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).

The Church can never rest content with economic and political structures which perpetuate injustice. We shall use, for example, what influence we have to achieve effective reform of the inequalities which exist between the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

The Church, and especially through the voice of the Holy Father, has consistently called for justice and peace in our society. The Synod recognises that many have the will to achieve change but not the power. We call on those who have the power to summon up the necessary will to give us a more just and peaceful society.

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POLICIES AND OPERATIONS... *(Continued from page 9)*

way of compensation for his services does not inure to him personally but to his community, since his vow of poverty requires that he turns over the amount to his Superior. Such amounts therefore represent income, not to the individual religious, but to his Order or Congregation, and since it is income from a religious activity — the apostolate of education — such income is exempt from income tax.

4. The Order lays down the educational and financial policies of its schools, which are then implemented by the schools of the Order through their respective boards of trustees and officials.

From a review of these relationships or ties between the Order and the non-profit university or college, I think it is fair to state that these universities and colleges are instrumentalities of the Order. The sooner this fact or reality is accepted by the university community — administrators, faculty and students — the easier it would be to understand its operations. More than that, the sooner the government realizes that the typical or common non-profit university or college is not really an independent and separate entity, but a semi-autonomous unit of an integrated educational network, the easier it would be to evolve a rational tax policy for private education in the Philippines.

INTERVENTIONS OF ASIAN BISHOPS IN THE 1983 SYNOD

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Most Rev. Stephen Fumio Hamao
Bishop of Yokohama (Japan)

Peace is another name for reconciliation. War is its radical negation. The bishops of Japan, the only nation which has experienced the horrors of an atomic bomb, feel obliged to call for concerted action for peace. Egoism and unlimited greed must be overcome. Rich nations must stop exploiting poor nations. Prompted by universal love, all men must exercise justice, mercy and forgiveness. Efforts of individuals to know one another and to create mutual trust must be promoted. The goal should be the abolition of all nuclear war and the global reduction of armaments. Work for peace will be effective if all men become aware of their deep connection with nature, especially with all living beings. Men must not only dominate nature, but also seek harmony with it and admire in it the beauty, wisdom and love of its Creator. Thus men will be freed from their frenzy for possession and domination and will become artisans of peace.

PROPHET OF DENUNCIATION

Cardinal Jaime L. Sin
Archbishop of Manila (Philippines)

The pastor must be a "prophet of denunciation" and a minister of reconciliation. This does not constitute a dilemma but a twofold function of the priest. Conflict and division are rampant realities in today's world; violation of human rights in many places reaches the apex of injustice: *this situation must be denounced*. But this denunciation must remind everyone that the Gospel's demands do not allow for hatred but neither do they permit that the poor be trampled upon. This double

task cannot be achieved without an inner conversion. Since the evils are social, so *reconciliation and penance* must have a social dimension. But Christian action for justice has the Gospel, not ideology, as its norm. When confronted with conflict, we must distinguish between institutional violence stemming from structures of injustice, and revolutionary violence. Conversion of structures is necessary to avoid revolutionary violence. Denunciation, conversion and reconciliation are inseparable.

HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF SIN

Most Rev. Angelo Fernandes
Archbishop of Delhi (India)

1) From the standpoint of the poor and lowly, the perspective of the final document must stress the relationship with the Kingdom of God and include full *human development and world peace*.

2) Peace is essential for nation-building but is thwarted by the weapons industry, multinationals and military dictatorships, Apartheid, the caste system, untouchability, with their violence and oppression, are also major obstacles.

3) *Ideological and religious dogmatism and religious intolerance* are other roadblocks to reconciliation.

4) The Synod document must, therefore, focus heavily on *human dignity and equality* as its central and essential message.

5) The world economic crisis of today's world likewise demands a more equitable handling of human affairs and specifically a new international economic order.

6) Since the lack of political will is a moral issue and represents *a crisis of conscience*, the Synod must speak a prophetic word on behalf of the suffering masses.

7) Such an approach sees *sin in its historical character*, and is a good starting point for *a theology of sinful social structures*. The Synod must make known such structures and issue a prophetic call to return to God's loving designs for mankind.

8) This is a ministry in the service of the Kingdom and could be undertaken in collaboration with other current religions, all working together for justice, peace and brotherhood.

ASIAN BISHOPS IN THE 1983 SYNOD 19

POPULAR DEVOTIONS

Most Rev. Paul Cheng
Bishop of Tainan (China)

For the mission of reconciliation entrusted by Christ our Lord to be fulfilled, the Church must first find that interior harmony, without which it is difficult to reconcile the world.

Theologians and the clergy must promote not only an intellectual kind of cult, but also the popular religious devotions which are useful for a deepening of Christian life and the spirit of penance.

In the future, one must follow abstinence and fasting according to the Buddhist manner, eating only vegetables, but not fish, because fish is not mortification but a delicacy.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Cardinal Stephen Kim
Archbishop of Seoul (Korea)

The Working Document links personal conversion to reconciliation in society, but it does not quite say how the mission of the Church in itself relates to the whole world.

Since the Working Paper refers to Catholics alone, the universal relevance of the Church's mission remains rather unclear to many.

Jesus reconciled all men to God and to one another by taking our sin upon himself on the Cross. We, too, must stand as sinners before God's mercy rather than stand before God in judgment over sinners. This identification is the meaning of Christ's priesthood and of our share in it.

Only thus will the Church be a convincing sign of salvation for all, the sacramental ministry become more understandable and its grace more readily accepted.

Before calling others to penance and reconciliation, let us first confess our Church's own share in the historical sins against reconciliation.

FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE

Most Rev. Ricardo Vidal
Archbishop of Cebu (Philippines)

The Synod should clarify certain terms and concepts related to formation of conscience:

1. "Conscience" with its related ideas of "personal conscience", "conscience of the community". The necessary education in serious matters should not overlook other aspects important for spiritual life and related to confessions of devotion.

2. Sin: grave, mortal, serious, leading to death, venial with emphasis on intention and circumstances as against judging the gravity of the act by its results or consequences.

3. "Sense of sin" as different from "sense of guilt".

4. Positive elements:

a) "Popular piety" offers great richness of penitential attitudes and practices, some of which could be integrated into liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations.

b) The Synod should spell out guidelines on reconciliation at national, diocesan, parochial, family levels.

AUTHENTIC INCULTURATION

Most Rev. Simon Ignatius Pimenta
Archbishop of Bombay (India)

The Church in India has to exercise its mission and ministry of reconciliation in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, which is overwhelmingly non-Christian.

One of the obstacles that the Church meets in the exercise of this mission is that it still conveys a Western image. To overcome this obstacle, it must enter into a dialogue with these other religions and must try to become incarnate in the soil and culture of India. This calls for a serious effort at authentic inculturation.

One of the essential elements of this dialogue has to be a better appreciation of these religions. In the past, we have painted these religions in the darkest colours. This must change.

ASIAN BISHOPS IN THE 1983 SYNOD 21

Even as Vatican II expressed regret for the past treatment of Jews at the hands of Christians, so should this Synod on reconciliation show a like sentiment towards non-Christian religions in a true spirit of reconciliation.

The philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi on non-violence has much to offer in bringing about peace and reconciliation and should be encouraged by the Synod.

The Church in India, together with men of all faiths, must work for reconciliation in the Indian society. Only a Church reconciled through the Sacrament of Penance can be a reconciling Church.

The Catholic Episcopal Conference of India places before the Synod certain questions for clarification with regard to the Sacrament of Penance. It also draws the attention of the Synod to the values of penance in non-Christian religions. It even suggests that some practices of penance be re-introduced in the life of the Church, as we seem to have lost them. The Synod could proclaim certain days and occasions as days of obligatory penance for the universal Church.

NEED FOR RELIGIOUS REVISION

Most Rev. Yohannan Semaan Issayi
Archbishop of Tehran
of the Chaldeans (Iran)

During the Iranian revolution, Christians began to feel the need for a religious revision of their lives and a return to God. And though this is determined partially by external factors it doesn't make it any less real. In fact, the Christians, in seeing their Muslim brothers committed in their faith, ask themselves if they too shouldn't know their religion better, if only to answer the objections made by them. Therefore, they consult the Bible and go to church more often; all this leads back to God, to penance and to reconciliation.

But what can be said about the Sacrament of Reconciliation? To answer this question, one must distinguish between Catholic and other Christians where the practice of reconciliation exists (Armenians, Nestorians, Orthodox) or doesn't exist (Protestants).

Given the mingling of Christians of different confessions, non-Catholics have a certain influence on Catholics. Therefore, some go to Communion without first confessing. But we must recognize that almost the totality of Catholics believe they are obliged to make an auricular confession at least on solemn occasions.

Despite all this, we don't mean that they form an elite, but are a tiny minority (0.05 per cent of the total population) who for various reasons have not yet been able to gather the desired impetus.

Despite all this, the ferment is there and the signs of this are the good works and the awareness of sin together with the need for reconciliation with God and neighbour. This should be said of all strata of the population that under different forms are committed to reparation with fasting and penitential ceremonies.

SOCIAL RECONCILIATION AND INTERIOR CONVERSION

Most Rev. Carmelo Morelos y Flores
Bishop of Butuan (Philippines)

The ecumenical aspect is an essential dimension of the reconciling mission of the Church. It has become an urgent apostolic imperative. Human life is in great measure ecumenically conditioned. Concern for a true humanization of life permeates all sectors today and requires that ecumenism take seriously the problems that affect human dignity. God's plan of unity amidst growing conflicts cannot be handled as if questions of doctrine could be totally separated from human tensions. Nor can the Church's mission be carried out if we are only looking for social reconciliation without interior conversion. Still less could reconciliation be realized by aggravating conflicts that would finally lead to a peace based on justice. The Church will help in solving conflicts only by "being" Church, if she lives Christ's total truth and justice. There are no divisions that are only doctrinal. Christ's Gospel constitutes an indissoluble unity. His teaching on justice is part of his truth. Real hope for reconciliation of Christians will come from accepting the totality of his message.

POSITIVE STEPS

Most Rev. Frank Marcus Fernando
Bishop of Chilaw (Sri Lanka)

While individual auricular confession is to be preserved, the Synod should take positive steps to make the Sacrament of Penance more accessible to the people of our times who have special needs, and who are sometimes unduly hindered by the scarcity of priests.

It is proposed that we have both forms of receiving this Sacrament — individual and general — and that we systematically educate our people to the enormous value of individual confession, freely chosen, and provide ample opportunity for this type of confession.

Regarding general absolution, an enlarged penitential rite at Holy Mass — at least on certain occasions — could be made use of to grant sacramental absolution to the faithful who desire it — without the need to confess individually afterwards. Adequate instructions and safeguards could be built in. Even external gestures or postures on the part of those wishing to receive absolution could be introduced. This too is a form of admission of one's sins.

ERADICATE CASTE MENTALITY

Most Rev. Joseph Thumma
Bishop of Vijayawada (India)

Castes are typical of India. Every Indian is considered to be born into one caste or another. The most obnoxious element of the caste system consists in considering certain lower castes of Harijans as untouchables. By being born in that caste, they automatically lose all social, economic and religious rights. They are therefore also the poorest and educationally the most backward. This rigid system sanctioned by the religion and enforced by the regulations of old legislators, has defied in the course of centuries all attempts at reform. Now "untouchability" has been abolished by law and temples have been thrown open to the Harijans. The Church too has been fighting this evil of untouchability by preaching the idea that all men are the children of God and that therefore they are all equal. Some progress has been made, especially within the Church, as far

as the external discriminations are concerned. But since caste mentality is deeply rooted in the mind of the people, it continues to influence social life and marriage relations. In many places, even after generations of Christian life, each caste keeps its identity and tries to perpetuate it. The educational and economic progress promoted by the Church and State has been bringing large numbers of the untouchables to a social standing comparable with the rest of society. The bishops, especially in recent times, have undertaken to eradicate the caste system in the Church, and have called upon priests and religious to play their special role in the promotion of equality of all people, both within and outside Christian communities.

BISHOPS AND PRIESTS

Most Rev. Joseph Banchong Aribarg
Bishop of Nakhon Sawan (Thailand)

Let us bishops be reconciled to our priests. The topic is about the relationship of a bishop with his priests. The situation in this regard is not critical or the bishop is not guilty, but it could be better and can be improved.

In all dioceses the bishop has difficulties with his priests or priests have difficulties with their bishop. Often difficulties and problems become heavier or are even impossible to solve, because the actual relationship between the bishop and priests is not very good.

The bishop should visit or meet his priests more often in order to know them, to have better relationship, to get to know their problems, especially problems concerning their personal lives or their vocation. The bishop should give more time to his priests; he should give himself more to his priests. The bishop should, perhaps, change the structures that impede the interpersonal relationship with his priests.

RECONCILIATION AND UNITY OF MANKIND

Most Rev. Angelo Innocent Fernandes
Archbishop of Delhi (India)

1. The *five dimensions* of the Trinitarian formula of absolution provide a good framework for the full ministry of reconciliation (cosmic, Christocentric, charismatic, ecclesial, personal).

2. Reconciliation must not be reduced to *conciliation*. Better relationships, dialogue, etc., are not ends in themselves. They enable us to be better instruments for the mission of the *unity of mankind*.

3. The policies of *Church-related schools* need to be oriented in favour of the poor.

4. *Joint collaboration* is called for with other Christians and non-Christians for the promotion of justice and peace.

5. *Lay people* must feel committed to renew unjust social statements.

6. *Lay ministries* could include, e.g., human rights, legal aid for the poor, etc.

7. *Religious freedom* must be reaffirmed by the Synod.

8. Christian life should reflect *hope* and *courage* and the *peace and joy* of those who abide in the *Lord* and his love.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE MISSION OF RECONCILIATION

Most Rev. Antonio Mabutas y Lloren
Archbishop of Davao (Philippines)

It appears somehow strange that in dealing with the mission of reconciliation, both in the interventions in the hall and in the reports from the groups, there has been a practically universal silence on the person the Church invokes as *Refugium Peccatorum*, the Blessed Virgin Mary. And yet we know that not a few among our faithful, even those who because of their sinful lives consider themselves alienated from God, still hold faithfully to the veneration of Mary and often we are witnesses of unexpected conversions of people who owe this grace to the devotion they had towards the Blessed Mother. The Second Vatican Council and Paul VI, when he declared Mary Mother of the Church, developed the role of Mary in the work of redemption of her Son, in virtue of which we became reconciled with the Father. Also, the devotion to Mary among our brothers in the

separated Oriental Churches is presented by the Council as a seed of hope for future reconciliation. It would therefore be desirable that the Synod speak distinctly of Mary's mission in the work of reconciliation.

IMPORTANT MISSION

Most Rev. Stephen Fumio Hamao
Bishop of Yokohama (Japan)

The whole Church expects the Synod to take a positive step towards the realization of peace in the world rather than look only at the problems of the Church itself.

The mission of reconciliation in the world must be the most important mission of the Church in the world.*

* Cfr. *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 1983 issues.

Pastoral Approaches In The Ministry Of Reconciliation

The Lineamenta, the Working Document, the introductory Relatio as well as the interventions we have heard so far have explicitated deep concern on pastoral problems that we, pastors, are now encountering in the sacramental and social levels of reconciliation; these reveal also the fears that we are not responding sufficiently to the needs of our people and our society.

This just makes us realize the more the importance and necessity of the action of grace in the sacrament of reconciliation, and the necessity of returning to the Gospel values of reconciliation taught and witnessed by Our Lord Himself.

The Exercise of Reconciliation

God has taken the decisive initiative in exercising the ministry of reconciliation, and human efforts must always be seen as a participation in it. This means not only passive openness but a positive initiative towards reconciliation. In saying that we should leave our gift at the altar and first become reconciled, the Lord is talking about reconciliation with a person who has something against us (Mt. 5:23-24). As Christians, we are called upon to take the initiative in reaching out as salt, light, leaven, ministers of Christ's reconciliation to the world.

The incomplete and imperfect nature of any reconciliation during the present journeying raises a major difficulty. Very often reconciliation seems illusive and premature. The logical inclination would be to wait until perfect momentum is achieved when all things will fit together as they should. Christ, however, called upon his followers to engage in this ministry now,

to be forgiving, to build peace and unity even in this imperfect state. The first Eucharistic Prayer for Masses of Reconciliation carries the reminder that now is the time of reconciliation.

Some concrete recommendations may be in place here:

1. We should prayerfully listen and discern the seeds of hope and the signs of reconciliation already present in the world; we would publicize these signs and build on them towards a better and fuller human life.

2. We should work with those who under God seek a reconciled world through common programs on the major issues affecting our country in the various fields indicated above: socio-economic, ideological, religious and "*ad intra*" of the Church, trying to make the various tendencies converge, whether they are verticalists, disembodied, personalist or horizontalist.

3. We should work for the enacting of legislation that fosters unity: social, political, judicial unity, religious liberty, anti-consumerism, public welfare, etc.

4. Give high priority to the formation of conscience. It is a fact that many people have misunderstood Vatican II on the formation of conscience and have reduced it to a simple "I make up my own mind". Public opinion, media, propaganda, advertising have powerful influence in the "deformation" of conscience. Hence it would be important to present clearly to our faithful (a) the meaning of conscience, (b) the factors and forces that form or deform conscience today, (c) the role of the teaching authority of the Church in the formation of the Christian conscience; (d) the duty to have an informed conscience.

5. Finally, a Catechesis on reconciliation and penance is needed. For many people in the Church, these ideas do not form part of their practical personal lives. Their thinking is often formed by propaganda and contrary practices. The law of gradualism should also be observed in this catechetical presentation.

Pastoral Problems and Approaches

The bishops envision the fostering and development of a "reconciliation mentality" as the task of the on-going formation and conversion for themselves, as well as for the priests, the

religious and the rest of the committed Christians in the local Church. They also acknowledge that this task is trying and troublesome, because it would often imply a conversion to generosity, kindness, compassion, love, hope and joy, which for our condition is always, a difficult decision to make.

However, whatever the theoretical or doctrinal stand of the bishops may be, they are, above all, "pastors". As such they are sincerely concerned with the practical solution of the very practical problems they are confronted with, both at the local and national levels. The main ones are indicated as follows:

It seems that the gigantic problems the bishops are facing is contained in the question: "How, in practical practice, shall we make the opportunity of confession more readily available to the faithful?"

The tragedy lies on the staggering disproportion between the number of faithful and the number of priests who may be available for the administration of the sacrament of reconciliation. The problem comes to this:

1. The faithful have an obligation, as well as a right, to receive the sacraments, in particular the sacrament of reconciliation to be administered by the priest. The obligation and right of the faithful to go to confession at least once a year entails a corresponding obligation in the pastors to provide for all the faithful the means for them to be able to comply with this duty. The problem is how this can be practically and effectively implemented.

2. On the other hand, we have the problem of numbers and proportions. Of the almost 50 million population, around 42 million are Catholics; about 35 million of them are of confession age. Of the about 4,400 priests actually staying in the country, only about 3,000 are in the direct pastoral ministry, while well over one thousand are in the field of education or retired. This proportion implies that each priest in the parish apostolate will have to hear an average of 11,000 confessions or more a year, or an average of two hours every day in the confessional box.

To this proportional scarcity of priests, other factors are to be considered: the unequal distribution of priests in the coun-

try, geographical distances, the high number of faithful per parish, the number of confessions "of devotion", the fact that often the same persons go to confession many times a year.

3. As a consequence, the bishops are understandably worried about the problem and would like to find the pastoral solution to it — a very important and urgent task for the fostering of a true Christian life; they see that the existing disproportion between the number of the "confession once a year" duty extremely difficult, with some of them considering the problem a practical impossibility.

4. Within this context, the bishops ask the question: could not the Synod pay special attention to the problem of "general absolution" with a serious study of (1) its positive advantages, (2) the necessary conditions for its effectiveness, (3) safeguards against possible and existing abuses?

May I also add the suggestion that, when the theme of General Absolution is taken up in the preparation of the final Propositions of the Synod, reference should be made on Canon 961 of the Codex of Canon Law, particularly on the faculty given to the Episcopal Conferences to discern, interpret, adjust or restrict what could be considered pastoral necessities, which is a condition required for the valid imparting of General Absolution; of course, in this process, the statutes of the general law must be followed. Above all, the problem of general absolution should be considered shedding light on its positive values.

† Antonio Ll. Mabutas
Archbishop of Davao

THE CHURCH WANTS MINOR SEMINARIES TODAY

by

Jesus Ma. Cavanna, C.M.

The Decree on *Priestly Training* (OPTATAM TOTIUS) of the second Vatican Council, the *Basic Norms for Priestly Training* (RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS INSTITUTIONIS SACERDOTALIS) of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, the new *Code of Canon Law* (Codex Iuris Canonici), promulgated by John Paul II, serve today as guides to the mentors in minor seminaries.

Vatican II, on October 28, 1965 takes for granted the validity and importance of *Minor Seminaries* "erected to develop the seeds of vocation", where "the students should be prepared by special religious formation particularly through appropriate spiritual direction, to follow Christ the Redeemer with generosity of spirit and purity of heart." (OPTATAM TOTIUS, 3).

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education on January 6, 1970, speaking in the same tenor declares that "the specific purpose of the *Minor Seminary* is to help boys who seem to show the initial signs of vocation to recognize this vocation more easily and clearly, and to respond to it." The Sacred Congregation remarks: "While recommending the *Minor Seminary*, the Council does not deny the possibility of trying other ways to foster priestly vocations, which may indeed be opportune, so long as the *Minor Seminary* as an institution does not suffer in consequence, and the experiments themselves are seriously and prudently directed to their purpose, not just a subterfuge for dodging the issue." "The *Minor Seminary* should be given due importance in the life of the diocese. It must be prudently open to this life and form part of it." (RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS, 11, footnote 60; 12).

Finally the new CODEX IURIS CANONICI promulgated on January 25, 1983, not only *recommends* as Vatican II did,

but *enjoins* with force of law: "Let *Minor Seminaries* or other similar institutions be preserved and fostered where they exist...; nay, the Diocesan Bishop should see to it that a *Minor Seminary* or a similar institution be erected, when he would judge it convenient" (Lib. II, Tit. III, Cap. I, can. 243, § 1: author's translation).

After those clear-cut official declarations of the Catholic Church, it seems there should be no room for further dissenting opinions from theologians or scholars. Let us be open to the guidelines of the Church which she taught for long time and proclaims once more.

This is the doctrine of the Church today as yesterday. To maintain the contrary, even alleging reasons from psychology or sociology, would be tantamount to imply that the Church for more than four centuries has been ignorant of human nature and human society, or to suppose that the Church today ignores the radical changes undergone by human nature and human society. Obviously such presumptions cannot be entertained by those who trust in the wisdom of the Church, assisted by the Holy Spirit, rather than in the "profane novelties and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge." (1 Tim. 6:20)

However, lest we may appear to evade the question posed in many sectors, today, we will examine here the factors usually alleged as militating against the continuance of Minor Seminaries, namely, the proper formation of young boys, and the statistics of perseverance.

I. *The proper formation of young boys*

It is said that in the early adolescent age, the proper environment for the attainment of maturity is the home or family. The seminary is an artificial environment, and if the regimentation is excessive, it causes a retardation rather than a development of the maturing process. The normal environment for young boys is the family and it should be only the exceptional need that would justify placing the young boys in an institutional setting.

This objection seems to confuse the early adolescent age with childhood. *Children* should indeed be with their parents. But let us not call *children*, the young boys of 12 or more years, entering the Minor Seminary. They may resent it. An adolescent is not anymore a child. Precisely it is in adolescence when boys begin to feel the urge of independence from their parents,

they like to go out and look for their peers, and join the "*barkada*" and play and run with the group, away from home... It is true that the ideal education of the young at any age, even for adolescents, is achieved at home, as Tacitus from ancient times said, "*in gremio matris educari*". But generally we cannot tie an adolescent and keep him at home with his little brothers and sisters, close to the mother's skirt. In the turbulence of his age he needs other companions and adventures. What parents should do then is to watch, guide and advise him in his wanderings and friendships...

There are many cases when circumstances demand that a good boarding school should provide the environment for an education the adolescent cannot get at home. Certainly there are risks and dangers in any boarding school, even a good one. But the serious inconveniences may well be prevented if the school directors are conscientiously watchful and a real family atmosphere prevails in the school together with a sound discipline and religious formation. On the contrary, many of the advantages offered by such boarding school could not be obtained in the limited and narrow family circle, especially if the home is not truly Christian, as is often the case in our days.

In the case of a prospective priestly vocation we find "the exceptional need that justifies placing young boys in an institutional setting." Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Letter, *SUMMI DEI VERBUM* of November 4, 1963 explains this need:

Precisely because the secular culture of our days stresses too much among the Christian people the esteem and pursuit of external goods, the regard of many towards lasting values that belong to the supernatural order diminishes. In such situation, how can the youths, even those animated with the best intentions, resolve to follow the priestly vocation, if in their family and school environments all they hear are only praises on the excellence and advantages of profane or secular professions? Hence, in order that esteem and holy enthusiasm for the priestly life may take root and develop in the hearts of boys and young men it is *necessary* that both in their own homes and in their schools they may find suitable conditions for that purpose...

For this reason, the parents and sacred pastors who are in charge of the education of boys and young men *should*, not only try to create for them an atmosphere favorable to ecclesiastical vocations, but also exert all

effort and try their best to bring to the *Seminary* the young adolescents as soon as they show a sincere inclination for the priesthood together with some fitness for that calling. *Only thus* can they be safeguarded from the corruption of the world and enabled to cultivate the seed of the divine call in the most suitable place. There is where the Seminary superiors, spiritual directors and professors shall have to discern firstly with the utmost care the signs whereby it may appear whether Christ has chosen these young men to become indeed His future ministers; and then the same superiors shall strive to help the candidate for the priesthood attain the fitness required for such sublime vocation. And this great and difficult educational work must be carried out *within the Seminary precincts* in whatever concerns the body, piety, behavior, and talents of the adolescents, as it was tersely expressed in those words of the Tridentine decree: *maintain, train in piety, and instruct in ecclesiastical disciplines*".

In these words addressed to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the whole world, Pope Paul VI declares the importance and necessity of Minor Seminaries, not only where young boys are unable to obtain a Catholic high school education, but also in places where there are excellent and renowned Catholic High Schools. A Catholic High School is *very different* from High School Seminary (*Minor Seminary*). (cf. SEMINARIOS, 47, vol. 18, Mayo-Agosto, 1972, pp. 234-238). And from my experience of some 27 years as spiritual director of minor seminarians I wish to add: if a Seminary were to be run just as an ordinary Catholic High School, without the sound discipline and spiritual formation proper of a Minor Seminary, I would be the first to say: Close it, and send the boys home where they may grow and develop in a more suitable atmosphere than that of a mere boarding school! They should live with their families and study in some other Catholic High School.

II. Statistics on perseverance

Statistics are quite deceitful when not interpreted correctly. If a chicken is served at table in a home of four persons, and one of them happens to eat it all, statistics might tell us that each one in the house ate one fourth of the chicken. At the middle of our century, statistics in France showed that "at least one half of the diocesan priests were formed in the Minor Semi-

naries", and this powerful argument decided the debate in favor of the continuance of Minor Seminaries (SEMINARIOS, *Ibid.*, pp. 273).

We have heard that in the Philippines the percent of minor seminarians who reach the priesthood is around 20-25%. But even granting that it were as low as 10%, as sometimes is said, and admitting that such percentage implies a great financial drain on the diocese, we must acknowledge that it is worthwhile the cost.

I have met former alumni of the Minor Seminary who were then good fathers of family, and were very grateful for the training and formation they received in the Minor Seminary. Evidently the Catholic education imparted there is more solid and perfect than what is received in any other Catholic school.

And those who persevere and become priests, certainly enjoy the advantages of a longer and more efficacious training for the priestly vocation than those who enter the Seminary at a later age. It is in the early age of adolescence that young men begin to wake up to the problems of life, although such problems become more acute in the late adolescence, in the first years of the Major Seminary, at the College level. Anyhow, at the age of 20 the adolescent has become already a man, with his own personality, which can hardly be "remade" or refashioned anymore in later years (A. Magiali, *PSICOPEDAGOGIA DEI CANDIDATI AL SACERDOZIO*, Milano, 1965, p. 60). The training and education of the early adolescence, pursued until the attainment of manhood, is of lasting effects in man's life. What has not been done at that age — during the Minor Seminary — could hardly be restored or supplied later in the Major Seminary. As a general rule, it is too late to try to correct wrong habits previously acquired, or to eradicate a deep-seated worldly mentality that has not been duly counteracted in the adolescent years. For this reason, in a certain way, the Minor Seminary has an irreplaceable role which cannot be taken up by a Major Seminary.

It is said that in some nations and cultures the age of maturity is now somewhere between 26 and 30. The new Code of Canon Law does not seem to imply that, when it puts the age for the ordination to diaconship at 23, and for the priesthood

at 25 (Can. 1031, § 1). Indeed, the Church has increased one year more to the previous legislation (22 for deacons, 24 for priests — Can. 975), which means, that the period for forming one's character and deciding one's vocation has been extended a little, just a little more than before.

If the formation in the Minor Seminary of the past has been excessively monastic, this defect has been corrected already long ago. If other professions and careers (e.g. doctors, lawyers) do not conduct "minor seminaries" in preparation for those professions, it is because the demands of the priestly vocation are much higher and exacting (e.g., in the education for chastity) than those of secular careers.

Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries

FOREWORD

In the ecclesiastical formation of future priests, a formation renewed following the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has been working for many years to provide suitable helps to the Bishops' Conferences. To the various documents and pedagogical assistance already produced with this end in view, this *Instruction on Liturgical Formation in Seminaries* is now added. Its purpose is to offer suitable directives and norms so that the liturgical life and the study of the sacred liturgy in institutions of priestly formation might be better adapted to modern needs. The great importance which the sacred liturgy occupies in the life of the Church demands that the contemporary candidate for the priesthood be given a proper formation both in the area of correct practice and in assiduous study, so that he will be most able to carry out his pastoral ministry in this field.

INTRODUCTION

a) The Importance of the Liturgy in Priestly Formation

1. The importance of the sacred liturgy in priestly formation is clear to all. Priests indeed are consecrated to God by the bishop not only to preach the Gospel and to pasture the faithful, but also so that, constituted in a special way as participants in the priesthood of Christ, they might preside over liturgical actions in the person of Christ the Head, who continually exercises in the liturgy His priestly office for us through the Holy Spirit.¹ Since the liturgy, in which "the work of our Redemption is carried on," is the outstanding means "by which the faithful express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church,"² its

¹ Cf. the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Degree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nos. 2, 5, 9, 12.

² Cf. the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 2.

diligent exercise and study will bestow on future priests a more solid knowledge and firmness in their faith as well as opening up for them a living experience of the Church.

2. All genuine liturgical formation involves not only doctrine but also practice. This practice, as a "mystagogical" formation, is obtained first and mainly through the very liturgical life of the students into which they are daily more deeply initiated through liturgical actions celebrated in common. This careful and practical initiation is the foundation of all further liturgical study, and it is presupposed that this has already been acquired when liturgical questions are explained.

*b) The Opportuneness of This Document
in Present Circumstances*

3. Formation in the sacred liturgy is especially urgent today. After the publication of new liturgical books according to the liturgical renewal decreed by the Second Vatican Council, there is a need to promote the correct instruction of future priests so they might thus be rendered more apt to understand clearly the character and force of the renewed sacred liturgy, to insert it into their spiritual lives and into their daily conduct, and to communicate it suitably to the faithful.³

4. Furthermore, greater emphasis on liturgical formation in seminaries is needed also in order to confront the new pedagogical problematic which comes from the growing secularization of society. This clouds the nature of the sacred liturgy in the minds of people, making it more difficult for them to live and participate in it more deeply. The students themselves notice this difficulty and thus they often express a desire for a deeper and more authentic liturgical life.

5. The compelling need for an updated initiation in the liturgy was already clearly expressed in the Second Vatican Council, both in the Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium*,⁴ and in the Decree *Optatam totius*,⁵ as well as in the document of this Sacred Congregation entitled *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*.⁶ The norms of this later document, taken from other documents of the Church, supply useful directives for the

³ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 14.

⁴ Cf. nos. 15-17.

⁵ Cf. nos. 4, 8, 16, 19.

⁶ Cf. nos. 14, 52, 53, 79, 94, 98.

Bishops' Conferences in their task of determining particular prescriptions in this material, according to their local needs in their own national or regional *Rationes institutionis sacerdotalis*.⁷

From various parts of the world, requests have been coming to the Sacred Congregation to issue more complete pedagogical norms, based upon recent experiencies which would concern both the correct regulation of liturgical life in seminaries and the teaching of the sacred liturgy.

c) The Nature of This Instruction

6. Moved by these reasons, this Sacred Congregation, after consultation with the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, has decreed the publication of this Instruction. It is complementary to the *Ratio fundamentalis* and it enjoys the same obligatory force.⁸ It sets out only matters of universal import,⁹ leaving to the Bishops' Conferences the duty to direct a further development of this matter or to choose the more suitable way of acting when a variety of options is presented.¹⁰

Also, the Congregation wishes that this present Instruction be effective, in the editing and updating of the *Rationes institutionis sacerdotalis*, by more clearly illustrating the material pertaining to the study of the sacred liturgy as well as in the liturgical order and life of the seminaries.

7. This Instruction, in the norms it prescribes, considers two aspects of liturgical formation: the practical (mystagogical), which pertains to the correct and orderly celebration of the sacred liturgy, and the theoretical (doctrinal), which places in clearer light the science of the liturgy, as one of the principal theological disciplines to be taught.

⁷ Cf. the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatum totius*, no. 1.

⁸ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, Preliminary Remarks, no. 2.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 7.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 3.

Part One

THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF SEMINARIES

1) General Principles for Promoting Liturgical Life of Seminaries

a) *Special Introduction into the Liturgical Life in a Previous Spiritual Apprenticeship*

8. "So that spiritual training can rest upon a firmer basis and students can embrace their vocation with a decision maturely weighed,"¹¹ it belongs to bishops to establish at the beginning of the first year of seminary life an appropriate period of time for a more intense spiritual apprenticeship. For this period of time, it is recommended that those students entering a seminary for the first time be given a suitable, short introduction into the liturgy, which they need to participate fruitfully in the spiritual life of the seminary from the very beginning. This would include some catechetical instruction about the Mass, the liturgical year, the sacrament of Penance, and the Liturgy of the Hours.

b) *Pedagogical Principles Regarding the Introduction into the Liturgical Life*

9. An authentic initiation or "mystagogia" should mainly illustrate those fundamentals on which the liturgical life is established, that is to say the history of salvation, the Paschal Mystery of Christ, the genuine nature of the Church, the presence of Christ in liturgical actions, the hearing of the Word of God, the spirit of prayer, adoration, and thanksgiving, and the expectation of the coming of the Lord.¹²

10. §1: Liturgical celebration, as the prayer of the Church, participates in her very nature. As such, it impels towards a simultaneous union of the voices of all and the heart and soul of each person, belonging therefore, fully to the community and to the individual. Indeed, "spiritual life is not confined to participation in the liturgy."¹³ For liturgical and personal piety mutually support and complement each other. Familiar communion in prayer with Christ leads to fuller, knowledge-

¹¹ Cf. Decree, *Optatam totius*, no. 12.

¹² Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, nos. 5-8.

¹³ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 12.

able, and pious participation in the sacred liturgy. On the other hand, private devotion receives example and nourishment from liturgical life.

It follows that in a seminary both the liturgy and private spiritual exercises are to be fostered and suitably joined together.¹⁴ According to local needs, insistence should be made upon the community and its proper spirituality if this is not adequately understood, or else upon personal acts of piety¹⁵ if these are held in less esteem.

§2: Devotional exercises recommended by the Church should be so arranged that they are compatible with liturgical seasons and so with the sacred liturgy. Thus, in a certain way, they derive from the liturgy at the same time that they lead the students to the liturgy.¹⁶

§3. From a deeper participation in the liturgical life, the students should learn to foster an interior life and acquire a deep spirit of meditation and of spiritual conversion. Furthermore, liturgical instruction should point out to the students the close connection between the sacred liturgy and the daily life of a priest and lay people. This stimulates the apostolate and requires a true witness of a living faith that works through charity.¹⁷

11. That understanding of the liturgy which is considered necessary for a priest and which seminarians must acquire demands a diligent familiarity with the Bible, as the conciliar Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium*¹⁸ recommends, and also some familiarity with the writings of the Fathers of the Church.¹⁹ This disposition of spirit will gradually be acquired by the students as they progress in their studies, in the spiritual life, and in participation in liturgical celebrations, especially in the Word.²⁰ Care should be taken to effect this through the above efforts and also to ensure special study so that the seminarians will be introduced into understanding that symbolical, liturgical language by which, through sensible signs, words, and gestures, divine things are signified and, in the case of the sacraments, actually caused.

¹⁴ Cf. Decree, *Optatam totius*, no. 8.

¹⁵ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 54.

¹⁶ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 13.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 10-11; *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 53.

¹⁸ Cf. nos. 24, 90.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, nos. 54f.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 53.

c) *The Seminary Community Gathered
for Liturgical Celebration*

12. The Liturgical celebration, while making any Christian community so solidly firm that its members become "one in heart and soul" (Acts 4:32), much more ought to unify the community of the seminary and develop a community spirit among the students. The students are to be formed in the seminary in order that, through sacramental ordination, they will participate in the one priesthood; they will acquire a common priestly spirit; they will become cooperators with their bishop and will be closely united to him; and they will exercise a ministry of building up the Church. Thus, the liturgical celebration in a seminary is to be done in such a way that its community and supernatural nature will shine out and thus it will truly be a source and bond of community life which is proper to a seminary and is particularly apt to prepare the students for the unity of the presbyterate.²¹

The rector and the teachers should take care to celebrate the liturgy together with their students, so that the community nature of the liturgy and its riches will be made more clear. Also the teachers who do not reside in the seminary sometimes should be given the opportunity to join with the priests and students of the seminary and to participate in the sacred actions.

The students ought not only to actively participate in the liturgy but also should be invited to collaborate with the teachers in preparing it.

13. So that the students might experience the mystery of the Church as hierarchical, namely as consisting of a variety of members and distinct ministries, it should be suitably arranged that in the seminary there be deacons, acolytes, and lectors, who must be imbued with the spirituality of their respective offices, and who should exercise their ministries in liturgical actions.²² Thus the proper office of the ministerial priesthood will be clear to all the students, as well as the offices of deacon, lector, and acolyte.

In each seminary there should be a *schola cantorum*, according to the norm of the Instruction *Musicam sacram*, no. 19.

14. Although it would be better for the whole community as a general rule to participate in the liturgy, sometimes it will

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 46 and 47.

²² Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 28.

be opportune to celebrate some liturgical actions in small groups. This could be for those students who recently entered the seminary and are in need of liturgical catechesis, as mentioned in no. 8 above, or, in regional seminaries, for the students from the same diocese, or for some other sufficient reason. Caution should be exercised, however, to ensure that such groups do not infringe upon the unity of the whole community and that the prescriptions of the Holy See are observed.²³

15. Therefore, it should be carefully provided that the authentic, ecclesial nature of a liturgical assembly is clearly pointed out. The community of the seminary, as a part of the Church, is distinct and very different from other communities and groups. Thus, it must be an expression of the Church herself and it must be open to the whole ecclesial community. Sometimes the seminary community should participate in parish liturgical celebrations, principally on special occasions and, above all, on those notable occasions when the seminarians are gathered around the bishop.

While the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop is recommended to all the faithful,²⁴ this is more necessary for those who are to be the future collaborators of the bishop. Therefore, in the major solemnities and especially in the paschal triduum and other circumstances dictated by diocesan tradition, the seminarians, mainly the deacons, ought to be with their bishop and ought to carry out around him those ministries which are theirs by ordination or installation, either in the cathedral or in another church where the bishop celebrates the liturgy. There could be some difficulty in this practice for those seminaries where the students come from various dioceses. Sometimes opportunities should be provided for them to participate in the life of their own diocese and to be with their own bishop for the sacred liturgy. But, they should also learn to serve the local church where they are and the local bishop according to tradition.

d) The Celebration Itself

16. The students should remember that liturgical actions are not private but are celebrations of the Church. They belong to the whole body of the Church and show forth and affect

²³ Cf. Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, Instruction, *De missis pro coetibus particularibus*, May 15, 1969: AAS, LXI (1969), pp. 806ff.

²⁴ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 41.

that body. That is why these actions are governed by the laws of the Church.²⁵ Therefore, the celebration of the liturgy of seminaries must be exemplary with regard not only to the ritual, but also to the spiritual and pastoral mentality adopted,²⁶ the observance of the norms and the liturgical texts, and the laws issued by the Apostolic See and the Bishops' conferences.

17. So that the students might be introduced with greater spiritual profit into the riches of the liturgy, and to prepare them practically for their future ministry, a healthy variety in the way of celebrating and participating in the liturgy should be fostered.²⁷ This variety concerns the ways of celebrating Mass, the celebrations of the Word, whether penitential or baptismal, and bestowing blessings, whether with greater or lesser solemnity, adapted to various circumstances and exigencies, as these are permitted or recommended in the liturgical books and in the prescriptions of the Apostolic See.

This means the art of making the right choice from among the various possibilities offered in the liturgical books or even of choosing, composing, and using new texts adapted to various occasions (for instance, in the bidding prayers or admonitions). It is the duty of the teachers in the seminary, however, not only to help and lead the students, but also to correct them patiently so that there is formed in them a genuine notion of the liturgy solidly rooted in the doctrine and sense of the Church. Thus the future priests will be educated not only in how to use efficaciously in their pastoral practice the various possibilities offered by the renewed liturgy, but they will also be educated to observe proper limits.

18. The concern for variety mentioned above must never draw attention away from the need to grasp deeply and intimately those elements of the sacred liturgy which belong to its unchangeable part, as this is of divine institution.²⁸ The structure of the liturgy always remains the same and many gestures and texts of greater importance are often repeated. Therefore, the students are to be helped to penetrate more profoundly these parts of the liturgy and to meditate on them and think about them. They are to learn to draw out and to take from them ever fresh, spiritual nourishment.

²⁵ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, nos. 23 and 26.

²⁶ Cf. no. 46, below.

²⁷ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 52.

²⁸ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 21.

19. It is most valuable for the students to be familiar with the Latin language and with Gregorian chant. Not only will this provide for the faithful the possibility of singing and praying together in large groups, as the Second Vatican Council prescribes,²⁹ but it will be especially suitable for future priests, that they might penetrate more deeply into the tradition of the praying Church in order to grasp the genuine sense of the texts and to elucidate the vernacular translations by comparing them with the original texts.

*e) Preparing the Students for the Future Office
of Leader of the Liturgy*

20. Great care should be exercised in preparing the students to fulfill the office of moderator of the liturgy and president of the liturgical assembly by teaching them all things regarding a correct celebration of the liturgy, most especially holy Mass.³⁰ However, there is a twofold distortion to be avoided in this: 1) the students should not consider and experience the celebration of the liturgy as mere practice for learning their future pastoral roles. On the contrary, they must participate here and now in the liturgical mysteries taking due account of their present status. Their participation should be full, understanding, and devout; 2) nor should those liturgical texts be chosen which, it might be presumed, are suitable to be used for the faithful in future pastoral work. Rather it is better that they here and now experience all the riches of ecclesiastical prayer so that, imbued with there, they might afterwards be able to communicate these riches to the faithful.

21. What the students live and learn in the seminary should be put into practice in suitable pastoral activities. The appropriate time for this kind of initiation into liturgical activity and especially that in which the students are instructed in how to carry out different offices in various ways in parochial celebrations would be diverse, apt occasions during the school year. These occasions, however, would be especially offered during vacation periods and also — as a type of a more profound apprenticeship — before the end of their theological studies; when the future priests, generally already ordained deacons, have more possibilities in the ministries of the liturgy. So that this introduction into liturgical work will achieve its ends, however,

²⁹ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 54.

³⁰ Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharistic mysterium*, May 25, 1967: AAS, LIX [1967] no. 20, pp. 552-553.

and contribute to the proper preparation of the students, it is necessary that it be supervised and moderated by the seminary instructors or else by the diocesan liturgical experts.³¹

2) Norms for Individual Liturgical Acts

a) *The Mass and the Worship of the Holy Eucharist*

22. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is to appear to the students as the true source and apex of the whole Christian life through which they share in the love of Christ, drawing from this richest of founts supernatural strength for their spiritual lives and for their apostolic labor.³² It will be well to help them grasp this through the homily of the celebrant. Care must be taken to instill into the minds of the seminarians a strong affection for the Mass and for the most Holy Eucharist, which they might not have had before their entry into the seminary. Inculcated into their minds, as future presbyters, must be the idea that celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the principal office of a priest, an office in which our redemption is continuously exercised. Thus while joined to the action of Christ the Priest, they offer themselves entirely to God each day.³³

23. It is most fitting that the daily celebration of the Eucharist, completed with the reception of Holy Communion, always carried out in complete freedom and in a worthy manner, be the center of the seminary's entire life. The students should participate in this celebration in a conscientious way.³⁹

With the exceptions noted in no. 14 above, the Mass must be the work of the entire seminary community. In it each and every person is to share according to his status. Thus, the priests who live in the seminary and who are not bound by pastoral obligation to celebrate Mass somewhere else should, as a praiseworthy act, concelebrate. Also the deacons, acolytes, and lectors should do their respective tasks.³⁵

³¹ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, nos. 94, 97-99.

³² Cf. Constitution, *Lumen gentium*, no. 11; Decree, *Perfectae caritatis*, no. 6; *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 52; Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, March 4, 1979: AAS, LXXI [1979] pp. 310ff.

³³ Cf. Decree, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 13.

³⁴ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 52.

³⁵ Cf. no. 10 above and no. 41 below.

It is desirable that some parts of the Mass be always sung.³⁶

24. Communion under both species, a fuller form of the sign,³⁷ is recommended in seminaries, always, however, providing that the norms are observed which are in the General Introduction of the Roman Missal and in the decrees of the bishops.

25. During vacations the students, by regularly and constantly attending weekday Mass, should show their spiritual maturity and love of their priestly vocation.

26. In view of some modern ideas spread about here and there, seminarians should be warned about how strongly the Church advises priests to celebrate Mass daily, even if they are not bound to do so by a pastoral obligation or even if the faithful cannot be present. The celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice even then is an action of Christ and the Church offered to God for the salvation of the whole world.³⁸

27. Sharing in the Mass with common piety, spirit of faith, and understanding, the students ought to be led to a more ardent devotion to the Holy Eucharist, according to the mind of the encyclical letter *Mysterium fidei*, and the instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*.³⁹ There the practice of spending some time in prayer after having received Holy Communion and visiting the chapel during the day to pray before the Blessed Sacrament is recommended. Indeed, on some days of the year the most Blessed Sacrament could be exposed, according to the norms contained in the same instruction⁴⁰ and according to the dispositions of the local Ordinary.

³⁶ Cf. Instruction, *Musicam sacram*, published by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on March 5, 1967: AAS, LIX [1967] pp. 300ff. and also the *Institutiones generales Missalis Romani*.

³⁷ Cf. Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, published by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on May 25, 1967, no. 32: AAS, LIX [1967] p. 558: "In ea enim forma signum eucharistici convivii perfectius elucet et clarius exprimitur voluntas qua novum et aeternum testamentum in sanguine Domini ratum habetur, necnon ratio inter convivium eucharisticum et convivium echatologicum in regno Patris."

³⁸ Cf. Decree, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 13: Encyclical letter, *Mysterium fidei*, of Pope Paul VI, September 3, 1965: AAS, LVII (1965) p. 761.

³⁹ Cf. Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium fidei*, of Pope Paul VI, September 3, 1965: AAS, LVII (1965), pp. 770-773 and the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites *Eucharisticum mysterium*, *op. cit.*, mainly nos. 38 and 50. Also cf. the Roman Ritual, *De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam*, published in 1973 by the Vatican Polyglot Press. Also see the Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 18.

⁴⁰ Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction, *Eucharisticum mysterium*, nos. 62-66.

In arranging seminary chapels, the tabernacle in which the Holy Eucharist is reserved is to be so placed as to favor private visits, so that the students will not neglect to honor our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament fruitfully and easily, even by private adoration.⁴¹

b) The Liturgy of the Hours

28. The renewed Liturgy of the Hours⁴² has opened up great spiritual riches for the praying Church, especially for priests, deacons, and those religious bound to the choir. But, it also includes the whole People of God who are strongly invited to share in it.⁴³ Therefore, the Liturgy of the Hours is to be held in high honor in seminaries, not only by those bound to recite it, namely the priests and deacons, but also by the entire body of students.

29. The celebration of the Hours, therefore, is to be fostered in the seminary and often, especially on Sundays and feastdays, it should be solemnized with song. In the Liturgy of the Hours it is appropriate that the leader presiding at it should assist the students with short explanations. Thus, they will better taste the daily riches of the office, they will grow accustomed to understand and love it, and they will learn to draw nourishment from it from their personal prayer and contemplation. In this way the Liturgy of the Hours will be harmonized with the exercise of other legitimate devotions and will not operate to their exclusion.

30. Usually it is to be celebrated in common, observing the proper time of day: Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer. "By a venerable tradition of the Universal Church, they are the two hinges on which the daily office turns."⁴⁴

Wherever possible, Compline is to be recited before the students retire to their rooms and, when it is no possible to recite it in common, the students should be counseled to say it in private.

Where it is the custom to gather in common for some other prayers during the day, it is useful to celebrate the "middle hour."

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 53.

⁴² Cf. Paul VI, Apost. Constitution, *Laudis canticum*, November 1, 1970: AAS, LXIII (1971) pp. 527f.

⁴³ Cf. *Institutio generalis de liturgia horarum*, nos. 20, 22, 26-27.

⁴⁴ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 89.

Especially on the vigils of Sundays and solemnities it is laudable to celebrate the Office of Readings, and to do this, at least sometimes, by means of the rite known as the *vigilia protracta* as described in the book containing the Liturgy of the Hours.

Finally, during spiritual retreats it would be proper to celebrate the entire Divine Office with each of the Hours said at its proper time.

31. Great care must be exercised to form the minds of the students so that at the time of their diaconate they will accept the mandate from the Church of celebrating the whole Liturgy of the Hours each day gladly and with due understanding of what they are doing. For the Church deposes this task to those who share in sacred orders "so that the office of the whole community might certainly and continuously be carried out at least by these men, and so that the prayer of Christ might ceaselessly continue in the Church."⁴⁵

Therefore, seminary superiors ought to recall to their students how necessary it is to be specially prepared for an apt initiation into the recitation of the office, even beyond a lively, liturgical experience in its recitation. Consequently, the students must be taught not only the doctrinal principles set out in the *Institutio generalis de liturgia horarum*, but also to understand the psalms, in the light of the New Testament and of Tradition, so as to discern the mystery of Christ in them and to be able to draw from them nourishment for their private prayers.⁴⁶

c) Sunday and the Liturgical Year

32. For seminarians Sunday should be — whether they participate in the Mass in the seminary or are sent out into parishes — both in the celebration of the liturgy and throughout the course of the whole day, "the original feast day," which must be taught and inculcated into the students as a joyful celebration of the Paschal Mystery.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Institutio generalis de liturgia horarum*, no. 28; cf. decree, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 13.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 53.

⁴⁷ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 106.

The annual cycle of the mysteries of Christ should be celebrated in seminaries with special fervor, according to the idea of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.⁴⁸

Therefore, besides the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, celebrated according to the norms of the liturgical books, care should be taken so that in seminaries, Sundays and the main feasts of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the saints are given a feast day character making them really become days of joy.

Special importance is to be given to the celebration of the patronal feast of the diocese, or of the region if the seminary is "regional." The life and spirit of the patron saint should be familiar to the students. Also care should be taken to celebrate suitably the feast of the dedication of the cathedral church and the anniversary of the local bishop's ordination.

To prepare for each celebration, the kind of catechetical instruction should be given to the seminarists which is, at the same time adapted to the minds of present-day students and to the needs of future priests.

The pastoral value of popular customs should be explained. The whole liturgical year should be not only a liturgical celebration, but a way of life, in the manner of a spiritual journey, in which the mystery of Christ is communicated.

33. Full and perfect formation of the students requires that, throughout their years of preparation in the seminary, they experience the richer and more developed forms of the liturgical celebrations of the seasons and solemnities of the liturgical year. Since after their ordination to the sacerdotal ministry they will be directing the liturgy, and feast day solemnities will increase their apostolic activity, they will be obliged to repeat these celebrations in various places, oftentimes in more simple form, as provided for in the liturgical books. Thus it is clear that the way the students experience the liturgy in the seminary will be an example for them on which their future pastoral ministry will be based, as well as the foundation for their meditation on and knowledge of the liturgical year.

34. A correct and adapted pedagogy used in these matters cannot overlook the special nature of our age, which is marked,

⁴⁸ Cf. nos. 102-105, 108-111.

at least in some places, by a less lively faith. This seems to lead to lesser understanding of the sacred seasons and feasts. One must bear in mind that those students, who before their entry into the seminary did not have a fervent and deep experience of the liturgical year, must be formed to grasp the supernatural meaning of these things, so they will be capable of acquiring a deeper recognition of the salvific nature of these events and will receive the grace that is found in them.

d) The Sacrament of Penance

35. In the spiritual life of future priests, great importance is to be given to the sacrament of Penance, which, because it is a sacrament, is among all penitential acts the action most capable of arousing in them those dispositions required by the following of Christ and the spirit of the Gospel. These are daily conversion, purity of heart, and the virtue of penance coming from love of sacrifice.

36. The students, therefore, should often go to the sacrament of reconciliation to acquire the grace they need for their daily spiritual development.⁴⁹ Frequent confession, "is not a mere ritualistic repetition nor some kind of psychological exercise, but it is the careful work of perfecting the grace of Baptism so that, while we carry in our bodies the death of Jesus Christ, we allow the life of Jesus more and more to be manifested in us."⁵⁰

Access to the sacrament of reconciliation is to be a very personal and individual act, while its liturgical character is always to be retained. Generally, it is to be distinct from spiritual direction. The frequency of confession is to be decided by each person with his own confessor, following the traditions of the spiritual masters and the laws of the Church.

Furthermore, to point out more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance it sometimes⁵¹ helps, especially during Lent and during spiritual retreats, to have a liturgical, penitential celebration, according to what is proposed in the Roman Ritual,

⁴⁹ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 55.

⁵⁰ *Rituale Romanum... Ordo paenitentiae, Praenotanda*, no. 7; cf. Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, March 4, 1979: AAS, LXXI (1979) pp. 314ff.

⁵¹ Cf. *Rituale Romanum... Ordo paenitentiae, Praenotanda*, no. 22.

either without sacramental confession or else with confession and individual absolution. In this latter case, however, everyone's freedom is to be respected.

*e) The Celebration of Ordinations
and of the Preparatory Rites*

37. The Church accompanies candidates for the priesthood in their initiation, one that is not merely doctrinal and spiritual in formation, but one that also consists of certain religious ceremonies.

During the course of study and following the norms set down by the Bishops' Conference, the time comes when following the application of the aspirants it is agreed that they have the necessary gifts and show themselves to be sufficiently mature. They are then invited to manifest this proposal publicly. After he receives this proposal in writing, the bishop gives ecclesial force to their selection and receives them through the rite of admission, that is, admission among the candidates aspiring to the diaconate and the priesthood.⁵²

Then, observing the time intervals established or to be established by the Holy See or the Bishops' Conference, their theological curriculum⁵³ "are to receive the ministries of lector and acolyte unless they have already been installed in them. These they are to exercise for a suitable length of time, and in this way they will be prepared to carry out their future duties with regard to the word and the altar,"⁵⁴ in a more fitting manner.

38. The celebration of these rituals together with the instructions that precede them provide a fine occasion to instruct the students in each of them and to help them to understand better the meaning, importance, and duties of the office they receive and to obtain the suitable spiritual enrichment which is demanded for the exercise of each ministry and order. Further elements for this spiritual and doctrinal preparation of the students can be easily deduced from the guidelines set

⁵² Cf. *Motu Proprio* of Pope Paul VI, *Ad pascendum*, August 15, 1972, I and III, AAS, LXIV (1972) p. 538-539.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, IV: AAS, LXIV (1972) p. 539.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, II: AAS, LXIV (1972) p. 539.

down about the offices of lector and acolyte in the *Motu Proprio Ad pascendum*⁵⁵ and *Ministeria quaedam*.⁵⁶

Insofar as it is possible, these celebrations should involve the participation of the entire seminary community and this could take place either in the seminary or in the candidates' home parishes.

39. Although much pastoral fruit can be produced when they are held in the home parish of the seminarian or in the parish where he exercised some pastoral ministry, sacred ordinations to the diaconate and to the priesthood are joyful events which involve the entire diocesan community. Therefore, the whole diocese should be informed about them and invited to attend them. The celebration of these events, which should be prepared with great care and dignity, requires that in the course of them the bishop be surrounded by his priests, deacons, seminarians, and faithful laity.

40. Sacred ordinations deeply affect the life of the whole seminary community. Not only the ordinands, but all the seminarians should be given a previous catechetical instruction concerning the rites and texts. This will help them draw from these ceremonies the authentic doctrine of the priesthood and the spiritual character of the apostolic life.

41. Lectors and acolytes ought to exercise their offices. Also the deacons, before they are called to the priesthood, should exercise their ordained ministry for some time either in the seminary or in some parish or, better still, in association with the bishop.

42. Since the Church has made some considerable changes in the rites and steps leading up to the priesthood, it is patently clear that seminary superiors must adapt themselves to these changes and also renew their style of formational work so that this new discipline will bear its desired fruits.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, I, c: AAS, LXIV (1972) p. 539.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Ministeria quaedam*, V and VI: AAS, LXIV (1972) pp. 532-533.

Part Two

THE TEACHING OF THE SACRED LITURGY IN SEMINARIES

a) General Principle

43. Besides the first and elementary introduction in the liturgy which is to be imparted, when necessary, when the students first enter the seminary, as mentioned in no. 8 above,⁵⁷ the Bishops' Conferences are to arrange that in their national *Ratio institutionis* the teaching of the liturgy is given that place in the four-year theology course which satisfies the prescription of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* no. 16: "The study of the sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of study; in theological faculties it is to rank among principal subjects. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects." This prescription, which is summed up in no. 79 of the *Ratio fundamentalis*, must be understood in its genuine sense and put into effect, as the following paragraphs indicate.

b) The Proper Object and Purpose of This Study

44. Liturgical studies are to be imparted in such a way that the needs of modern times are suitably met. These are mainly theological, pastoral, and ecumenical:

a. The strict connection between the liturgy and the doctrine of the Faith has a special importance for the correct liturgical formation of future priests. This must be clearly pointed out as the study of the liturgy unfolds. In prayer the Church especially expresses her faith so that "*legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*."⁵⁸ Therefore, the *lex supplicandi* is not only to be observed in such a way that the *lex credendi* is not endangered, but scholars working in the field of sacred liturgy are to investigate carefully the tradition of divine worship, particularly when they study the nature of the Church and the doctrine and discipline of the sacraments.

⁵⁷ This first liturgical apprenticeship can be made a part of the "Introductory Course in the Mystery of Christ and the History of Salvation" which the Decree, *Optatam totius*, no. 14, and the *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 62, speak about.

⁵⁸ Cf. St. Prosper of Aquitaine, *Indiculus*, c. 8: Denzinger-Schönmetzer, no. 246.

b. With regard to the pastoral aspect, it is of the highest importance that liturgical renewal promoted by the Second Vatican Council be correctly and fully grasped by future priests in the light of sound doctrine and of tradition, both Western and Eastern. The norms of the renewed liturgy should be explained to the students so they will understand better the reasons for the adjustments and changes decreed by the Church. This will help them to discern the options which can be legitimately selected and to know the serious and difficult questions presently being discussed in this field, thus being able to distinguish the immutable part of the liturgy which comes from divine institution from other parts which can be changed.⁵⁹

c. Also ecumenical dialogue, promoted by the same Second Vatican Council, requires a careful liturgical preparation. As a matter of fact, this dialogue gives rise to many difficult liturgical questions, and to evaluate them adequately requires a good preparation by the students.

a) The Scope of Liturgical Studies and Teaching Procedures

45. It belongs to each Bishops' Conference to determine in its individual *Ratio institutionis* the way in which the liturgy is to be taught in the seminaries. In the Appendix to this Instruction there is a list, by way of example, of the main points that seem opportune to treat. Here, meanwhile, the more general norms are simply outlined.

46. Above everything else, liturgical acts, both as regards their texts and their ceremonies, must be explained to the students.

The prayers and orations offered by the sacred liturgy are to be explained in a way that sheds light upon the doctrinal treasures and the spiritual values they contain. For this it is not enough to read them in their vernacular translations, but it is necessary to use the original texts and to have them illustrated with the help of Sacred Scripture and of the traditions of the Fathers. Furthermore, the literary form of Christian "euchology" and especially of the psalms is not easily understood without a certain ability in literary appreciation having been acquired.

The teacher should instruct the students with care in the *Institutiones* which are found in the foreword of the Missal

and the book of the Liturgy of the Hours. This also applies to the *Praenotanda* which are found at the beginning of each chapter in the Roman Ritual. In these documents one can find the theological doctrine, the pastoral motivation, and the spiritual aspect not only of the rites in general but also of each of their parts. Then too, since these documents often propose a variety of ways of enacting the same ceremonies, the teacher, in using them, should so develop the judgment of the students as to give them the capacity to know how to evaluate and discern the various ways of doing things which can be legitimately selected according to different circumstances. Also they should be led to understand why the rubrics use such terms as "*de more*," "*pro opportunitate*," or "*his quae laudabiliter fiunt*."

47. Since the historical part of the liturgy has assumed great importance,⁵⁹ it is advisable that, in teaching, the history of the rites be carefully described, enabling the students to understand better their meaning and to grasp how they are composed of unchangeable elements coming from God's institution and other elements "which can and ought to be varied in the course of time whenever there are parts of them which seem to respond less than adequately to the very nature of the liturgy or which have become less functional."⁶¹ It should be pointed out how in various circumstances the Church displayed her pastoral art by taking into account the different customs of people and their various cultures. Moreover, especially from studying the historical documents of the rites, sacramental theology can be helped to acquire greater clarity and certitude.

48. In describing the rites from the historical viewpoint, due importance ought to be given also to the traditions of the Oriental Church: "For, distinguished as they are by their venerable antiquity, they are bright with that Tradition which was handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers, a Tradition which forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Catholic Church."⁶² Indeed, pastoral reasons also draw attention in these days to the value of knowing these Eastern-rite liturgies.

49. However, it is preferable that, beyond the treatment given to single liturgical actions, the very nature of the entire

⁵⁹ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 79; cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 21.

⁶⁰ Cf. no. 44 a above.

⁶¹ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 21.

⁶² The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the Decree on the Oriental Churches, *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, no. 1.

liturgy should be theologically explained, following the mind of the Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, nos. 5-11. For this purpose seminarians are to be brought to a deep understanding of the Paschal Mystery of Christ "from whom all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power,"⁶³ the history of salvation,⁶⁴ and the presence of Christ in the sacred liturgy.⁶⁵ Also, the idea of signs must be studied since the liturgy uses perceptible things to signify invisible, divine reality⁶⁶ so that through these signs, in a way proper to each of them, the sanctification of men and women might be effected.⁶⁷ From these signs it must be made clear how the liturgical assembly manifests God's Church insofar as she is the People of God, enjoying unity along with a distinction of various ministries.⁶⁸

50. For a deeper theological treatment of the liturgy as well as to resolve many problems confronting pastors of souls in the ordering and promoting of the liturgy, it is necessary to appreciate certain findings of modern sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics and the comparative history of religions, etc. These throw more than a little light in certain cases on liturgical studies, but only within the limits established by the supernatural nature of the liturgy. In these matters what must be cultivated in the students is a sense of discernment, giving them the capacity to evaluate soundly the importance of these kinds of disciplines while at the same time teaching them to avoid anything that could lessen the full, supernatural force of Catholic worship.

In the use of these sciences, the following norm should be observed, "... care must be taken to avoid multiplying the number of courses. Rather insert new questions or new ways of looking at things into the courses which are already provided, where this is possible."⁶⁹

*d) The Endowments of a Liturgy Professor and the
Relationship of the Liturgy with Other Disciplines
Taught in Seminaries*

51. So that all this will be correctly taught, there ought to be in each seminary a special professor suitably prepared to

⁶³ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 61.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 5.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 6-7.

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 33.

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, no. 7.

⁶⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 26-32; 41-42.

⁶⁹ *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 80.

teach liturgy. As far as possible he should have had his preparation in an institute which has this special purpose.⁷⁰ He should have studied theology and history and ought to understand pastoral reality as well as being endowed with a sense of the public prayer of the Church. He should well understand that his work is not simply scientific and technical, but rather "mystagogical," so that he may introduce the students into the liturgical life and into its spiritual character.

52. In a special way the professors of Sacred Scripture must remember how much richer is the selection of biblical readings offered to the faithful in the renewed liturgy in these times. Indeed, it should be taught how all liturgical actions and signs derive their meaning from Holy Scripture.⁷¹ Hence it will be necessary that future priests receive a fuller understanding of the sacred texts and of the history of salvation. This means not only the science of exegesis, but also "that warm and living love for Scripture to which the venerable Tradition of both Eastern and Western rites gives testimony."⁷²

53. To achieve greater progress in liturgical study more than a little help will come from its coordination with other disciplines, as the Second Vatican Council recommends.⁷³ Thus for example, in treating especially the doctrine and practice of the sacraments, there ought to be close cooperation between the liturgy professor and the professors of dogma, moral, and canon law. There should be frequent conversations to foster a fruitful common spirit with everyone working together for the same end in order to avoid frequent repetition of the same things and, indeed, to avoid contradicting each other.

54. In arranging the class schedule for the theological courses, it would be desirable, if possible, to treat liturgical questions at the same time that theological questions on similar issues are being taught. For instance, at the time that ecclesio-

⁷⁰ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 15; *Instructio ad executionem Constitutionis de sacra Liturgia recte ordinandam*, issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, September 26, 1964, no. 11: AAS, LVI (1964) p. 879.

⁷¹ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 24.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 16; "Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy, as also the unity which underlies all priestly training." Cf. Decree, *Optatam totius*, no. 16; *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 90.

logy is taught, the liturgy classes would explain the theological nature of the praying Church, and so forth.

In some seminaries it perhaps might help to have the liturgy professor also teach the whole tract on the sacraments. This would be done of course only if he were as well versed in sacramental theology as in liturgy.

55. Care must be taken that from the study of liturgy those elements and aspects are drawn out that can contribute to the final theological synthesis which, according to the *Ratio fundamentalis* no. 63, should involve the whole theological curriculum. This is especially important at the final stage of the theological studies.

e) *Music and Sacred Art*

56. Given the importance of sacred music in liturgical celebrations, the students should be trained in music by experts, including a practical training, in those things necessary for them in their future roles as presidents and moderators of liturgical celebrations. In this training, account should be taken not only of the talents of the individual students, but also of new techniques now generally used in music schools, which will make this instruction more profitable for the students. Above all, care must be taken that the students are not simply taught a vocal or instrumental art, but that they are given a true and authentic formation of their minds and their feelings, molding them to know and appreciate the better musical works of the past and also to know how to choose soundly and correctly from among present-day experiments.⁷⁴

57. Equally, the seminarians, "during their philosophical and theological studies are to be taught about the history and development of sacred art and about the sound principles underlying the production of its works. As a result they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art."⁷⁵ Indeed, the archaeological study of Christian antiquities can contribute much toward throwing light on the liturgical life and the Faith of the early Church.

⁷⁴ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, nos. 112-121; Instruction, *Musica sacra* of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, March 5, 1967: AAS, LIX (1967) pp. 300ff.

⁷⁵ Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 129.

58. Finally, it is extremely necessary that the students be taught the art of speaking and of using symbols, as well as how to use communications media. Indeed, in liturgical celebrations it is of the highest importance that the faithful be able to understand the priest, not only in what he says, whether in the homily or in the prayers and orations, but also in what he does by way of gestures and actions. Formation for this purpose is of such high importance in the renewed liturgy that it deserves very special consideration.

*f) Practical Pastoral Apprenticeship
in Liturgical Ministry*

59. Practical pastoral apprenticeship in liturgical ministry must be imparted at suitable times throughout the whole course of study in various selected circumstances.⁷⁶ It reaches its peak during the final year of study, when future priests, after their seminary liturgical life has given them a taste from the fountain of true Christian spirituality, will receive a more careful preparation specifically adapted to the special circumstances in which they will be exercising their priestly ministry. During this time of practical formation, there must be insistence upon the pastoral norms and cautions which the bishops have decreed in regard to preparation for and administration of the sacraments. In imparting this formation, the seminary professors should consult the diocesan liturgical commission.

This adaptation to local conditions and prescriptions requires that the student also must learn and appreciate the various forms of popular devotion which are approved and recommended by Church authorities.⁷⁷

*g) More Thorough Liturgical Preparation
for Some Students*

60. In order that dioceses might have at their disposition some priests who are well qualified and able to teach liturgy and to direct diocesan liturgical commissions, it is necessary that some candidates who are gifted in this line be prepared for such

⁷⁶ Cf. nos. 20-21 above.

⁷⁷ Cf. Constitution, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 13.

work. Therefore, after such priests have finished their normal seminary course and have spent some time in pastoral work they should be sent by their bishops to attend one of these specialized institutes established by the Holy See or by the Bishops' Conferences.⁷⁸ This is especially urgent for those places where, in the judgment of competent Church authorities, a more thorough liturgical adaptation is needed.

h) Liturgical Formation in the Continuing Education for Some Students

61. In the field of continuing or permanent education of priests who have already finished their seminary course, according to the norm of the Second Vatican Council,⁷⁹ there ought to be a place for studying sacred liturgy. This is quite important because in the course of normal seminary training it is not possible to exhaust the treasury of the sacred liturgy and because modern circumstances make this advisable. As a matter of fact, human and societal customs change so rapidly now that it is not possible to foresee, during the seminary training period, what new difficulties will show up in pastoral work, nor what kind of liturgical confusion might arise. Neither is it possible to overlook the wide and swift diffusion of periodicals, meetings, use of the media, and the pressure of public opinion, which also affect the sacred liturgy, posing for it difficult questions, which nevertheless must be answered by priests since it involves their daily activity.

Conclusion

62. Ever greater fruit is being daily produced by the renewed liturgy. This is not surprising since the liturgy is the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. Priests and seminarians must recognize more than the other faithful these benefits, since in the

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ratio fundamentalis*, no. 85.

⁷⁹ Cf. Decree, *Optatam totius*, no. 22; *Ratio fundamentalis*, nos. 100-101.

liturgy they acquire a deeper and fuller experience of the priesthood and its requirements. They are invited to "imitate what they handle."

In this way, therefore, the assiduous study and exercise of the sacred liturgy ceaselessly recalls to their minds the goal towards which all their apostolic labors tend. At the same time all their study efforts, their pastoral work, and their interior lives become more mature and more deeply unified.

Given at Rome from the offices of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education on the Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday, the third day of June in the year of our Lord 1979.*

Gabriel-Marie Cardinal Garrone
Prefect

Antonio-Maria Javierre-Ortas
Titular Archbishop of Meta
Secretary

* Note: We publish this instruction upon the request of the delegates who attended the 10th Convention of Formators in the Philippines held on October 24-28, 1983 in Davao City.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF OZAMIS

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Quo maius quidem commodum haud paucis suppeditaretur Christifidelibus intra fines ecclesiasticarum Zamboangensis et Cagayanae hactenus degentibus, praesules seu pastores eisdem praepositi, consulta Episcopali Insularum Philippinarum Conferentia idem sentiente, nuper ab Apostolica hac Sede poposcerunt ut, ad mentem Decreti — Christus Dominus — n. 40, et Ecclesia Ozamisana ad gradum honoremque Sedis metropolitanae eveheretur et provincia ecclesiastica ibidem eodem nomine institueretur. Quapropter, cum etiam constet eidem rei assentiri venerabilem Fratrem Brunonem Torpigliani, Archiepiscopum titulo Mallianensem et in Insulis Philippinis Nuntium Apostolicum, Nos de consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium negotiis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis praepositorum, suppleto autem consensu quorum interest vel interesse censetur, eiusmodi petitioni concedimus deque plenitudine Apostolicae potestatis Nostrae per has Litteras ea decernimus et iubemus quae sequuntur. Dioecesim Ozamisanam ab ecclesiastica provincia Zamboangensi seiungimus et ad gradum Ecclesiae metropolitanae eam attolimus iuraque proinde ac privilegia ei tribuimus, quibus reliquae huiusmodi ordinis Ecclesiae ad normam iuris communis sunt auctae. Hac de causa istic ecclesiasticam etiam condimus provinciam **OZAMISANAM**, quae ut talis constabit: metropolitana Ozamisana Ecclesia novae provinciae Sede eademque a Zamboangensi seiuncta; dioecesibus Dipologana et Pagadianensi, quas nunc a provincia Zamboangensi separamus; diocesi Iliganensi et praelatura Maraviensi, quas Nos nunc a provincia Cagayana distrahimus, quasque una

cum Dipologana et Pagadianensi ut suffraganeas metropolitanae Ozamisanae subicimus. Ad Ozamisanum autem pro tempore pastorem quod attinet, sicut venerabilis Frater Jesus Dosado primus istic dignitate archiepiscopali ac Metropolitae propria a Nobis insignitur idemque iuribus et privilegiis ornatur congruentibus, cui tamen et muneris onera imponuntur, ita futuri quoque Ozamisani praesules eadem dignitate iisdemque Meropolitarum iuribus et privilegiis praediti erunt necnon obligationibus adstricti ad sacrorum canonum normas. Ad effectum quae hic praescripsimus adducat memoratus venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, cui necessarias et opportunas facultates facimus, aut alius vir in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutus ab eo delegatus, onere urcumque imposito curandi ut, re acta, certa veraque de executione documentorum exempla ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis transmittantur. Has Litteras Apostolicas nunc et in posterum ratas esse volumus suosque effectus habere, contrariis non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quarto et vicesimo mensis Januarii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo tertio, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a publicis Ecc. negotiis

† Sebastianus Card. Baggio
J. C. pro Episcopis Praefectus

Marcellus Rossetti, Proton. Apost.
Liborius Leaccia, Proton. Apost.

APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. TEODORO BUHAIN

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

dilecto filio **TEODORO BUHAIN**, hactenus moderatori instrumenti communicationis socialis cui nomen — Radio Veritas —, electo Episcopo titulari Bacanariensi et Auxiliari archidioecesis Manilensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Ecclesiae curae est ut pro temporum necessitatibus filius suis prospiciat, et hoc sane efficit singulas suas portiones ubivis gentium dispersitas apris instruendo subsidiis, quorum primum patet esse opportunitatem Postorum assignationem. Eandem Nos adhibentes curam perlibenter Venerabilem Fratrem Nostrum Jacobum S.R.E. Cardinalem Sin, Archiepiscopum Manilensem, audivimus precantem ut sibi alium in episcopali ordine daremus adiutorem, cum eius ecclesiasticae circumscriptionis rerum religiosarum et civilium progressus pastorales labores multiplicasset. Quoniam, autem, dilecte fili, tu ad illud obeundum munus aptus esse videbaris, tum ob ingenium et virtutes, tum ob usum et consuetudinem cum eius regionis gente, idem tibi statuimus delegare. Nunc consultis Venerabilibus fratribus Nostris S.R.E. Cardinalibus, qui negotia Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis agunt, auctoritate Nostra Apostolica te Episcopum creamus et Auxiliarem archidioecesis Manilensis nominamus et constituimus, simul titulum vacantis Ecclesiae **BACANARIENSIS** tibi tribuentes et iura, quae in Apostolicis Litteris — Ecclesiae Sanctae — indicantur, Motu Proprio datis die VI mensis Augusti anno MCMLXVI. Quod ad tuam vero attinet episcopalem ordinationem, licet tibi eam extra urbem Romanam accipere iuxta liturgicas normas a quolibet catholico Episcopo, post factam fidei professionem postque ius iurandum interpositum delitatis erga hanc. Apostolicam Sedem, teste Episcopo Ordinatore vel alio Sacro Antistite. Tuum erit deinde utriusque actus formulas quam primum mittere ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis ex more signatas et impressas sigillo. Quod si, dilecte fili, non leve tibi imponitur onus, dignitati equidem acquabile, de Dei gloria cogita, in cuius agrum colendum immitteris, deque animis, quibus si bene ministraveris pro tua parte, tuam pigneraberis salutem. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quinto nongentesimo octogesimo tertio, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a publicis Eccl. negotiis

APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. FRANCISCO SAN DIEGO

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

dilecto filio **FRANCISCO SAN DIEGO**, e clero saeculari Manilensi, electo Episcopo titulo Licensi et Coadiutori cum iure successionis Vicarii Apostolici Palavanensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Decet et iuvat Nos, totius Christi gregis Pastorem, Fratribus Nostris Episcopis auxilia dare, quae maiori ovium suarum utilitati prospicientes postulant. Cum igitur Venerabilis Frater Gregorius Espiga e Infante, Vicarius Apostolicus Palavanensis, hac eadem causa petivisset ut sibi Episcopus Coadiutor cum iure successionis concederetur, libenter postulationem exaudivimus. Tuis autem, dilecte Fili, inspectis dotibus et virtutibus, imprimis pietate, apostolico studio, rerum agendarum peritia, prudentia atque doctrina, munus illud tibi committere statuimus. Audita igitur Sacra Congregatione pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide, ex Nostra Apostolica auctoritate et potestate, te Episcopum creatum Vicario Apostolico Palavensi Coadiutorem assignamus cum iure successionis, titulo insignitum Ecclesiae **LICENSIS**, collatis iuribus quae Apostolicae Litterae — Ecclesiae Sanctae — describunt, Motu Proprio datae die VI mensis Augusti anno MDCCCCLXVI. Quod vero pertinet ad episcopalem tuam ordinationem, poteris eam etiam extra urbem Roman accipere, servatis liturgicis legibus a catholico Episcopo quem malueris facta prius coram eodem vel alio sacro Praesule fidei professione et iure iurando interposito fidelitatis erga hanc Apostolicam Sedem. Formulas deinde, iuxta quas hos egeris actus, ex more signatas et sigillo impressas curabis quam primus ad Sacram Congregationem pro Gentium Evangelizatione mittendas. Denique, dilecte Fili, sciens te per Nos a Spiritu Sancto delectum, omni diligentia promptaque voluntate huic obsecunda, ut quae voluerit facias, quae noluerit detrectes, cum et tua et animarum, quas es recturus, hinc pendeat salus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, nonagesimo octogesimo tertio, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a publicis Eccl. negotiis

RESPONSA AD PROPOSITA DUBIA

September 29, 1983

Your Excellency:

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has asked me to communicate the following to the Episcopal Conference.

In the past, the same Sacred Congregation, and also that for Sacraments and Divine Worship, had authorized some Episcopal Conferences and some individual Ordinaries to permit priests suffering from alcoholism to celebrate Mass, under certain conditions, with grape juice instead of wine.

Now, after further study, the Sacred Congregation has decided to adopt the alternative proposed in the first part of the document "Responsa ad proposita dubia" (cfr. Acta Apostolicae Sedis LXXIV — 1982 — page 1298 — copy attached), that is, that the priests in question may either concelebrate and receive the Eucharist "per intinctionem", or celebrate individually, also receiving per intinctionem and having an assistant, who may be a person, consume the remainder of the consecrated wine.

Consequently, the general faculties given to Episcopal Conferences and to individual Ordinaries concerning the use of grape juice are no longer valid. However, the permissions granted in the past to single priests for the use of grape juice remain valid, it being understood that the grape juice be fresh, or preserved by methods which do not cause fermentation or alter its nature.

In conveying the foregoing, I avail myself of the opportunity to renew the assurances of my deep respect and warm personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) † Bruno Torpigliani
Apostolic Nuncio

H. E. Mons. Antonio Ll. Mabutas, D.D.
President — CBCP
375 Arzobispo Street
Intramuros, Manila

ACTA SS. CONGREGATIONUM SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

Responsa ad proposita dubia.

Patres Sacrae Congregationis pro Doctrina Fidei, propositis in ordinario coetu quae sequuntur dubiis, respondendum esse censuerunt ut infra ad singula:

I

- D. 1) Utrum sacerdoti, qui ratione alcoholismi vel alius infirmitatis secundum iudicium proprii medici non potest sumere ne illam quidem minimam quantitatem vini consecrati quae in Missa adhiberi solet, suggerendum sit ut communicetur “per intinctionem” in Missa concelebrata.

R. *Affirmative.*

- D. 2) Utrum Ordinarius loci permittere queat sacerdoti, qui in eadem versatur conditione, ut etiam solus celebret Missam sese communicans “per intinctionem”, dummodo fidelis, qui Missae assistat, consummet quod de vino consecrato remansit.

R. *Affirmative.*

II

- D. 1) Utrum Ordinarius loci permittere possit, communionem sub sola specie vini illis fidelibus, qui morbo sic dicto celiachia laborant, cuius ratio curandi exigit, ut a glutine, praesenti in farina frumenti ac proinde etiam in pane eucharistico, abstineant.

R. *Affirmative.*

D. 2) Utrum Ordinarius loci permittere possit, ut pro supradictis fidelibus sacerdos speciales hostias, quibus glutinum ablatum est, consecret.

R. *Negative.*

SS.mus Dominus Noster Ioannes Paulus divina Providentia PP.II, Audientia concessa infrascripto Secretario S. Congregationis pro Doctrina Fidei, supradicta responsa adprobavit et publici iuris fieri ius sit.

Ex Aedibus S. Congregationis pro Doctrina Fidei, die 29 Octobris 1982.

IOSEPHUS Card. RATZINGER, *Praefectus*

† Fr. Hieronymus Hamer, O.P., Archiep. tit. Lorien, *a Secretis*

CANON LAW

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CBCP ON THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW*

Your Excellencies:

I should like to express my gratitude for the invitation extended to me on your behalf by His Excellency the President of the CBCP, Archbishop Antonio Mabutas, to share a few moments with you at the beginning of this meeting which has been convened in order to study and determine the application in the Philippines of those Norms in which the New Code of Canon Law gives to the Episcopal Conferences a measure of discretion.

It is, I think, particularly fitting that this special meeting should have been arranged for the purpose in question, since it demonstrates that collegiality of which the New Code itself is the result and the fruit. That this is so, was emphasized by the Holy Father in the Apostolic Constitution in which, on January 25, last, he promulgated the Code. He pointed out that the New Code is a logical consequence of the Second Vatican Council, in which collegiality was given ample expression, and that the preparatory work on the Code was pursued in that same spirit of collegiality, which is inevitably reflected in the final and definitive text which will become effective on Sunday, November 27, the first day of the next liturgical year.

And similarly, your work in these days will reflect the collegial preparation of the Code, as you seek to ensure that the Code will, in the Philippines, be an instrument which will render more efficacious the mission of the Church, which is the salvific mission entrusted to it by Christ.

And it is from the lips of Christ Himself that we hear what could well be taken as a guiding force in any consideration

* Address of His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio on the occasion of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines at the Pius Catholic Center, on November 7, 1983.

of this nature. He said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come, not to abolish, but to fulfill them." Far from wishing His Church to live without laws, therefore, Christ saw in the law the means by which His followers would be led and conducted towards a way of life in which the practice of the virtues would become easy, and indeed natural. The Code therefore is not in any sense a substitute for faith, grace, charity or sanctity in the life of the Church or of the individual. On the contrary, its aim is to promote an ever more intensive striving towards the building up of those virtues and graces by which the members of the Church are made living and active members of Christ's Mystical Body.

Since this is so, and the Holy Father states it also in promulgation of the Code, it follows that the Code is in fact a form of Ecclesiology — complementing the Conciliar Magisterium contained in the Dogmatic and in the Pastoral Constitutions on the Church. And so, what is 'new' in the Conciliar Ecclesiology is reflected also in what is new in the New Code: in neither case however is there any deviation from the sacred Deposit of Faith and Revelation which are the expression of the eternal and unchanging truths about God and Man. The Code, like the Council, manifests fidelity in newness, and newness in fidelity.

I can only pray therefore, that the deliberations of this Assembly will not be purely legal or canonical. I pray that they will be also ecclesiological, and that they will result in added impulse and vitality, not only in the administrative and organizational aspects of the life of the Church in the Philippines, but also in the faith and hope and charity which are the marks of Christ's followers. The Holy Father's wish as he promulgated the Code was that it would be received and implemented in joy and peace, with justice and obedience, and that its external observance would be the reflection of internal compliance with the laws which God has implanted in men's hearts, and which are in turn, the safeguards of the eternal values without which man's existence would lose its meaning.

It is in this context that the New Code of Canon Law has been promulgated and it is with this aim that you will un-

doubtedly conduct your work in these days. Since this work is, as I remarked earlier, in a sense, a continuation and an extension and an application of the work of the Second Vatican Council, I make mine, and share with you a short excerpt, from the prayer which was said at the beginning of all working meetings of that Council:

We are here before you, O Holy Spirit, conscious of our innumerable sins, but united in a special way in your Holy Name. Come and abide with us. Deign to penetrate our hearts. Be the guide of our actions, indicate the path we should take, and show us what we must do so that, with your help, our work may be in all things pleasing to you... Thus united in your Name, may we in our every action follow the dictates of your mercy and justice, so that, today and always, our judgments may not be alien to you, and in eternity we may obtain the unending reward of our actions.

The Code and the Council

By

Archbishop Jerome Hamer, O.P.

1. In the eyes of John XXIII, the revision of the Code of Canon Law was inseparable from the work of the Ecumenical Council. They constituted two points in one and the same programme, announced the same day at St. Paul's Outside the Walls on 25 January 1959.

Naturally, that revision could not begin until after the Council. In fact, it was a matter of translating into legislation the principles, the decisions and the directives adopted during the course of the four sessions, that is, of giving juridical form to the content of the Council.

For the first time in history a reform of ecclesiastical legislation could be based on a widely elaborated doctrine of the Church. Practically the principal text of the Second Vatican Council is the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) which, together with a series of documents for internal renewal and some guidelines for post-conciliar dialogue, constitutes an impressive ecclesiological datum which has no comparison with that left us from the past. Certainly, the entire heritage of the Church is present, but it is found in the complex of an organic synthesis which gives it more value, grants it greater breadth and allows it to confront new situations.

Open the new Code and you will discover the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* and of the other Council documents. The Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code has faithfully completed the task entrusted to it by John XXIII and confirmed by his successors.

2. Of course, *all* the Council is not found in the Code. The doctrinal and pastoral teaching of Vatican II offers precise directives which the Law must keep in mind and issues a complex of already well-formulated norms; but it does not dwell upon directly or indirectly juridical considerations. The Church's doctrine will always be richer than Canon Law, since not everything can be formulated in laws.

On the other hand, the Code contains some norms which are not found in the Council. Indeed, it will be remembered that from the first session it was evident that the schemata had to be reduced considerably and that a large part of the questions foreseen had to be entrusted to the Commission of the Code, instituted for that purpose at precisely that moment (29 March 1963, between the first and the second sessions). In addition, the Code was to legislate on subjects indispensable to the life of the Church which at the Council had been treated only vaguely or not at all.

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3. Vatican II presents an ecclesiology of communion easily recognizable in the Code. Typical in this respect is the first canon (can. 204, par. 1) of Book II (*De Populo Dei*). It defines the faithful (members of the Church) in consideration of their vocation to fulfil, each according to his condition, the mission entrusted by God to his Church on earth. This vocation is based on their incorporation in Christ through Baptism, their constitution in the People of God, their participation in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. This definition of the faithful precedes the canon which differentiates them as clergy and laity, according to whether or not they were constituted sacred ministers through the Sacrament of Holy Orders (can. 207, par. 1).

Everyone is called to take part in the mission of the Church, since everyone is baptized and made part of the one People of God. This universal call, from which no one is excluded, establishes true equality among the faithful, which the Code mentions (can. 208). Nevertheless, Baptism does not confer, *per se*, a kind of general qualification to assume any task whatsoever in the Christian community. In carrying out the mission of the Church, each one works according to his condition and his office (*secundum propriam cuiusque conditionem et munus*: can. 208). Therefore, the sacraments received (Confirmation, Marriage and above all Holy Orders), the other spiritual gifts, the

(Continued on page 85)

CASES AND INQUIRIES

A PERPLEXED MARRIAGE CASE

Tony and Gina came to see me two weeks before the date they had planned to marry. I made the investigation myself, but knowing them to be practical Catholics, I did not bother much to see what they answered to the questionnaire given them. But the day before the wedding the sister of Gina approached me and gave the information that Gina was under-age, being only 13 years and 10 months old. I checked the written answers given by Gina and found out that she stated she was already 14.

My parish is quite far from the city where the Bishop has his residence. I called Gina back and she told me there was a mistake in the written investigation. She admitted she was 13 years old. I requested the couple to postpone the wedding four or five days so that I will be able to communicate with the Bishop. They refused and got married before the judge instead, since everything was prepared for the wedding.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Did they do the correct thing by getting married before the judge?*
- 2) What could have I done to prevent them from getting married civilly?*
- 3) Could have I married them, knowing the impediment?*

A Parish Priest

The case proposed by our consultant reflects some defects in the way of conducting the investigation previous to marriage. How this should be done is declared in canon 1020, §2 of the 1917 Codex, still in force. It states that the parish priest who has the right to solemnize the marriage "should ask both male

and female, separately and prudently whether they are free or not from any impediment, and give freely their consent, especially the woman..." This implies that an oral, personal and individual investigation is to be conducted. Only in this way good results can be achieved in performing the investigation as contemplated by the legislator. But if the parties are merely given a questionnaire to fill up, the results cannot be satisfactory. Their answers will not reflect the true situation if they have something to hide. In conducting a personal investigation, the parish priest can perceive not only the material answers given by the parties, but he can also see their reaction while the investigation is going on. In giving a written answer to the questionnaire, they are not asked for any explanation of facts that can help in appraising the situation.

This is aggravated by the fact that even the written answers given by the parties are sometimes the conventional answers agreed upon by both during the written inquiry. They can confer with each other and write down what they suppose will be the more expedient answer to facilitate the wedding, rather than the real truth. The legislator indicates the convenience of a separate investigation, especially for the woman. The First Plenary Council of the Philippines, held in Manila in 1953, states likewise the following: "The Pastor shall put the questions to them separately, that is to the groom but not in the presence of the bride, and to the bride but not in the presence of the groom" (Appendix Secunda, page 284). Our case obviously reveals the consequences of conducting the investigation previous to marriage, not separately but together, not orally but in writing. And of course, the investigation is supposed to be conducted by the parish priest, or another priest delegated by him, and not by the secretary or sacristan.

With the foregoing observations, we answer the questions of our consultant thus:

1. — The couple did not do the correct thing in getting married before the judge, just because the parish priest had requested them to delay the wedding for four or five days. We cannot excuse them from resorting to the civil marriage, which for Catholics is obviously invalid. The woman was at fault, because she declared she was fourteen years old when she was only thirteen. Had she told her true age during the investigation, the situation would have changed without them being embarrassed at the last moment when the impediment was dis-

covered. So we don't excuse them for getting married civilly, though we have to understand their frame of mind. Probably they had everything prepared for the wedding which could not be postponed, without great inconvenience.

2. — As to what our consultant could have done to prevent their getting married civilly, is provided for in canon 1045 §3 of the 1917 Codex and in canon 1080, §2 of the new Codex. Both Codices state that parish priests may dispense, but in occult cases only, from ecclesiastical diriment impediments (age among them) "When everything is prepared for the wedding and the local Ordinary cannot be contacted," and the marriage cannot be delayed without probable danger of serious evil if a dispensation is still to be obtained from the competent authority. No doubt everything was ready for the wedding of Tony and Gina. The Ordinary could not immediately be contacted because of the distance from the parish to the place where the Bishop has his residence. The serious evil of delaying the wedding is obvious, and so they have resorted to the civil marriage in order to save face. The only possible doubt is on the nature of the case at hand: is it an *occult* or *public* case? If it is a public case, the parish priest may not dispense from the impediment. If the case is occult, he may grant the dispensation. The Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Codex declared on December 28, 1927 regarding this matter that the case can be *occult* even when the impediment is by its nature *public* (ASS, XX, 1928, p. 61). Thus, in order to obtain the dispensation from an impediment, it is considered *occult*, though it can be proved, as long as it is not known nor there is danger of being divulged. It is presumed there is no public knowledge of the impediment if in the locality few persons only know about, and they will not divulge it. Hence, though age is by its nature a *public* impediment, it is presumed to be *occult* for the purpose of the dispensation if it is unknown in the vicinity and there is no danger of divulging it. The parish priest could have prevented the civil marriage of Tony and Gina by dispensing from the impediment himself and solemnizing their marriage canonically.

3. — The answer to no. 3 is already given in no. 2.

SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

SEBASTIANA DE Santa MARIA

Holiness or sanctity would not lose anything of its worth and luster even without either beatification or canonization. Without doubt any one occupying a high "mansion" in heaven (cf. John 14:2) can be beatified or canonized, but only a few of the humans who now occupy the places vacated by the higher angels who had sinned are beatified or canonized servants of God. It is an exaggeration to say that the Catholic Church has had millions of eminently holy members from its beginning to the present; but only a relatively few of them are known by name, and even these are not all beatified or canonized.

Canonization is the supreme honor by which a person is declared by the Holy Father to have led an eminently or heroically holy life on earth and to be actually enjoying the bliss of heaven, and to deserve to be called a Saint (with a capital S) and to have his or her image exposed and revered in churches, chapels and elsewhere. Also a special office or mass is celebrated in his or her honor.

A Blessed is one who has been beatified by the Roman Pontiff, and has the same privileges as the canonized Saint, but only in a definite territory, such as the native land of such Blessed. Beatification must precede canonization. But only a small fraction of the Blessed will be eventually canonized.

Beatification (more so canonization) is a time-consuming, arduous and even financially expensive process. Its main requirements are: an eminently or heroically holy life on earth, or martyrdom; approval of the writings, if any, of the candidate; his sufficiently documented biography; and two miracles performed by his intercession. In case of proven martyrs the Roman Pontiff may waive the requirement of the two miracles.

As we all know, a man, Lorenzo Ruiz, bids fair to be the first Filipino to be beatified and perhaps canonized within a foreseeable future. Why not one of our women who as elsewhere comprise the devout feminine sex and outnumber men in

church attendance and activities? It may be said in passing that the first Saint of the Catholic Church is a woman — the Blessed Virgin Mary: who else? —, that of the U.S.A. also a woman, St. Frances Cabrini; of Peru, St. Rose of Lima, etc.

Indeed there have been more Filipino women than men who have led eminently holy lives on earth and whose souls are already in heaven and thus deserve to be beatified, but do not pass muster due to the lack of one or more of the requisites for beatification mentioned earlier. In most cases what is utterly missing is the sufficiently documented biography, due either to the unavailability of records, or due to the fact that the historian to locate and systematize them is not yet around, or perhaps not even born. But even though he were already born, around, prepared and ready for the task, will he achieve it? As an illustration, the biography prepared for the process of beatification of Lorenzo Ruiz and companions was a very thick book — some 900 big pages — prepared by a professional historian, Rev. Fidel Villarreal, O.P., during a period of nearly two years.

The perhaps only extant biographical note about Sebastiana de Santa María that we shall transcribe rendered into English is culled from: Salazar, Vicente de, O.P.: *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila, 1742, pp. 600-606. He writes:

“Before God there is no acception of persons and nations, nor is there nobility or lowliness by blood in his presence, because he made the powerful as well as the weak, and both of them are under the wings of his Providence.

“Yet, no matter how cogently this truth is evinced in the Holy Writ, still there are some presumptuous men, who, advertising only to the humble ways of these natives, their down-to-earth concerns and simple manners, dare say and affirm that they are incapable of heroic virtue and of the sublimity of contemplation.

“What happens is that those who so think consider merely the capacity of human nature without taking into account the power of divine grace which can turn stones into children of Abraham and can raise the lowly from the dunghill to the most exalted greatness.

“To give us, therefore, a proof of the efficacy of his grace and to make a vivid show of his divine omnipotence, God per-

formed in our subject such wonders that, if those who were her guides or directors had put in writing her life and virtues, she might have become a shining glory of this country and would have contributed to the luster of the Church of God. From the Acts of the Intermediate Congregation of 1692 we may surmise such spiritual progress in her in the ways of the Spirit so as to accept that she could compete in virtue with the holy women of the highest order.

"Sebastiana de Santa María was a native Filipina, born in the town of Pasig, two or three leagues from Manila, being called and drawn since her earliest years to the good Lord who infused into her so much light and knowledge of his Majesty that since then she made up her mind to give her heart only to God and to consecrate herself exclusively to his service, despising not only all temporal goods — this was nothing unusual for she was poor —, but also her love for, and attachment to, the things of this world. Since then she consecrated her virginity to God, and kept it completely unsullied until her death, together with the baptismal grace which she never lost throughout her lifetime.

"Such baptismal innocence indeed was not her only aim, nor could it be attained without possessing the other virtues to a very heroic degree through strict vigilance and self-control, and a high degree of interior as well as exterior mortification.

"Since her early childhood she started to practise all these ascetical means of perfection, even before she knew about spiritual direction or had a spiritual guide, because the Holy Spirit guided all her steps and directed her affections and efforts toward heavenly aims and pursuits.

"So as early as at the age of seven she began a lifelong fast by which she took food only once a day and in so little a quantity as if only to avoid talks of her being singular. Her confessors in their quandary whether such a meager amount could suffice to preserve human life for long, sought the opinion of physicians who also shook their heads in wonder of what was nearly impossible according to the laws of physiology.

"And amazing but true is the fact that during the last fifteen years of her life she barely took any other solid by mouth than the Holy Eucharist which thus was not only spiritual food of her soul but also physical nutriment of her body. And so whenever she could not receive Holy Communion, she would fall into a state of extreme weakness and languor that her confes-

sors deemed it necessary to allow her to receive daily Communion. But when sometimes she was advised to refrain from Holy Communion just to shut the mouths of some envious though on the other hand pious souls who were not given the same privilege of daily Communion, Sebastiana would seem to hover between life and death, moving everyone who saw her thus to compassion and to the acknowledgement of the prudence of her confessors in allowing her to receive daily Communion without which her life was in continuous danger of being snuffed out.

"Every priest who gave her the Holy Host could feel in the unusual warmth of her breath the burning love in her breast, and her mouth looked like a burning light which emitted flames of fire and intense heat.

"In addition to her superhuman fast she also used hair-shirts, she scourged herself often and rigorously. She slept on the hard floor — nothing unusual in these parts where the natives do so—, and for a special mortification used a block of wood for pillow, and lay down to sleep in all her clothes. As she ate little or nearly nothing, so little or nearly nothing did she spend in sleep, for during most of the night she was occupied in prayer and in different kinds of mortification.

"She used to keep kneeling during four hours in a row, in deep meditation or contemplation, without being distracted by the various vexations with which the common enemy tried to disturb her during such pious exercises. It was a pleasant surprise for her confessors that she reached the rare grace of the highest degree of contemplation and most intimate union with God, with whom she spoke with the same confidence as a friend with a friend.

"The Lord favored her with frequent and manifest apparitions (the details of which have not reached us), and she received many revelations about things to come. And thus she foretold many future events, but her best documented prophecy concerns the founding of the Santa Catalina Beaterio or Convent.

"Mother Sebastiana longed ardently for the establishment of a Beaterio of our Third Order, where the 'Beatas' living in community could praise and serve God on a stable basis. Other pious Beatas shared the same desire, which, however, did not appeal to the Religious of this Province. So whenever the Beatas broached this topic to them, they were invariably dismissed in a huff.

"In the face of such opposition, however, the Beatas prodded on especially with constant prayers. Mother Sebastiana soon got a favorable assurance from the Lord about a future Beaterio to rise up, and told another Beata, Doña Antonia Esguerra: 'Mother Antonia, the Beaterio will come to be, but neither you nor I will live to see it.' And indeed both died and did not see it.

"Mother Sebastiana foretold also some details about the upcoming Beaterio. A Father Prior, relenting to the repeated requests of the Beatas, gathered the Beatas residing in Manila in a house close to the Priory, with the plan to found therein a Beaterio. But Mother Sebastiana remarked to him that the Beaterio would surely come to be but much later, and not in that house and even street, but in a building opposite the Priory. And so it happened, for that house was purchased by a person who told the gathered Beatas to move out. And so they dispersed, each left to her own designs, waiting for better times.

"She also foretold the number of Beatas that the Beaterio would have, and added that whenever this number should be exceeded, and the number she said was fifteen, then the Beaterio would come under a severe trial. Both prophecies were fulfilled, for, later when the Beaterio was finally founded, the moving spirit behind it, the venerable Father Juan de Santo Domingo, O.P., without any inkling of Mother Sebastiana's prophecy, prescribed that the Beatas should be fifteen in honor of the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. But a few years later, to the customary fifteen one member was added — who is still living —, and the Beaterio underwent such a turmoil that brought it to the brink of closure, as will be recounted in its place.

"Let us go back to the virtues of this saintly Mother. So conspicuous was her humility as to despise herself, despite her pure and innocent life, as the scum of mankind. The holier one is, the lower his idea of himself, because he acquires a clear knowledge of the infinite goodness of God, at whose side even his own slightest defects are so glaring and magnified. Thus she confessed her slightest faults with an intense contrition.

"She attributed all the trials and sufferings that befell herself and others as punishment of her own sins, and during public calamities she undertook specially rigorous scourgings and other austerities. Moreover, she prayed God to make her the lightning rod of his divine wrath so as to spare the real sinners, and the country of such offenders of the Lord.

"Acceding to her wishes, God sent her a continuous suffering or cross to bear in her lifetime, such as pains and ailments of recurrent fevers and a frequent painful oppression of the breast making it painful to breathe and sending her to the agony and verge of death. Thus she could scarcely stand on her feet. However, she insisted and managed to repair to the church everyday, though often carried in others' arms.

"During one Lenten season a Religious who was giving sermons in our Priory suddenly fell gravely ill. Mother Sebastiana felt it keenly because nobody was available to take his place and, moreover, she herself was gathering much spiritual fruit from his talks. So she implored God our Lord to restore the health and strength of the said Religious even if his sickness would pass to her own self.

"God granted her prayer instantly so that the preacher became suddenly well and went on with his task; while she fell seriously ill, even to the brink of death, but God spared her still because she was destined for a greater suffering.

"Such were her physical sufferings, hardly imitable for the run-of-the mill human; but her afflictions of the spiritual order were incomparably more intense, such as spiritual dryness to such an extent as to have been apparently forsaken by God. Thus in body and soul she was crucified with and in Christ, but she longed to suffer much more in honor and to the glory of a purifying Lord and in atonement for the sins of her own and her fellowmen.

"She was endowed with utmost charity and compassion towards all, regarding their trials as her very own. She regularly visited and consoled the sick, not merely with spiritual considerations, but also with a prescription of her own, despite being untaught in the art of medication. She invariably gave a concoction of chicken feathers as a panacea for all ills and pains, which indeed was known to be effective for women suffering from "mal de madre" (an unspecified gynecological illness), but hardly for any other illness, so that its efficacy was ascribed solely to the fervor and power of her prayers. With her widespread reputation as a healer big throngs used to come to her asking for her prayers and her medicine, that is, those who had either spiritual or physical sufferings or both, and they all left consoled and cured. Even those who merely listened to her words and exhortations felt an inner compunction and a strong urge towards a holier life.

"Once a skeptic tried to put to a test her widespread reputation of holiness. As the Pharisees of old did with Christ, he sought her, for he did not know her in person. He accosted her when she was pointed to him, at a moment when she was going out of the church, and dryly asked her: 'Are you Mother Sebastiana?' She replied, 'I am she, and what may I do for you?' These short and simple words had on the doubting man nearly the same effect as the 'I am' uttered by Jesus Christ to those who came to arrest him, and rendered the skeptic so confounded and regretful for having addressed her with so much boldness. He later admitted that her modesty, humility and composure aroused in him such deep sense of respect towards a superior being and pricked his troubled conscience to repentance.

"All those who dealt with her in any way felt the same effect, and even her confessors, although highly knowledgeable and spiritualized persons, harbored great veneration and deep respect towards her, while she on her part regarded herself unworthy to tie the strings of their shoes.

"She obeyed humbly and punctually not only the express commands of her confessors but also their slightest insinuations, although such might be against her own lights or her interior illuminations.

"Such was the holy life of Mother Sebastiana until the age of forty, ever striving to progress in virtue, and to grow daily in the fervor of charity, in self-mastery and in self-denial or mortification, in gentleness and patience towards every neighbor until, worn out by her continuous austerities, sickness and mortifications, her body gave way for her soul to fly and be united to God, as she had always desired and prayed for. She died on March 20, 1692.

"At the news of her demise the whole city of Manila was stirred up, and all, small and big alike, the high and the low, the pious and the lukewarm and even sinners flocked past her coffin which contained her holy corpse which remained so flexible, free from deterioration and any foul smell as to appear to be merely sleeping in peace.

"She was buried with all solemnity in our Priory of Manila at the gospel side of the old altar of the Rosary, and her virtues were extolled in a funeral oration, which was more devout than eloquent, more tearful than rhetorical. During her burial the

Religious — friars and women tertiaries — and the lay men and women gave free vent to their deep sorrow with copious tears. Even the lukewarm and negligent of their spiritual welfare by looking at that holy corpse that scattered around fragrant whiffs of holiness were moved to repentance and the start of a better life. Such indeed was a special grace from God through her intercession."

FR. PABLO FERNÁNDEZ, O.P.

THE CODE...

(Continued from page 74)

tasks assigned by the hierarchy, the religious state, the talents placed at the disposition of the Church, etc., must be considered. The Church is therefore a differentiated community, whose pastors are constituted as such through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

4. Therefore, an application of the communion of the Church occurs, based on the fact that each of the faithful is part of a reality that is organically one, to which he contributes with all that he is and with all that he has received. At the heart of this *sui generis* unity, bonds of mutual exchange and of interdependence are established between each member of the Church and all the others. It is the cohesion proper to the People of God.

In the Code, as in the Council, there is noted the concern to increase the value of the place which each individual occupies in the Church, the role which he is assigned and the means at his disposal to contribute to the development of the Body of Christ. Since every believer is called to collaborate with others, the Code likewise indicates through which instruments of communion he may concretely carry out his vocation.

The Dominicans: Founders and Builders of Towns in Pangasinan

12. Lingayen

Its location and bordering towns

Lingayen is located in the periphery of Pangasinan, along the shore of the gulf of its name, in a low and sandy terrain, covered with nipa groves. It is either crossed or encircled by a number of esteros of salty water.

For its border towns it has San Isidro to the east at a distance of 10 kms., the south Salasa 5 to 6 kms. apart, and farther to the southeast San Carlos; to the northwest Binmaley at 5 kms.

As Father Suárez remarks, the town practically extended from Binmaley to San Isidro, along a narrow strip of land between one of the branches of the Agno to the south and the gulf to the north. This is due to a number of barrios which — as Father Suárez adds — in Pangasinan are formed by clusters of houses, built here and there without any order or plan along the roads; so much so that it may be said that the whole province is a succession of houses without any good population center excepting three or four towns that were laid down in a more modern plan.¹

Its ancient relevance

It has been said that Lingayen is nowadays a dormant city, having yielded its ecclesiastical and commercial pre-eminence to Dagupan. However, in bygone times it was the true "Cabe-

¹ SUAREZ, RAIMUNDO, O.P., *Apuntes curiosos sobre los pueblos de Pangasinán*, MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán", Vol. 7, Doc. 15a, Fol. 185v.

cera" of Pangasinan, where the *Alcalde Mayor* or Provincial Governor resided and the *Hacienda Real* had its store of the monopolized articles of wine and tobacco. On a higher level, it was the first town in Pangasinan that, under the shadow and protection of the Spanish military garrison, received the light of the Faith and was privileged with a permanent missionary.²

Moreover, there existed in Lingayen a guild, or class, of Chinese mestizos who carried on an active trade and maintained a shipyard, which turned out many ships not only for coastal trade but also for sailing on high seas and voyaging to distant continents. However, this industry began to decay through the 19th century when good timber grew scarce in the nearby forests.

Almost from the start there was in Lingayen, as we have just stated, a large group of Chinese mestizos. They were headed by a *Gobernadorcillo* and had a courthouse and schools of their own. They lived in the northwestern sector of the town, in a street named after Rizal in more recent times.³ Their quarters in Lingayen eventually came to be known as *the Parian*. All in all they amounted to seventeen or eighteen *cabeceras* in 1869, that is, seven to eight hundred souls.⁴

The Spanish presence in Lingayen

The first Spaniard to set foot on the soil of the province of Pangasinan was the Master of the Camp Martín de Goiti who, about the middle of 1571, reached the shore of Lingayen gulf after having subdued the bellicose inhabitants of Betis and received the submission of several other towns on the way.

Then, in 1572, Capitan Juan Salcedo annexed to the crown of Castile the provinces of Zambales, Pangasinan and Ilocos, although in such short space of time he could not effectively subject such a wide area. It is clear, however, that the Pangasinanes of the coastal settlements, including Lingayen, acknowledged the Spanish sovereignty at this time.

² FERRANDO, JUAN, O.P., *Estado de la provincia del Santísimo Rosario en 1848*, MS in AUST, Section "Provincia", Vol. 10, Fols. 18v-19.

³ GONZALEZ, JOSE MARIA, O.P., *Labor Evangélica y Civilizadora de los Dominicos en Pangasinán (1587-1898)*, UST Press, Manila, 1948, pp. 11-12.

⁴ SUAREZ, *Loc. cit.*

This settlement was soon to obtain historical pre-eminence due to the fact that the famous Chinese pirate Lim-a-hong sought shelter there after his unsuccessful attack on Manila in 1575. It seems that his plan was to establish himself permanently in the region. However, the brave Salcedo who went after him in hot pursuit at the head of 250 Spaniards and 2,550 Filipino auxiliaries, managed to destroy his armada, captured one of his forts and besieged him in another during four months in a place between Lingayen and Salasa. On the other hand, he was out-witted by the pirate who on one night made good his escape, with the help of some boats which he had stealthily built, along a canal towards the sea.⁵

This event very likely compelled the Spaniards to establish a military garrison in Lingayen in order to stave off possible future attacks from foreign enemies, and thus they took effective possession of the coastal area of Pangasinan.⁶

The Augustinian stint

The first missionaries in announcing the word of God in Pangasinan were the Augustinians and according to tradition, Frs. Rada and Holgado erected the first chapel at the mouth of the Agno, that is, somewhere between the mouth of this river and Toboang creek, near the present town of San Isidro. However, finding the people adamant in receiving the benefit of their instruction, they moved to Lingayen where the Spanish civil and military authorities had set up their quarters. Finally, in 1587 or whereabouts, they officially accepted Lingayen as one of the ministries of their Religious order.⁷

The Dominicans take over

Precisely in the year 1587, when the Augustinians were in full possession of Lingayen, the Dominicans began their tricentennial apostolate in Pangasinan province, and more concretely

⁵ Father Suárez makes the following comment on the famous canal of Limahong: "The famous canal of Limahong is an "estero" which, having its start near the Administration Building, reaches Salasa through Balococ, with both extremes connecting the respective branches of the river Agno. It is not navigable (i.e. in 1869) except for very small boats (*Op. cit.*, Fol. 186).

⁶ GONZALEZ, *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷ SAN AGUSTIN, GASPARD DE, O.S.A., *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas (1565-1615)* Edición, Introducción, Notas e Índices por Manuel Merino, O.S.A., Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 1975, pp. 622-623.

in the town of San Carlos, as we have previously stated, and from here they fanned out to other population centers, including Binmaley which lay just at the door of Lingayen.

Eleven years later, that is in September 28, 1598, some chiefs and *timawas* (commoners) of Lingayen, attracted by the protective policies that the Dominicans followed in defending the rights of the natives against the abuses of their lords and masters, and lured by the kind treatment that they accorded them, presented themselves to the provincial scribe Antonio de Valencia, asking him to put officially in writing their petition, addressed to Bishop Miguel de Benavides, then present in Binmaley for the episcopal visitation, to be transferred to the spiritual ministration of the Order of Preachers. However, as things happened, they would have still to wait for fifteen years before their wishes were fulfilled.⁸

In the Dominican chapter held in 1614, Lingayen and its "visita" Bagnotan (later named Dagupan) were officially accepted by the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary. By this time, these two Augustinian ministries, surrounded as they were in the west and in the south by Dominican foundations, had practically become an enclave, and the Province of the Holy Name of Jesus was perhaps waiting for an opportunity to transfer them honorably to the Order of Preachers.

This occasion presented itself in 1613 when both Religious families brought to a close, through an amicable settlement, a long standing litigation regarding the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi in the city of Manila, which both Religions, backed up by Papal briefs, had been celebrating in their respective churches on the Sunday following the said feast. It was agreed that both Corporations, starting with the Dominicans, would alternately celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi on the Sunday of its infraoctave; the Dominicans one year in the Church of St. Augustine and the Augustinians another in Santo Domingo Church.

It was further agreed that the ministry of Narvacan, in the Ilocos region, together with its "visitas" Santa María, San Esteban and Santiago be transferred from the Dominicans to the Augustinians, and the Augustinians surrender to the Order

⁸ Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Pangasinán", Vol. IV, Doc. 1 (Los indios de Lingayen piden al obispo Benavides les dé ministros Dominicos, el año de 1598).

of Preachers Lingayen with Dagupan, its "visita" in Pangasinan, and Baybay in Tondo.⁹

This transaction was given legal force by means of a public deed on June 29, 1613, before the scribevener Diego de Rueda in the presence of Juan de Silva, Governor General of the Philippines, of Diego Vázquez de Mercado, Archbishop of Manila, and Diego de Soria, Bishop of Nueva Segovia, besides the Provincials and some conspicuous Religious of both Orders.¹⁰

Church buildings

At the start — comments Father José Ma. González — the missionaries built humble churches and chapels or, in other words, what they strictly needed for the sacred functions, and for themselves even humbler houses, because they centered all their activity around the conversion and "reduction" of the natives into organized towns. Later on, when the light of civilization and the Evangelical news had spread to all places and taken deep roots everywhere, they fomented more impressive works like the formation of towns, construction of imposing churches, schools, houses, bridges, canals, town squares, etc. Lingayen, as well as most of the towns in Pangasinan, and elsewhere in the Philippines, is a good example of this.¹¹

About its church we have the following excerpt taken from the *Compendio Historial* of Father Peguero: "The Church is very large and is well furnished with sacred ornaments and utensils."¹² To which Father Mora adds in his *Report* of 1804: "The Church of Lingayen and its belfry are of brick; the church consists of one nave and its transept is topped with a dome which was renovated this year; all very well proportioned and tidy and abounding in sacred vestments and furnishings. The Church seems to have been built about the year 1710, as may be inferred from a loose paper that, among some odd documents, I came across in the Convent. It is dedicated to the Three Kings, whose

⁹ FONSECA, JOAQUIN, O.P., *Historia de los PP. Dominicos en las Islas Filipinas y en sus Misiones del Japón, China, Tungkin y Formosa* (6 Vols.), Madrid, 1871, Vol. I, pp. 613-618.

¹⁰ SAN AGUSTIN, *Loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹² PEGUERO, JUAN, O.P., *Compendio historial de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, MS in APSR, Section "Historia de la Provincia", Vol. 7, Fol. 16.

altar is new, as are also the side altars. The belfry is good and seems to be older than the church itself."¹³

In spite of Father Mora's assertion, the actual church is in all likelihood basically the same referred to by Father Peguero, but extensively renovated and improved in the said year and at later dates. Its bell-tower, which without doubt is one of the best, if not the best in Pangasinan, was according to tradition, as Father Suárez attests, the work of a Dominican lay-brother, who also built the church of San Fabian.¹⁴

In this church was buried Msgr. Francisco Albán, Bishop of Vigan, who died in 1837; and another Bishop, Blessed Domingo Henares, later martyred for the faith in Tonkin (North-Vietnam), sang his first solemn Mass.¹⁵

According to Father Valentín Marín "the magnificent actual church with its imposing bell-tower, 45 yards high, was inaugurated in 1740; they were the work of Frs. Andrés Caballero and Fernando de Santa María. Father Marín's assertions seem to rest on the authority of a manuscript still extant (in his time) in the church of Lingayen, and signed by both Fathers."¹⁶

Piecing together, therefore, the testimonies of these historians, it seems very probable that the church antedates the 18th century, with additions and improvements made by succeeding Vicars, like Father Miguel Aparicio who rebuilt the dome, starting from the supporting walls and their foundations, and Father Francisco Treserra who added a cornice to the dome.¹⁷

*Lingayen — a place of exile for an Archbishop and
an Ex-Governor General*

Famous at the close of the 17th century are in Philippine History the legal contentions or quarrels between Archbishop

¹³ MORA MANUEL, O.P., *Estado de las casa de la Provincia en Filipinas, Años 1804-1806*, MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios", Vol. 2, Fol. 111.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, Fol. 211v. The brother, according to Father V. Marín, was Fray Francisco Ferrer, a skillful carpenter, who was assigned in Pangasinan during the British invasion, (Cfr.: MARIN y MORALES, VALENTIN, O.P., *Ensayo de una Sintesis de los trabajos realizados por las Corporaciones Religiosas Españolas de Filipinas*, Manila, Imprenta de Santo Tomás, 1901, Vol. II, p. 657).

¹⁵ GONZALEZ, *Op. cit.*, p. 40; RECODER, JOAQUIN, O.P., *Vida y martirio de los XXVI Mártires de la Misión Dominicana en el Tung-kin*, Manila, Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1900, p. 87.

¹⁶ MARIN, *Loc. cit.*

¹⁷ GONZALEZ, *Loc. cit.*

Felipe Pardo and the Royal Audiencia, headed by the Governor General Juan de Vargas y Hurtado. So famous they were, in fact, that they fill many pages in some historical books and entire folders in archives. However, it is not our concern to go over them here. Suffice it to say that the little flexibility shown by Archbishop Pardo in dealing with some persons, laymen as well as ecclesiastics, who had violated some ecclesiastical laws and privileges, gradually led him to an open confrontation with the Governor General and the Real Audiencia. In the first stage of the struggle he had, although unwillingly, to yield to the civil power, which had him arrested on March 31, 1681 and exiled to Lingayen. There he was forbidden to exercise any act of jurisdiction and was confined as a prisoner within the narrow limits of its convent. However, with the arrival in Manila of the new Governor General, Miguel de Cruzalaegui, in August 24, 1684, the setting of the politico-ecclesiastical scene so changed that the exiled Archbishop was brought back to Manila with all honors, while his antagonist, Ex-Governor Vargas, eventually was also banished to Lingayen, condemned to performed a public penance at the doors of its church in punishment for the excesses he had committed against Msgr. Pardo.¹⁸

A prominent "Vicar"

Such was Father Miguel Aparicio, born in Spain in 1788 and Vicar of Lingayen from 1826 to 1834. A tireless defender of the natives, he was a victim of misunderstandings and ill-feelings on this account, most specially during the time when the corps of militiamen (*resguardo militar*) were stationed in northern Pangasinan for the purpose of protecting the tobacco monopoly from the Igorot contraband. As if he were their true father, he deprived himself of food and clothing in order to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

He worked hard for the instruction of the youth of both sexes and to this end he built two schools, paying the workers' salaries from the parochial funds. He also constructed a water-tank or cistern (*aljibe*) for the needs of the convent, almost finished the building of a kitchen and built the bridges and culverts (*imbornales*) of the road leading to San Isidro. Besides all this, Lingayen is indebted to him for 50,000 coconut trees that he caused to be planted for the benefit of its folks.

This Father was so gifted that the Superiors of Manila thought of him when the time came to look for a man to suc-

¹⁸ FONSECA, *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 440-443, 464, 467-470, 480.

ceed Msgr. Roque Carpena, aged Vicar Apostolic of the Dominican Mission of Fukien province, China.¹⁹ He passed to a better life in Dagupan in 1834.

Another Vicar, worthy of mention, was Father Francisco Treserra who repaired the convent and the kitchen and started the construction of the cemetery, which was finished by Father Julián S. López (1874-1878), together with its chapel.²⁰

The Santísimo Rosario College

The founding of this College, decreed by the Provincial Chapter of 1890 for the purpose of providing the young women of Pangasinan and neighbouring provinces with an educational center where to further their studies at a lower cost and away from the moral dangers of the city of Manila.

It was a complex of several structures, either accommodated to serve the purposes of a school and the habitat of a Religious community, or raised from their very foundations at a later date. In 1890 Father Vicente Iztegui, its founder, bought some residential houses which, quickly remodelled, were ready for the opening of the school about the middle of the year. The second structure (1914), of steel and concrete, is the work of the Dominican engineer Father Roque Ruaño, who also constructed Dominican Hill in Baguio and the Main Building of the University of Santo Tomas; and the third, consisting of concrete columns and beams and wooden walls covered with a galvanized iron roofing, dates from the year 1936.

The school functioned smoothly from August 1890 until 1898, and the subjects taught therein during the last decade of the 19th century led its graduates to the title and position of Elementary School teacher and even of the Secondary Instruction if they took an additional course.

The buildings left to their fate in 1898, suffered much during the following six years of abandonment. However, the American forces, by occupying them from November 1899 to January 1903, saved them from further damage.

¹⁹ OCIO, HILARIO MARIA, O.P., *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas* (1587-1895), Manila, Establecimiento tipográfico de Real Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1895, pp. 592-593.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 934-935; GONZALEZ, *Op. cit.*, pp. 42-53.

Its enrolment was not high even during the pre-revolutionary years when the Dominican Fathers stationed in Pangasinan backed it up with their influence and propaganda, and during the American regime it could hardly compete with the public schools which offered the same training at a lower cost.²¹

The Santisimo Rosario College, closed again at the start of the Pacific war in 1941, served as a Novitiate for the training of young Filipinos in the Dominican way of life from 1943 until 1946. In the succeeding years, the sisters sold the buildings, not without having removed first many of their materials and transferred them to the more promising school of San Manuel in eastern Pangasinan (1955).²²

Population statistics

The population of Lingayen, as it happened in almost all the towns in the Philippines, shows an upward trend throughout the 18th and the 19th centuries. However, it abruptly decreased, according to statistics, in the last quarter of the last century, as the following figures indicate:

1591 (the whole "encomienda" of Lingayen)	4,000 souls. ²³
1621 (The Dominican ministry of Lingayen)	632 tributes ²⁴

²¹ Blair & Robertson offer us the following brief statistics regarding the College of Lingayen:

Nuns who act as teachers	7
Resident pupils	53
Non-resident pupils	13
Servants	10
Total	83

(Cfr.: *The Philippine Islands*, 1493-1989, Vol. XLVI, "Dominican Educational Institutions, 1896-1897", pp. 263-264.

²² CALLEJA, ATANASIO, O.P., "Colegio del Santísimo Rosario de Lingayen", MS in AUST, Section "Folletos", Vol. 169, No. 3, pp. 1-3.

²³ "Pangasinan, Lingayen: King — The encomienda of Lingayen, belonging to His Majesty, has one thousand tributes, or four thousand persons. It has one Augustinian convent. The inhabitants are peaceable, and have justice" (Cfr.: Emma Helen Blair & James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. VIII—1591-1593, p. 104.

²⁴ Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Ministerios", Vol. 4, Doc. 1, Fol. 1.

THE DOMINICAN TOWNS IN PANGASINAN 95

1751 Lingayen	5,515 souls. ²⁵
1798 Id.	9,754 souls. ²⁶
1848 Id.	20,972 souls. ²⁷
1875 Id.	22,379 souls. ²⁸
1897 Id.	14,120 souls. ²⁹

PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

²⁵ "Informe al Rey nuestro Señor", Año 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelánea", Vol. 3, Fol. 8.

²⁶ "Lista de almas de la provincia de Pangasinán, año 1798", MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán", Vol. 11, Doc. 20.

²⁷ *Revista Católica*, enero de 1849, p. 467.

²⁸ *Estado de almas* ..., 1875, Manila, 1876.

²⁹ *Estado de almas* ..., Manila, 1897.

HOMILETICAL GUIDELINES*

JANUARY - MARCH

By

Benito Vargas, O.P.

Vatican II decreed in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, promulgated on December 4, 1963 by Pope Paul VI, that "the homily ... is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason." (Sacrosanctum Concilium, No. 52) A homily is a discourse that explains the Scriptures and points a moral. There are occasions when the preacher may deliver instead a catechetical instruction, or an apologetical conference or sermon. The sermon is a formal exposition of some doctrinal or moral truth, aimed at the mind and heart. Moreover, it may happen that on a particular Sunday or weekday the town fiesta is being held in honor of a Patron Saint, and then a panegyric of the Saint is in order instead of the homily. But as a rule the talk of the preacher, usually the celebrant himself, should be a homily which only a priest is allowed to give. Deacons and others may deliver other kinds of discourses, but not the homily.

In times past the homily used to be a long discourse, lasting for even more than an hour. But at our age as a rule it should last between five to fifteen minutes — ten minutes being the ideal duration of the homily itself. A long homily nowadays may be interesting to some people, but it is not appealing for the vast majority due to the manifold tasks, duties and engagements of the modern man and woman especially in urban areas.

The reader will prune out outlines, or select those portions that he judges interesting and useful for his particular audience. Of course, he can add something that he knows will be suited to the edification of his listeners.

* For the biblical notes we want our readers to refer to BEF, Vol. LII, Nos. 578, 579 and 580.

January 1, Octave of Christmas**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God****Readings:**

Numbers 6:22-27

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:16-21

In this year of 1984 January 1 falls on a Sunday, the first day of the week. This is also the civil New Year's day — the ecclesiastical New Year's day was on last November 27, the first Sunday of Advent.

Fittingly do we celebrate January 1 as the feast of Mary, Mother of God. For on Christmas day we centered our thoughts and heart throbs on the Child Jesus. So it is most appropriate that this day of New Year be celebrated in honor of Jesus' Mother.

Jesus as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity existed from eternity, that is, for more than millions of years before Mary was born. But when he became man to redeem fallen mankind, the Second Person was born of a virgin without ceasing to be God, and the virgin without ceasing in any way to be a virgin. So in Jesus incarnate there are two natures — the divine and human — but only one Person, viz., the Divine Person. That is why in plain language we can call Mary Mother of God much in the same manner that we call the mother of a man who later became a Bishop mother of a Bishop.

Mary bore her child Jesus without losing her virginity, for she conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. St. Joseph was her virginal and industrious spouse and provider, but not the father of Jesus.

Mary treasured all the things pertaining to Jesus in her heart and often reflected or meditated on them. We are to do the same — by studying the catechism or the Bible which contains the eternal truths of our faith.

When Jesus was yet a child, no one could come close to him except through Mary. At present we can pray direct to God and

to Jesus, but it is more in keeping with our nature to ask the mediation or intercession of Mary, especially if we are sinners.

There is a consensus among the Saints and theologians that a true devotion to Mary is a sign of predestination, that is, a true and sincere devotee of the Virgin Mary will die in the state of grace, and so even if he did live in an unholy fashion, he will be converted to repentance before his soul leaves his body. But this deathbed convert will probably pass through Purgatory for months or years if not centuries.

What does being a devotee of Mary entail? That the person pray to her often, at least, one Hail Mary daily. St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori tells of an idiot who knew only a two-word prayer: *Ave Maria*. Can we not pray longer and better?

The average normal person should pray much more than the idiot by reciting daily some prayers, say, a chaplet or more of the Rosary. He should not for he cannot imitate St. John de Macias, a Dominican illiterate laybrother, who was wont to pray daily twenty or more chaplets of the Rosary.

So we can sin freely as long as we are praying to Mary now and then? By no means, for devotion to her consists in imitating her charity to the poor and sick, her profound humility and immaculate purity, and above all her burning love for God. In a word, the heroic virtue of Mary is summed up in the words: "Let it be done to me according to thy word," which is the highest degree of obedience. This is the acme of virtue, though not spectacular or glamorous an act before the eyes of the world.

The eloquent preacher Bishop Fulton Sheen, in a sermon preached during a Mass held at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City, told the following story, which is a parable to convey a lesson:

"Everyday some 50,000 Catholics die and their souls appear before the door-keeper of heaven, St. Peter. But St. Peter is strict, and disallows the entry into heaven to the majority. But the Virgin Mary inside heaven, standing near a big window, beckons them to the window near her, as they do so, she waits for a moment when St. Peter is looking in the other direction, and she lifts all she can into heaven through the window."

The lesson is that Mary is omnipotent by intercession. She is the true Mother of God. Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity which became man, and his body came and grew from her flesh and bones in her virginal womb. Once born, Jesus sucked the milk of her breasts, he was nursed and tended by Mary. When he was big enough he obeyed her orders, maybe to fetch water or gather firewood, perhaps even to sweep the floor or repair the furniture in their home. For thirty years Jesus lived in the same abode with her (Joseph had died earlier). Jesus was her teacher in the Scriptures and even about other branches of human knowledge. She sewed and washed his clothes, she cooked the simple food which they ate together.

Jesus Christ was not as other sons, who are incapable of selecting their own mothers. Being God and omnipotent, he chose the best among the best of all women, and endowed her with all perfections and graces and privileges a creature is capable of receiving. And moreover, for the thirty long years Mary was with Jesus, she came to acquire as much of his wisdom, holiness and all other virtues as a creature is capable.

That is why Mary is a Saint above all other Saints. The Church honors the Saints with veneration (*dulia*), and the Virgin Mary with a very special devotion (*hyperdulia*). But only God deserves adoration (*latria*). Mary is the masterpiece of the omnipotent hand of God, and she is the best image and most perfect reflection of God.

The following lines from William Wordsworth, the English laureate poet (1770-1850) may suitably wind up this homily:

Mother! whose virgin bosom was uncroft
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost.

January 8, Epiphany or Feast of the Three Kings

Readings:

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

This feast used to be celebrated on January 6 and was a holiday of obligation in the Philippines. It is still kept on

January 6 in the Universal Church, and is a holiday of obligation; but in many places, including our country, it is transferred to the Sunday after New Year, and so a pious Filipino wag has said, "By hearing mass on the day of Epiphany I catch two birds with one stone: I fulfill my double duty of hearing mass on Epiphany and on the Sunday." This year this can be said too with the feast of New Year's day, which falls also on a Sunday.

While the new Code of Canon Law lists some ten holidays of obligation according to dates, be such dates a Sunday or a weekday, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) obtained from the Holy See the reduction of holidays that might fall on a weekday, and thus in our country the holidays of obligation are only January 1, December 8 and December 25, only three and even then one or even two of them may fall on a Sunday.

What is the rationale for this special privilege of Filipino Catholics? Are we made of weaker stuff in matters of the spirit, so much so that we have not even one canonized Saint (Japan has many canonized Saints), and all we can boast about is Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz? Be that as it may, the frontal motive behind our privilege in this matter is that the Bishops want to spare us the occasion of sin by missing Mass on holidays of obligation, inasmuch as due to the separation of Church and State, the latter does not defer to the laws of the Church regarding holidays, and so, as it happened before Vatican II, many holidays of obligation falling on weekdays were working days for the government. While the Bishops have done the right thing, still it is really sad to admit that many a Filipino Catholic does not care to keep holy the three remaining holidays! *O tempora, o mores!* To such the Three Kings or Magi point a reproving finger and say: "We left the comforts and peace of home and hearth, we walked or travelled hundreds if not thousands of miles under the scorching heat of day and the freezing sleet at the night, oftentimes attacked by brigands in the highways, and so forth, just to pay our respects to the Child Jesus born in Bethlehem; and you cannot walk less than a mile to hear Mass and adore Jesus truly present in the Blessed Sacrament?"

So what is the significance of the feast of Epiphany? This word is derived from Greek and means "revelation, showing, manifestation or proclamation". Christmas is also a manifestation or showing or appearance of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to the world by his birth. But Epiphany refers mainly to the manifestation of Christ to peoples other than the

Jews, i.e., the gentiles. When Jesus was born, angels invited poor shepherds and not wise and rich Pharisees or nobles to come and adore him. Here we see how God blesses the poor more than the wealthy. Thus the Church of God loves the poor as her favorite children, as Joseph was of Jacob, his father. And presently most people in the so-called Third World die of hunger, and the more fortunate cannot make both ends meet!

But the feast of today proves that God does not curse wealth or the wealthy. For God is the creator of wealth and the wealthy. Today is the feast of the wealthy and powerful — of the Magi who were influential and very rich and powerful. Wealth can be used for vice and sin, and then it is a sure road to hell; but it can be employed for defraying the Christian education of our children, or for helping the poor and sick, and then wealth is a passport to heaven.

Mary delivered her divine Son in a stable due to the lack of money to pay for the high rentals of a room in an inn due to the unprecedented demand during the census. Poor Joseph! He was blaming himself bitterly for Mary's giving birth in a stable; and so he did not rest until sometime later he found a snug but affordable room in a third class inn for Mary and the Child Jesus. Most probably Joseph promised to repair the room for free, good carpenter that he was.

At the very moment of the birth of Jesus, an extraordinary star appeared in the East. Let us not be so naive so as to believe that it appeared in the Far East or in our land. East here means any place east of Palestine. But the star was seen throughout the whole world. It was more a comet, because it was a gliding or running star. Many people followed the star, certain as they were that it would lead to nothing but good and luck and salvation; but the Bible mentions only three such persons for being the most important among them all. And they were called Magi, that is, magicians or astrologers or wise men — and millionaires to boot, and even Kings of some regions of the Middle East.

The three Magi were called astrologers. They were called so not because they were fortunetellers but rather because they jabbled or pioneered in the still beginning science of astronomy. They certainly came from different countries of the East, but they met at the crossroads and immediately became united in true friendship and community of purpose of their journey. There must be truth in representing them in Christian pictorial

art as belonging to different races — black, white and yellow (or brown?). Their names: not recorded in the gospels: were rendered by an old Tradition as Melchior, Gaspar and Balthezzar. They were happy and perhaps singing together while following the star when it disappeared without any warning when they were near or already entering the gates of Jerusalem. Being men of wealth and rank and perhaps kings or princes, they went to King Herod, their peer, for help in their predicament. Herod called the chief priests to answer their question about the birth-place of the Messiah, who readily answered that it was Bethlehem, according to a prophecy of Micah. So they proceeded on their journey, after the instructions of Herod to follow the way leading to Bethlehem. Herod was disturbed with the news of the birth of the Messiah whom he considered as a threat to his crown, and told the Magi to come back to his palace in their way back home.

As soon as the Magi were out of Jerusalem, the star reappeared in all its splendor and guided them to a house — not the stable anymore — over which it stopped. They entered the house and adored the Child in the arms of Mary. One of them offered gold, the other frankincense and the third myrrh. Usually the offering of gold is interpreted as an acknowledgement of his kingship over heaven and earth; the offering of frankincense is a confession of his divinity, and the offering of myrrh a confession of his humanity.

The Magi talked with Mary and Joseph about the Child Jesus and about all the prophecies pertaining to him. The three Kings and their retinue believed in the divinity of the Child Jesus, and thus were the first converts among the gentiles. And they went home without passing by Jerusalem again, for an angel warned them that Herod was planning to kill the Child and perhaps those who believed in him.

Once in their own countries, they started preaching the good news about the Messiah, and their subjects believed too. Then some thirty five years later an Apostle, either St. Thomas or St. Bartholomew, came to their lands and baptized them and their subjects. According to Tradition the three Magi later became priests and perhaps bishops and were put to death for their faith by the priests of the false deities or idols, and their remains or relics came to repose in some roundabout way in the Cathedral of Cologne, Germany.

Here are some of the lessons we can glean from the feast of the Epiphany:

1. God loves both the real poor and the real rich who are also poor of heart, that is, who use their wealth not for vanity and ostentation and vice, but for the service of religion and the poor and sick. The Christian poor of heart who has great wealth cannot be less charitable than observant Moslems who are enjoined by the Koran to dispense at least two and a half percent of their yearly gross income for religion and charity.

2. The Church of Jesus Christ calls all peoples of all races to salvation. That is, the Church of Jesus Christ is universal or catholic. An eloquent illustration of this universality or catholicity of the Church of Jesus Christ are two Saints from the two superpowers of the earth. One is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, an American Saint whose feast falls on January 4, who was a convert from Protestantism and became an educator and foundress, after becoming a widow; and the other is St. Philip of Moscow, a Russian Saint whose feast occurs on January 9. He was a wealthy nobleman who became an abbot and an agricultural engineer to boot, then archbishop or metropolitan of Moscow and died a martyr choked to death with a cushion by an emissary of the Tsar whom he had tried to reprimand, as John the Baptist did with Herod.

3. Everyone of us should follow the star of truth, and spread it in our midst. In other words, due to the universal priesthood each and every Christian should be an apostle of his faith.

4. And last but not least, if the Magi covered thousands of kilometers during the thick of winter amidst so many risks to their lives just to adore the Child Jesus, whom they could have confessed merely from afar — but telepathy, as it were —, who is the Catholic who will not come to Mass on Sundays and holidays, unless excused by sickness or another sufficient reason, for during the Mass the wafer of wheat flour bread becomes the true body and blood of that same Christ that the Magi had adored?

January 15, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Isaiah 49:3.5-6

I Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

John baptized Jesus Christ upon the latter's insistence, who did not need any baptism, but who thus instituted the sacra-

ment of the New Law called Baptism, and to stress and impress on us its need. "After Jesus was baptized, he (John) saw the Spirit of God descended like a dove and hovered over him. With that, a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my beloved Son. My favor rests on him'" (Mt. 3:15-17).

Soon after this incident on another occasion Jesus came to John, who said about him to those around: "Look there! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world... This is God's Chosen One" (Jn. 1:29-34).

Why is Jesus Christ called a Lamb? This is certainly a metaphor. First, because he was compared to a lamb in a prophecy by Isaiah (53:7). Secondly, because it was a custom from time immemorial to offer a lamb as sacrifice to the deity. Lastly, because like the Lamb, Jesus Christ is innocent and pure, meek and humble of heart.

Jesus Christ takes away the sins of the world. He did not come to destroy sinners, but to free them from their sins. We should hate sin, but love the sinner's soul.

How did and does Jesus Christ destroy sins?

First, by redeeming the human race with his death on the cross. Secondly, by giving us all the means to avoid sin, and to be forgiven after committing sin. John the Baptist preached penance or the foregoing of vice, repentance and renewal of life. For the Catholic penance means sorrow for our sins (attrition or contrition), and their declaration to the priest.

The priest has the power to forgive all sins. "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." The confessor might be a much graver sinner than the penitent, but still he can forgive the latter.

According to traditional teaching, there are two kinds of sins, viz., venial and mortal. It is not necessary, though praiseworthy, to confess venial sins; but it is necessary to confess mortal sins not yet confessed and forgiven. The very few who have never committed a mortal sin in their lifetime are called innocent like a lamb. But the Saints who started out as sinners but repented and became Saints are in the great majority: St. Mary Magdalene, Dimas, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Mary of Egypt, St. Camillus, etc., etc. Judas Iscariot lost a chance to be a Saint when instead of confessing his sin to St. Peter or another fellow Apostle, he despaired and hanged himself. St. Peter

Peter would have told him, "Brother Judas, I have been worse than you. I denied him three times despite my protestations. I would never do that again. I forgive you, brother Judas; and now forgive my sins too."

One saddening event after Vatican II is the unpopularity of sacramental individual confession, and the geometrical increase of communicants. This is due to many causes. First, to the spread of the Protestant tenet of confession direct to God. Secondly, due to the wrong concept of sin, as being harm done to our neighbor only, and thus sins against God are not so considered. Third, due to a wrong understanding of the fundamental option in which many theologians base the essence of sin. Many construe it as an open and direct rebellion and challenge against God; but rightly understood, fundamental option is the sum of grave matter, perfect knowledge and full consent. Any of the three elements lacking, there is no fundamental option, and consequently no mortal sin either.

The damned are very miserable for the eternal, multifarious and intense sufferings in hell, the least of which is more painful than all the sufferings here on earth. And they blame themselves as they realize that they could have shunned such pains and sorrow had they devoted a few minutes to a good confession. It is like losing one's property worth a billion for having neglected paying taxes of a few thousand pesos. What a big folly! And were confession to be done in public, one could excuse oneself from it; but it a secret one, and the lips of the confessor are sealed. And one can choose his own confessor, or even change confessors with due reason.

One should declare the kind (species) of sin, and if mortal the exact or approximate number of times it was committed. In case of needed restitution, it should be done either before the absolution or there should be an earnest resolve to do so.

The most important integral part of Penance is the purpose of amendment, which should be firm, efficacious (by using all means available to avoid sin), and universal (extending all mortal sins and even their occasions).

The recent Fourth Synod of Manila prescribed wisely as follows about General Absolution:

Individual integral confession and absolution are still the only ordinary ways of obtaining reconciliation with God and the Church unless physical or moral impossibility excuses one from this form of reconciliation.

Circumstances that warrant General Confession and General Absolution:

In addition to a situation of imminent danger of death, there are other instances of serious necessity when it is licit to impart sacramental absolution to a group of faithful who have made only a general confession but have been suitably urged to repent. This is certainly true when there are not enough confessors to properly hear individual confession within a suitable time.

Exclusions: However, when confessors are available this practice is not licit even though there is a large number of penitents, as might happen, for example, on a great feast day or on a pilgrimage.

Special circumstances when General Absolution may be imparted: In the Archdiocese of Manila, the following are special circumstances of physical or moral impossibility when general absolution may be imparted: cases of barrios rarely visited, of barrio fiestas, occasions of great conflux of people, as on some days of Holy Week and the novenas in preparation for Christmas (Aguinaldo Masses), graduations, etc.

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

It is the local Ordinary who decides whether or not the conditions indicated above are verified.

When a situation or situations exist other than those mentioned above, and in the judgment of the confessor constitute a serious need, the confessor should, if possible, consult with the Local Ordinary. When this is not possible, he should as soon as possible, *post factum*, inform the Ordinary of his procedure in the case.

Validity of the Sacrament: For the validity of the sacrament of Penance, it is absolutely required that the faithful be properly disposed, which means that each must repent his sins, resolve not to sin again and to repair any scandal and damage inflicted and to intend to confess in due time each serious sin that he is unable at present to confess. The priest giving the General Absolution must inform the faithful about these required dispositions.

January 22, Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Isaiah 8:23-9:3

I Corinthians 1:10-13,17

Matthew 4:12-23

"When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee," where he had so far no enemies. Even Jesus avoided useless trouble — he was brave but not temerarious, rash, reckless or careless. We should avoid exposing ourselves to temptation without any compensating reason. "He who loves danger, will perish in it." This is especially true with temptations of the flesh and of the wallet — money.

Jesus' main theme in his sermons was this "Reform your lives! The kingdom of God is coming!" To reform one's life is to avoid bad company, bad literature, immoral gathering, and everything harmful to the soul. Then it consists in acquiring slowly the moral virtues, and in praying constantly and without ceasing. It consists in believing in God, hoping in him, but especially in loving him, and in doing good — acts of mercy — to our neighbor for the sake of God.

So Jesus addressed himself mainly to sinners, for the virtuous have nothing or nearly nothing to reform. He came to save sinners and not the virtuous, like a doctor who ministers to the sick and weak, and scarcely to the healthy. But Jesus has a special affection towards the healthy in the spiritual life, who are the holy or saintly, and encourages them to progress in holiness, for not to do so is to backslide or retrogress.

What is the relation between the reform of one's life and the arrival of the kingdom of God? Simply this: that the most opportune or auspicious time to reform is now that the kingdom of God has come. Kingdom here means the reign of God over the world and over the devil, inasmuch as Jesus is just three years off from the redemption of the human race by his passion and death. It is like saying: "Very soon heaven will be opened again, after having been closed since the sin of Adam; so repent now so that you, after you die, will enter it and be eternally happy with God and his angels."

To reform one's life consists in repenting for one's sin, in restituting all grave harm done, and in starting the practice of faith, hope and charity, and of the four cardinal virtues, with

the big array of moral virtues in tow. After Jesus instituted the sacrament of Penance, the reform of one's life means the worthy receiving or performing of this sacrament. This was the theme in our homily last Sunday.

Then the gospel passes to relate how Jesus Christ chose and called his first apostles. "As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee he watched two brothers, Simon now known as Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea." Of course, Jesus knew them very well, God that he was. But did Simon and Andrew know him by then? Most probably yes, from John the Baptist, who was now preaching about Jesus as the Messiah, and even urging his followers to leave him and go after Jesus.

Jesus told Simon and Andrew, "Come after me." And "they immediately abandoned their nets and became his followers." What a heroic response! They could have told the Lord that they would fold first the nets and tie the boat and perhaps say goodbye to their folks, but no. "Let the nets and boat go to waste, but we follow him or do as he wishes." This is an example for those among us when we have inspirations from God to follow him or to do something special for his sake. But the difference is that Simon and Andrew were seeing and hearing Jesus physically, but we often are not sure of whether the call is Jesus' or not. Thus we should test and consult our vocation or inspiration with reliable counsellors such as our confessor or parish priest, and once convinced of that it is from God, let us immediately set to follow it. This refers mainly to the vocation to the priesthood or to the religious or quasi-religious life.

The manner Jesus called his apostles illustrates what he would tell them later: "You did not choose me, I chose you." Jesus indeed chooses whom he wants to serve him in a special manner in the priesthood, religious life or Catholic apostolate.

With Simon and Andrew Jesus continued his walk, and "caught sight of two other brothers, James, Zebedee's son, and his brother John. They too were, in their boat, getting their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they abandoned boat and father to follow him." This is even more heroic, for the father was with them. Of course, Zebedee did not interpose any objection. Parents should not object to the vocation of their children.

Here we learn a psychological lesson from the Lord. Whenever possible, let two brothers or sisters enter the seminary or

convent together. They will help each other in the endless trials they will undergo. I cannot resist telling you the story of a CPA man from Iloilo, whose two daughters entered the convent. Then he and his wife agreed to separate and enter too the religious life, he as a laybrother, and she as a sister as their daughters. At present the four of them are Dominicans, and may God grant them to persevere to the very end.

Those called by Jesus considered it an honor and privilege to be so chosen for the greatest mission or task on earth — that of being Christ's ambassadors and successors. Certainly Simon was married, and he abandoned his young wife for good to follow the Lord. (It is said that St. Peter then had a small daughter named Petronila, and he abandoned her too.) How great a love, faithfulness and self-denial and sacrifice! It is related that the parents and siblings of St. Thomas Aquinas objected to his vocation to be a Dominican, but he persisted in his resolve, even to the point of emerging victorious of an almost insuperable temptation of the flesh.

Catholic parents should consider it an honor to have an offspring consecrated to God, like Anna of old who offered her Samuel to the Lord. But it is a lesson of experience that only pious families where there is family prayer and concord produce vocations. Some parents choose the ugliest "duckling" for the priesthood: there is nothing wrong in this, so long that he is mentally bright and morally upright. St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Antoninus of Florence and a host of many other priests and Saints were unsightly but wise and holy.

Jesus toured all of Galilee. He had now four companions: Simon, Andrew, James and John. "Jesus taught in their synagogues, proclaimed the good news of the kingdom, and cured the people of every disease and illness." His four apostles were being instructed in their future mission by Jesus himself. In time they would be a dozen. Their faith was growing stronger with every sermon of Jesus, and every miracle that he witnessed. Jesus cured every disease and illness, but more than that, he gave them the grace of faith, hope and charity.

Women are not excluded from the inner company of Jesus Christ. St. Luke tells us: "The Twelve were with Him, and also certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases — Mary called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had been expelled, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who helped support him

out of their means" (Lk. 8:2-3). From this text we see that more women were following Jesus and serving him. One of these women was Mary Magdalene, another was no less than Joanna, the aristocratic wife of Herod's steward or treasurer, Chuza by name. Of course, she had the consent and even encouragement of her husband to serve Jesus. Certainly she and her husband had received a very special favor from Jesus too. Did Herod object to Joanna's providing Jesus with what Chuza earned from his work as the treasurer of the kingdom? Perhaps not, because Jesus never promoted political division or war. Much unlike some ministers of today who perhaps out of amateurish vanity dabble in politics about which they knew much less than the politicians about theology, and who preach disobedience to the constituted authorities, in opposition to the doctrine of Jesus, Peter, Paul and the Popes.

January 29, Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Zephaniah 2:3.3:12-13

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Matthew 5:1-12

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the Gospel of St. Matthew contain in full the text of the first formal "discourse or sermon" or lecture of Jesus Christ. It is dubbed Sermon on the Mount because it was delivered atop a hill. It opens up with the famous beatitudes which are a declaration of sorts of principles or of priority of values. So to say, the beatitudes form the constitution or charter or basic law of the doctrine of Christ. Many great men and women tried to learn the Sermon of the Mountain nearly by heart.

As said, the beatitudes which open the Sermon of the Mount speak about the main purpose of the doctrine of Christ, which is happiness or beatitude. Jesus describes those who are happy here on earth according to his doctrine, not in accordance with the ideas of worldly men and women. But there are two kinds of happiness, namely, that in heaven which is perfect and everlasting; and that on earth, which is incomplete and temporary.

Perfect happiness cannot be attained here on earth. It does not consist in any good or goods inside or outside man himself. In fact, such goods are perfect health, wealth, honor, fame and

glory, pleasure, success and the like, even when taken together; are not lasting but often easily lost, and inevitably lost with death. But the above mentioned assets are not bad in themselves, but when used for a good purpose and in the spirit of thanksgiving and service to God, they are of great worth and merit. They may be called the beginning of happiness or initial happiness. But when they are used as instruments for vice and sin, then they are initial damnation.

In what does perfect happiness consist? Without doubt, without entering into theological distinctions and subtleties, we can safely say without any error that perfect happiness consists in possessing or reaching heaven, even if in the process one had to suffer and be unhappy. So what is heaven?

The Holy Bible mentions heaven 362 times.

Heaven is a state and place of supreme happiness: "a state perfect with the aggregation of whatever good" (Boetius, *De Consolatione Philos.*, 133, prosa II); or "the perfect good that totally quiets the rational desire" (St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, Ia Iae, q. 2, a. 8).

As a place, heaven is the most beautiful that one can think or dream of. St. John tried to describe it by making use of everything most precious, exquisite, magnificent and perfect with which we are acquainted (Rev. XXI, 10-27).

As a state, heaven is perfect happiness. St. Thomas said that the least pain in purgatory surpasses all the sufferings, trials and torments of this life. St. Thomas was speaking of suffering souls, separated from their bodies. Thus, *a pari* we can say categorically that the least joy in heaven relished by the lowest soul surpasses all the delights and pleasures here on earth! And what makes those blessed souls happy?

There are two kinds of happiness in heaven: the essential and the incidental. The essential happiness springs from the supernatural face-to-face beatific vision, and a consequent beatific love of God. About this supreme bliss St. Paul said, quoting Isaiah (LXIV, 4): "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. II, 9).

The incidental happiness of the blessed in heaven consists in the dowries, the aureoles, the knowledge and love of the humanity of Jesus, the company of Mary and of the angels and

of the Saints, the discovery of all the laws of the universe (some of which we have glimpsed in our studies of science). St. Theresa of Avila said that an ignorant man on earth upon reaching heaven will be wiser than all the sages of this earth. What ecstatically joyful and blithe was Archimedes when he discovered the law of bouyancy! Or Newton, unfolding the myteries of calculus; or Napier, stumbling upon logarithms; or Descartes devising the coordinates in graphs. Well, the soul of a rustic farmer in heaven is a thousandfold wiser than all the scientists that walked the earth.

The aureoles. The Virgin Mary and all the blessed of our human race are described as decorated with golden crowns as symbols of their victories over the enemies of salvation (cf. Rev. XIV, 14; IV, 4). There are some groups — the virgins, the doctors of the Church and the martyrs — who all have special secondary crowns called aureoles.

The dowries. These are spiritual endowments of the blessed that adorn them and dispose them to the perfect union with Christ. The name is adapted from the custom of a bride's contribution to the connubial property.

The other incidental enjoyments. The most important of these are those that will reach their fullness after the general resurrection of the body at the end of the world.

Indeed at the end of the world, after the general resurrection, the bodies of the citizens of heaven will have four precious attributes or qualities. One is beauty. A person who was lame or ugly or otherwise defective when still here on earth will have a body beautified by God. Another attribute is impassibility — by which it cannot die, be sick, hungry, thirsty or under pain again. Not even a million bombs can as much as make a scratch on its fine complexion. Another attribute is subtilty or subtlety, by which it can be like a light that crosses through the thickest glass. Another attribute is its incredible speed equal to that of light (300,000 kilometers per second, or 18,000,000 kilometers per minute!). Thus a blessed body or person, without any other means of transportation than its own desire, may be in one continent and in a jiffy transfer to another, or even to the planets, stars and other heavenly bodies.

In heaven there will be no food or drink: "They shall no longer hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the

waters of life, and God shall wipe away all their tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:16-17). Nor will there be "sex" in heaven: "For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married; but shall be as the angels of God in heaven" (Mt. 22:30).

But the pleasures of food, drink and sex which many people make so much stock of here on earth will be supplanted with other enjoyments much more ineffable and satisfying. Toddlers enjoy dolls; boys and girls relish candies; the youth fly kites or play tennis or dominoes and the like; but they all outgrow such diversions and entertainments. The blessed in heaven shall have outgrown the sensual pleasures, for their joy is exceeding all imagination so that words can hardly describe them.

The blessed after the resurrection will retain their senses of sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. We have just said that there will be no hunger or thirst or sexual desires in paradise, but the blessed will have their senses of taste and touch filled in a mysterious way we cannot fathom now.

The sense of smell will have its full satisfaction. Says Gaume: "Heaven shall be a city filled with the most exquisite perfumes. We know for certain that the bodies of many Saints have yielded such pleasing odour after death that no person had ever felt the like. This, according to St. Jerome, is what occurred to St. Hilarion. For ten months after he had been buried, his body was found as entire as if he were alive, and from it there issued a miraculous fragrance, which make some people suppose that it had been embalmed. The same thing is related of St. Servulus, the poor paralytic of whom St. Gregory makes such a great eulogy. When dying, he spread around him a heavenly perfume, which amazed all those who were present. There are innumerable other examples of this wonder. Hence we may conclude that if bodies whose souls enjoy glory exhale a divine odour even in the grave, the case will be different in heaven when they shall be living and glorified."

And what will their eyes see?

"The Saints shall see the new heavens and the new earth, incomparably more beautiful than the former ones. They shall see that holy city which Tobias and, after him, the Apostle St. John, having no terms to express its magnificence, picture to us as a city build of gold, and adorned with all kinds of precious stones. They shall see one another, and as, according to St. Paul, their bodies shall be transformed on the model of that of

Jesus Christ (I Philip. 3:2), they shall be so bright and beautiful that they shall not yield to the sun in brightness and beauty" (Gaume, *ibid.*, p. 570).

And what will they hear?

Sounds and music that surpass the symphonies of Beethoven, or the arias of Verdi, or all the songhits of all times. "We learn from the Book of Tobias and the Revelation of St. John that there shall be canticles sung in heaven to the praise of the Lord. These canticles, so sweet and ever new, shall wondrously rejoice the Saints, and shall please them so much the more as their voices shall be more beautiful, as He whose praises they sing shall be more worthy thereof, as the audience shall have more delicate ears and be assembled in greater numbers... St. Francis, we learn from St. Bonaventure, having heard for some little time the sweet sounds of a lute touched by an angel, was so ravished therewith that he imagined himself in another world. What pleasure then shall it be to hear millions of voices, accompanied by as many instruments, which, divided into two choirs and continually answering one another, shall sing for ever and ever the praise of God!"

All this sounds fantastic, but true and will come!

Philip, king of Macedonia, once met Demades, one of the chief magistrates of Athens, who described to him the city of Athens — its beautiful architecture, the wealth and the learning of its inhabitants, the joys and pleasures of its theaters, bath houses and the peace and concord among its citizenry. Philip listened in silence, but at Demades' last word, he exclaimed, "That city must be mine, cost what it may!"

Should we not too risk everything to reach heaven?

Jesus Christ tells us who will win and obtain heaven in the first part of the Sermon of the Mount in the so-called beatitudes, which we shall try to explain.

"Blessed are the poor either in fact who cannot even afford the necessities of life, or those who are rich or even very rich, but live simply and use their wealth not for vice or sin, but for generating jobs for the unemployed or for helping orphans, the sick and disabled who cannot fend for themselves, and for religious purposes too; for the reign of God is theirs, that is, for they will go to heaven."

"Blessed are the sorrowing, that is, those who in the performance of their duties meet many trials and sorrows and contradictions and misfortunes, for thus they have atoned for their sins, and having suffered so much on earth, their souls have been purified, and thus after death they will not fall into hell, but go to heaven either directly or through the antechamber of purgatory."

"Blessed are the lowly, either because their station or rank in life is low, or because even though they are highly placed they consider it as a gift of God, and are gentle and meek towards others without any haughtiness or pride; for they shall inherit the land, that is, they shall own their property here on earth in peace, or even without any thing to their name, they will inherit the greatest treasure which is heaven, our permanent country."

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness, that is, who practise penance for the sake of holiness; or who are sinners and yet aspire to holiness in their walks of life; for they shall have their fill, that is, they will have full contentment not of body but of soul, and when they die, they will reach our permanent country which is heaven."

"Blessed are they who show mercy, that is, who perform all or some of the fourteen acts of spiritual and corporal mercy, for God will be merciful to them by forgiving their shortcomings and sins and helping them attain the happiness of heaven."

"Blessed are the pure of heart, that is, those who either have never committed any mortal sin in their lives, or have committed only a few of them, and have repented; for they shall see God even in their world by being with divine inspirations and mystical graces, and after death their souls will go direct to heaven to see, through the gift of the *lumen gloriæ*, the beauty of God himself face to face."

"Blessed are the peaceful or peacemakers, namely, those who do not harbor spite or revenge or grudge against his neighbor who has wronged him, and rather strives to be reconciled, and to reconcile those who are at odds, and promote social justice and peace and discipline by preaching respect and reverence and obedience to the legally constituted authorities, and try by all means to avoid factions and wars and intestine quarrels; for they shall be called sons of God, that is, they are like Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born when there was a univer-

sal Octavian peace, and who preached the good tidings of peace; for when they die, Jesus Christ would be waiting for them in heaven."

"Blessed are those persecuted for holiness' sake, namely, those who are martyred for the faith or morals; or those who have suffered much for God short of being martyrs, for they shall have a special prize in heaven."

"Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me" that is, when you follow the commandments of God and obey the precepts of the Church, and thus are despised or ridiculed by the worldly or lukewarm; for your reward will be great in heaven, namely, eternal and perfect happiness in exchange for your brief sufferings and embarrassments here on earth."

February 5, Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Isaiah 58:7-10

I Corinthians 2:1-5

Matthew 5:13-16

(Homily notes are furnished for the three readings of the Sunday, and the homilist may choose the materials he prefers to develop into his Sunday sermon; or he may glean from the three or two sets of notes to compose a talk that will be most appropriate to his audience.)

I

As gold is the most valuable among the metals, or diamond among the precious stones, so charity or love of God and of neighbor for the sake of God is the queen of all the virtues. In this world our love towards God consists in keeping his commandments and being united to him in prayer, and most importantly in loving our neighbor or fellow human being for the sake of God. We naturally love our kith and kin, and this love rather pertains to the virtue of "piety" which is what the fourth Commandment of the Decalogue enjoins. We love our neighbors not related to us by blood by this virtue of charity, if we do so for the sake of God.

This love naturally begets mercy or compassion towards our neighbor who is indigent or needy of spiritual or material aid. And it is saying the obvious that in our country hundreds of thousands cannot fend for themselves, such as abandoned children, orphans, the crippled, disabled, the sick or sickly, the strong but unemployed, and the like. And those who need spiritual help in the form of the seven acts of corporal mercy are in the range of millions.

The first reading stresses the importance of giving corporal aid: food, clothes, shelter, etc. There are especially in the big cities countless beggars besieging us for our alms — money which can buy food and all other necessities and even comforts. Some or even many of them may be feigned or false beggars who overact the role of invalids or sick, who find panhandling more profitable than employment. If we in all our good intention are fooled by such beggars, still what we do is meritorious, if done for the love of God. We should, however, be aware that many people particularly in big centers of population cannot find employment, and thus deserving of material aid or alms. In progressive countries such are given "welfare" by the government.

The theme of this first reading is repeated a hundred times throughout the whole Bible, for example, by the following quotations:

Let not thy hand be stretched out to receive, and shut when thou shouldst give. — Eccles. IV, 36.

According to thy ability be merciful. — If thou have much, give abundantly; if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little. — Tob. IV, 8-9.

He that giveth to the poor, shall not want; he that despiseth his entreaty, shall suffer indigence. — Prov. XXIII, 27.

Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold: for alms delivereth from death: and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and Life Everlasting. — Tob. XII, 8-9.

Stretch out thy hand to the poor, that thy expiation and thy blessing may be perfected. — Eccles. VII, 36.

He that stoppeth his ear against the cry of the poor, shall also cry himself, and shall not be heard. — Prov. XXI, 13.

He that is inclined to mercy shall be blessed; for of his bread he hath given to the poor. — Prov. XXII, 9.

When thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. — Matt. VI, 2.

Almsgiving is a duty, not a mere work of supererogation or devotion. Moslems are enjoined by the Koran to give away 2.5% of their yearly gross income to religious and charitable purposes. Catholics should do no less.

II

In a sermon or homily truth, clarity and conviction or unction are far above grammar, rhetoric and eloquence. If rhetoric should lead to confusion or double sense, be gone with it.

The most eloquent manner of preaching the truth of our religion is by examples of holiness and simple sermons. St. Francis of Assisi invited a Brother to accompany him to preach in the town. They walked the streets in utmost modesty and in prayer, and went back home. "You forget the preaching," the Brother told Francis, who had a ready answer thus: "We have already preached without words but by example." Jesus is said to have done first before teaching.

The sublime height of preaching is dying for the faith. On this February 5 we recall the feast of St. Agatha who died for Christ rather than lose her virginity and faith. Also today we reminisce the feast of the Martyrs of Japan, one of which was a Spanish Franciscan who had lived and worked in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City — St. Peter Bautista. Preaching is the noblest use of the tongue, which was misused by a Spanish sea-captain who bragged about the power of the King of Spain to subdue other nations, and thus triggered one of the cruelest persecutions of Christians in Japan in which 19 Japanese shed their blood for the faith with St. Paul Miki, a Jesuit, as their leader. At the same time a Korean, St. Leo Karasuma, and five Europeans sealed their faith with their blood and death.

The best preparation for a priest to preach is to study and meditate the word of God and to peruse the commentaries thereof by the Fathers, Doctors and exegetes. The preacher should

imitate the style of Jesus Christ who used simple parables and illustrations. St. John Bosco used to rehearse his sermons with his mother, and any word that his mother could not readily grasp was dropped for a simpler one. St. Dominic of Guzman abounded with stories from the Bible and the lives of Saints in all his talks. St. John Vianney, the dull seminarian who had been failing in Latin, finally was ordained, for the Bishop was convinced that he would be a holy priest. Indeed he became so, and a simple, clear but effective preacher, by imitating the style of St. Dominic of Guzman.

III

Jesus called his disciples the salt of the earth. The principal disciples were his closest followers (in addition to his apostles), 72 in number who later were to become priests and bishops. But in a real sense anyone who is baptized is or should be a disciple of Christ. So all the faithful in general and the priests in particular are the salt of the earth. This is a metaphor, which figure of speech together with the hyperbole often occurs in Jesus' speech.

Salt gives savor to food, it hinders or retards decomposition, it is pure white, and only a little of it is enough.

Earth here does not mean the ground or soil; but rather the inhabitants of the earth. So Jesus meant: "Catholics should give savor to the human race, should hinder its moral degeneration, should be pure white by being free from sin, every one Catholic should suffice to exert salutary influence on many non-catholics.

"But what if salt goes flat?" In other words, what will happen if instead of giving good example and setting a high standard of holiness, the follower of Christ, especially any member of the clergy, should give scandal? Who will save them from the mire? Salt that is flat is useless and should be thrown into the dustbin. But the scandalmonger can repent and become holy, as St. Mary Magdalene, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary of Egypt, St. Augustine and many other Saints who had been previous sinners.

The disciples are also "light of the earth". Of course, when this was said, St. Peter was present, and probably the Lord made a significant gesture towards him. Thus St. Peter was endowed with infallibility, which is inherited by his successors. While Bishops and priests are not endowed with infallibility, they are so when they follow faithfully the Magisterium or teaching of the Pope.

Light should illumine and dissipate darkness, and thus every Christian, especially the members of the clergy, should spread the gospel by all means of communication, but especially through the luster of a virtuous life.

February 12, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Sirach 15:15-20

I Corinthians 2:6-10

Matthew 5:17-37 or 5:20-22.27-28.33-34.37

I

The first reading is from the Book of Sirach, which is also called Ecclesiasticus. This book is an encyclopedia of practical lessons and advices on every phase and function of human life, a veritable encyclopedia of wisdom in tackling all human situations and problems. The exhaustive and voluminous commentary by Cornelius a Lapide of the Ecclesiasticus is a masterpiece.

This first reading stresses our personal freedom which God respects. We can choose to keep his commandments or not. But God helps us to fulfill them but not to break them. But when we should have broken some of them, he helps us to make amends and to start all over again in his service.

We are also reminded that God knows everything, and this includes all about each of us to the last detail, even the exact number of hairs in our head, the precise moment of our death. There is nothing secret to God. He sees each of us at all times. So we should always flee from sin and always do good.

Nathanael coming to Jesus heard from him these words: "When you were under the fig tree, I saw you." What happened under the fig tree? Where was it, in the first place? Probably under that fig tree many miles away one pitchdark evening Nathanael underwent a very strong temptation either against the sixth or seventh commandment of the Decalogue, but he did not consent to sin, saying: "Indeed no human being is a witness to what I can do now, but God sees me from above." That is why when Jesus told him, "I saw you under the fig tree," Nathanael broke into the confession: "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, and as God as the Father and the Holy Spirit."

So whenever we are tempted, even when no human being sees us, let us say: "God sees me! My guardian angel is always at my side!" St. Augustine says that many a time when we are sure that nobody witnesses our sin, a human eye that is hidden from our own eyes registers the whole story of our sin.

II

There are two kinds of wisdom or knowledge: the one acquired by the natural means of observation, study, tutorship and learning; and the infused one which God, as it were, funnels into the mind or soul. The second kind excels over the first as the heavens over the earth. St. Thomas Aquinas confessed that he had learned much more by the illumination of God than by his arduous study with professors and books.

This does not relieve us from the noble task of study, especially of things pertaining to God and to the spirit, for infused knowledge or wisdom seems to be dormant in the soul and is awakened by our own personal efforts.

St. Theresa of Avila, with all theologians in unison, tells us that an unlettered peasant who died in the state of grace immediately acquires more amount of knowledge and learning than what is contained in all the books written by men of all times. And "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him." This is the bliss of heaven, the substantial part of which is the contemplation face to face of God, Infinite Bounty and Beauty. This is the most precious pearl to purchase

which we must sell all our other properties, that is, we should joyfully lose all we have and love in this world, in order to gain entrance into the eternal happiness of heaven.

III

This gospel is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount, and being long, the preacher should choose to explain the main idea of the whole gospel.

The Jews understood the commandments of the Decalogue at their face or literal value, without penetrating into their implications. They were also scrupulous in observing many ceremonials, such as the circumcision, the frequent washing of hands, the abstention from certain foods, and so forth. Christ not only confirmed the commandments of the Decalogue but explained their fullest meaning. But he abolished the ceremonials, except when they were part and parcel of the Decalogue.

The Jews made extreme efforts to avoid external sins, but they did not care much about the innermost dispositions and sentiments of the heart and soul. But Jesus Christ teaches that the purity of the heart and mind is above that of the external acts, and so he gives the commandments a new dimension — the “secret” one which God alone sees and rewards. Thus the Decalogue prohibits murder; the law of Christ disapproves of hatred, contempt of neighbor, scandal, grudge, vindictiveness, angry thoughts and desires, and the like. Christ enjoins us to be reconciled with our fellowman before offering our sacrifice to God.

The Decalogue prohibits adultery. But the law of Christ forbids not only exterior actions not only of adultery but also of other acts against chastity, natural or abnormal, and also unchaste words, entertained impure thoughts and consented desires.

For the Jews a “white” lie was of no consequence; but for the law of Christ a lie is always a lie, and should be avoided. However, when we cannot tell the truth, we better keep our mouth shut or evade the issue through some reasonable restriction of mind. However, Christ does not urge us to be candid or naive, but to be truthful and sincere and clear.

Jesus Christ did not disdain to use figures of speech like the metaphor and even the hyperbole, as when he said: “It is

easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Here he uses some hyperboles, such as: "Cut your hand that sins," "Gouge your eye that sins," "Do not swear at all," etc. The hand is a gift of God and is very useful, why cut it? Moreover, it is only the instrument of the will in doing either good or bad. We should swear only when there is truth, reason and charity in what we say, and usually when someone in authority, even the civil one, enjoins us to do so.

February 19, Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings:

Leviticus 19:1-2. 17-18

I Corinthians 3:16-23

Matthew 5:38-48

I

The first reading is from the Book of Leviticus, a handbook for levites, the Jewish counterparts of the Catholic ministers of today. The levites were enjoined to be holy, which in the Old Testament meant loyal to God and inimical to idols, and free from all vices.

Those levites did not enjoy the powers to administer the Sacraments as our priests, and so the latter must strive to be even holier than those levites of old. All baptized persons are priests in a general sense; while those who have received the sacrament of holy orders are priests in the special or ministerial sense, as they alone can administer the Sacraments of the New Law (except emergency baptism, which anyone can and should confer). The precept of aspiring to holiness devolves on all the faithful, but in a special manner on the ordained priests.

Holiness may be summed up as perfect obedience and devoted service and an intense love of God and of neighbor for the sake of God. For the Jews the word neighbor or brother referred only to another of the Jewish nation; but for Christ all men are brothers or neighbors, irrespective of nationality, race, color, political persuasion, or religious creed.

Christians should avoid every attitude or act of vindictiveness and should not harbor any grudge against anyone. If the restoration of justice demands some action, no one can take the

law into his hands, but must recur to the lawful authorities for redress. Such recourse should be availed of only after all efforts at amicable settlement have failed.

II

Every baptized person receives the virtues of faith, hope and charity and the whole array of moral virtues, though apparently in a sort of dormant state. God stays in the soul of the baptized because grace (and every virtue brings grace with itself) is a participation of the divine nature. Thus every baptized person is a temple of the Holy Spirit (but the whole Trinity is there).

We can destroy this temple by mortal sin. But while still on earth, we can always repair the damage done by a sincere repentance and confession. But after death this will be impossible.

There are two kinds of wisdom, that of God and that of the world. The wisdom of the world proclaims pleasure, wealth, health, honor, power and like as the goals of life; and such a wisdom destroys the temple which is our soul. According to the godly wisdom, the main goal of man is to know God here on earth, to obey his commandments, including the precepts of the Church, to love God and neighbor for his sake as much as we can, and after death to enjoy the vision of God face to face in heaven.

Human leaders are worth only according as they reflect the leadership of God by complying with his commandments and by promoting peace and concord among the different sectors of society. According to Vatican II the Catholic laity is duty-bound to take an active hand in ordaining material interests in accordance with the word and spirit of the law of Christ.

III

The law of Moses approved of the law of the talion ("eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth," or "tit for tat," as we say nowadays). This legal system is indeed primitive and even ungodly.

Jesus Christ condemns it, and enjoins effective charity and forgiveness towards our offenders. But when Jesus Christ says, "Offer no resistance to injury," this should not be taken literally,

for our duty of charity to ourselves binds us to avoid being injured by others. It simply means that we should forgive right away an injury once done. (When the right of society or of a third person is at stake, it is not forbidden to look for redress in the civil courts, but no one should take the law into his hands.) When Jesus said, "When a person strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer him the other," it should be understood as: "When a person does us wrong that hurts us alone, Let us not make much fuss of it, but forgive him." To use a farfetched comparison, let us imitate the thickskinned carabao that glosses over the bites of bees or fleas. Jesus also said: "Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him two miles." The meaning is, "Employees should try to do their best and thus deserve their salary's worth. Thus the employer will be able to pay them regularly and even perhaps add some fringe benefits. Such who perform their duties up to par are the probable candidates for promotion and success."

Jesus speaks plainly when he says: "Give to the man who begs from you." This theme often recurs in the preaching of Christ. Please refer to our Homily Notes from the First Reading of February 5 this year.

St. Theresa of Avila says: "Those that give alms only to those they consider worthy, have reason to pray that the Lord in judging them will not follow their example."

Usually a beggar asks for something material, especially money. Often it is better to give in kind, when the beggar is suspected to be a drunkard, drug addict or gambler. Says the Catechism of the Council of Trent:

"With our means and by our cooperation we must be liberal to the poor, and this by that very true argument that, on the day of final judgment, God will abhor and consign to everlasting fire those who shall have omitted or neglected the offices of charity, but will invite in the language of praise, and introduce into their heavenly company, those who shall have acted kindly towards the poor. Their respective sentences have been already pronounced by the lips of Christ the Lord: 'Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you' (Matt. XXV, 34, 41); and: 'Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire'" (Matt. V, 41).

"Do not turn your back on the borrower." Very few people can borrow from banks, and so they go to their acquaintances

when in need. If the need is real we should lend, if we can. This is even a less sacrifice than outright almsgiving. But we face the risk of not being paid. In that case let us consider it as loaned to the good Lord. Of course, we may charge a legal interest (as much as that charged by banks) for big loans, but not more. Lending money at interest higher than the legal is tantamount to forcible stealing.

To charge legal interest is lawful, even though some early theologians considered it immoral. The Koran prohibits it absolutely.

"Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors. If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that?" Christ enjoins us to love not only our countrymen or relatives or co-religionists but all people whatsoever because they are creatures of God (who creates directly the soul of everyone). Of course, we should love some people more than others: the holier they are or the closer they are to us, the more we should love them. But this love should be given for the sake of the Lord.

"You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." To be perfect is to fulfill the letter and spirit of the commandments of God and of his Church. And this is a duty imposed by Jesus Christ on everyone of the faithful. But not all will reach the peak or acme of holiness, but only a select few. Some will reach the midst between the base and the peak of Mount Carmel (the ascent to holiness is often compared to a climb of a high mountain, like Mount Carmel.) Most will reach just a little above the base of the Mount. The higher one reaches in this climb, the higher will be his mansion in heaven.

February 26, Eighth Sunday of the Year

Readings:

Isaiah 49:14-15
I Corinthians 4:1-5
Matthew 6:24-34

I

Zion said: "God has forsaken... forgotten me!"

Zion is a hill in Jerusalem. Because a hill cannot speak, Zion here stands for the Jews in general. They had suffered

a lot throughout their history, had undergone many persecutions, and so they were often complaining that they were abandoned by the Lord.

What happened to the Jews of old, continues to happen to us Christians, as many among us are agonizing under the weight of many trials, such as poverty, sickness, hatred from our neighbors, etc. And such often consider themselves as forgotten by God. "Why am I, who have always tried to fulfill all the commandments of God, suffer this sickness or another misfortune, while Mr. X, who never goes to Church and is a notorious criminal ever gets scotfree and is successful in all ventures and enjoys perfect health?"

God says to his suffering servant. "Even should a mother forget her infant, I will never forget you!" That is, I know and allow you to suffer, and that is remembering you with affection. If you would not suffer, you would not be like Jesus Christ who suffered since birth to his death on the cross. Suffering here on earth is just a shadow of the pains in hell and even purgatory. An hour of suffering in hell and even in purgatory surpasses all the sufferings of all human beings here on earth, and hell will endure forever, while purgatory will end at the end of the world during the final resurrection. That is why the servants of God whom he cannot forget should better suffer here on earth, which for everyone of us will last not more than a seventy-year period of life. Our life here on earth compared with eternity is like a drop of water compared with all the oceans of our globe.

Gold is purified in the crucible of fire, so our souls should be cleansed of sin through suffering. Dirty clothes are soaked in water, rubbed with soap, crushed between the hands, then dried under the sun, then pressed under a hot iron, and thus become ready to wear again. In the same way does sufferings cleanse our soul.

"Thou, My servant Jacob, fear not, saith the Lord; because I am with thee, for I will consume all the nations to which I have cast thee out; but thee I will not consume, but I will correct thee in judgment, neither will I spare thee as if you were innocent." — Jer. XLVI, 28.

"My son, reject not the correction of the Lord: and do not faint when thou art chastized by him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chastizeth: and as a father in the son he pleaseth himself." — Prov. III, 11-12.

Thomas a Kempis says: "Christ was also in this world despised by men, and in his greatest necessity forsaken by his acquaintances and friends, in the midst of reproaches. Christ would suffer and be despised; and dost thou dare to complain of any one?"

St. Augustine says: "Oh, friend, what is there that can happen to you that your Saviour did not suffer before you? Is it slander? He heard it, when he was called a glutton, a drunkard, a heretic, and a rebel, a companion of sinners, one possessed by the devil."

"Blessed is the man whom God correcteth: refuse not therefore the chastising of the Lord." (Job. V, 17.)

II

The doctrine of the Catholic Church distinguishes two kinds of priesthood, namely, the universal priesthood and the ministerial priesthood. Every baptized person is endowed with the universal priesthood, which makes him a delegate of Christ to participate in spreading the kingdom of God — the Catholic Church — all over the earth. Thus the married should have their offspring baptized as soon as possible and educated as good Catholics. The laity should maintain the Church with their contributions, part of which is for the sustenance of the priests. Laymen should undertake those tasks that would make society more religious, more observant of Christian principles, and more homogeneous in such a manner that the majority if not the entirety of the population earns enough for a decent standard of living.

The other kind of priesthood is that of the ordained ministers whose main duties are to preach the word of God and to administer the sacraments. (The laity can administer emergency baptism only.) To the priest Jesus Christ gave the power to offer the Mass in which bread and wine are turned respectively into the body and blood of Christ as our spiritual food.

To the priest Jesus Christ said: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth it shall be loosed also in Heaven." In his infinite wisdom Christ dispensed and ordered human beings to be priests in lieu of the angels; who could not condole with sinners, nor have compassion and sympathy towards them.

The first qualification of an administrator of the sacraments is to be trustworthy beyond doubt. A child cannot be trustworthy, for he has not enough sense of responsibility. Thus a priest should first of all be a mature, responsible man. That is the meaning of priest, *presbyter* in Greek, which means an old man. A priest has to be 25 years of age for ordination, and should have shown the maturity, seriousness and wisdom of a man twice his age.

III

Jesus said: "No one can serve two masters", that is, if they are contradictory to each other. Usually God and money are opposite each other in the sense that most people use money for sin and vice. However, when money is used in order to provide jobs for the unemployed, or to relieve the sufferings of orphans, the sick, the disabled, and the indigent in general, for the love of God, money is not opposite to God; rather it leads to God as a passport to heaven.

"Do not worry about the things of this life — food, drink, clothes and other material needs." One thing is to work calmly to earn those things, another is to be mentally disturbed or nervous, solicitous or frantic about having those things in abundance. Such a state of mind does not help. We should try to be calm, cool and collected in all our human pursuits, often praying for the help of God in all our problems, and he will not fail to come to our succor. We should not get the impression that our Lord wants us to be negligent and idle; for as the bird was made to fly, so man was created to work. God helps those who help themselves.

When we speak of work, we take it in a wider sense so as to embrace prayer, study, teaching, corporal work, etc., so long the activity is not immoral or illegal. The ministers of the Lord by complying with their duties as such will receive all they need for their maintenance; but the more they are attached to money, usually the less generous their parishioners are towards them.

Jesus Christ warns us too against overwork, especially against servile work on Sundays. "Enough, then, of worrying about tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Today has troubles enough of its own." All these injunctions amount to putting our confidence in our Father in heaven. We should work and strive indeed, but with peace of mind and with trust

in the Lord. We are not forbidden to plan out our enterprises, in fact such is necessary for success of any human venture. But we should work with moderation yet with perseverance. When the work of this day is done, let us rest and pray. Tomorrow we shall begin again. If our work or occupation is so taxing, let us have regular vacations, for such increase our efficiency, productivity and enthusiasm.

Many spiritual authors recommend the so-called "theology of the present" as one of the surest means to be holy. It consists in living for the "now" without worry, haste or fear. An instance of this is related of St. Charles Borromeo, who one day was playing billiards with some other priests. "Suppose you'd die within an hour, Charles, what would you do now?" he was asked. "I'll just finish our game, and then prepare for death. I've no hurry, because whatever I do, I offer to God as done in his name, according to the advice of St. Paul."

March 4, Ninth Sunday of the Year

Readings:

Deuteronomy 11:18.26-28

Romans 3:21-25.28

Matthew 7:21-27

Moses, either foreseeing his upcoming death or his retirement into private life, makes a will which should never be forgotten: "Obey the commandments of the True God; do not render adoration to false gods or idols!"

Moses, shrewdly knowledgeable of human nature, does not give many or long instructions. A long talk is usually forgotten and even misinterpreted. The Jews like most people were somewhat like children, to whom one should give short and precise instructions. Give a child five orders at a time, and he will forget or neglect all. Give him one order only, and he will follow two. The will of Moses was simply: "Avoid idolatry first, avoid idolatry second, and avoid idolatry third."

Applying this to ourselves, we should adore God alone. The Saints deserve our veneration, the Virgin Mary merits a super-veneration, i.e., *hyperdulia*. Near the end of the world, idolatry will be a widespread sin. For then the Antichrist will appear,

who according to St. Paul, will sit "in the temple of God and will himself out as if he were God" (cf. II Thes. 2:3-8). He will be a supermagician who will convince many, even among the pious, that he is the Incarnation of God.

Some people profess no belief in God, or believe that there is no God. The main objection and mistake of Communism is that it is officially atheistic — unbelieving in God. There are many other people who believe in God, but consider him far removed from human affairs, uncaring and unconcerned and even ignorant about what happens to each of us. They are called deists — believers in a distant God.

The good Catholic believes in God and follows his commandments. Faith in God is also the theme of the second reading of today.

Faith, in general, is the acceptance of a statement upon the authority of another; and if this latter person is a human being, we have human faith; if the statement is from God, then we have supernatural faith. About this supernatural faith St. Paul asserts: "A man is justified by faith apart from observance of the law." Some interpreted this text to mean that faith alone without the observance of the law, that is, the commandments, is all that is needed and sufficient to justify a man and lead him to heaven. This interpretation runs counter to what Jesus says in the gospel today: Anyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like the wise man who built his house on rock... Anyone who hears my words but does not put them into practice is like the foolish man who built his house on sandy ground."

So what St. Paul meant is that faith is the first step towards justification or sanctification. But it would be incomplete and insufficient for salvation or entrance into heaven. In fact, the devils also believe, but they do not perform good works. The gospel clinches strongly this truth, saying or testifying that Jesus said: "None of those who cry out, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. When that day comes, many will plead with me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name?"... So even the prophets who did not fulfill God's commandments or did not fulfill them thoroughly will be excluded from the Kingdom of God, that is, heaven. But for some faith without good deeds is enough for salvation.

A child before the use of reason, if baptized, and dies, goes direct to heaven. The same is true with those who are like small children — the insane and the like.

But for normal adults faith which is infused by God normally through Baptism should be perfected or complemented with the performance of the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. Hell is full of good intentions, that is, good intentions are already good deeds, but they are not enough if not put into action. A very necessary good deed for those who have fallen into mortal sin or sins, so that they can be saved, is Penance, the sacrament of forgiveness.

St. Francis de Sales says: "My children, perhaps you will never have it in your power to do great works for God, but little ones you can perform every day of your lives. He who lays a brick upon a building, each succeeding day, will soon complete a large house. Do some good, therefore, every moment of your lives." Even the greatest Saints, like the Virgin Mary, did not do anything spectacular, but they performed to perfection the commandments of God and of the Church.

St. Ignatius of Loyola says: "The devil will often endeavour to hinder us from doing a good work by suggesting one which is greater, but in the end, by means of fresh obstacles, he will manage to prevent its accomplishment."

St. Vincent de Paul says: "Vain complacency is the poison of good works if it enters into them. It is a plague which infects the most holy actions, and makes us speedily forget God. It is a vice most fatal to all progress in the spiritual life and perfection." In other words, we should fulfill the commandments of God and of the Church for the love of God, and not for vain-glory.

March 11, First Sunday of Lent

Readings:

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Romans 5:12-19 or 5:12,17-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Temptation is an enticement or provocation or invitation to do something sinful or immoral. In our spiritual life we undergo temptations coming from three sources: the devil, the world

and our own human inclinations or weaknesses. The readings of this First Sunday of Lent deal about the temptation coming from the devil, who tempted our first parents who succumbed to him; and who also enticed our Lord Jesus Christ to sin, but withdrew in utter defeat.

The fallen angels or demons hate God, but cannot do any harm to God. They also hate us, envy us, want our condemnation so as to have us with them in hell — if the demons can have any, it is the fact of cheating us out of our birthright to heaven and of being able to say: "I, the demon, am not the only stupid one to lose heaven for so flimsy reasons!" Who then are these so bad demons or devils?

In the beginning God created numberless spirits called angels, of different ranks, which from the highest down are: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Principalities, Virtues, Archangels and Angels. They were created "good" by God; but endowed with freedom. And lo! Lucifer, the highest among them, seeing how wise, and powerful and beautiful he was, thought himself equal to God and said: "I will not serve God, I am also God!" And he tempted many to follow him. And there was a battle in heaven, Lucifer and his millions of followers, and Michael with the rest and majority of the angels who remained loyal to God. Lucifer and his hosts were cast into hell and are now known as demons or devils, and Lucifer is now called Satan or Beelzebul. This is the history of the first sin or sins.

God later created Adam and Eve, and they were also endowed with freedom. They were happy in Paradise, and Lucifer, now called Satan, was envious of their bliss. So he tempted them to disobey God. Satan seems to have appeared to Eve in the form of a speaking snake. Poor Eve! She might have thought: "A speaking snake is not an ordinary snake, and should be right!" The snake told her that if she disobeyed God, she would be like God. She disobeyed God and insisted with her husband to do as she did. A weeping woman cannot but melt the heart of a man. So poor Adam! he should have obeyed God and allowed Eve to weep her heart out. After their sin our first parents were expelled from Paradise, and all of us who are their descendants contract their sin, except the Virgin Mary, who would be the Mother of our Redeemer.

Then the time was ripe for the Redeemer to be born. He was born of the Virgin Mary, and when he was thirty years old,

he began to preach the good news of the kingdom of God, that is, the way to heaven. The first public appearance of Jesus Christ was his baptism at the Jordan by St. John the Baptist. He did not need to be baptized, but to stress its importance for us, he deigned to receive it too. Then after his baptism he was led by the Holy Spirit to a deserted or solitary place, as if to make a holy retreat as his immediate preparation for his preaching campaign. In the desert he fasted for forty days and forty nights. St. Luke, relating this same fast of our Lord, says: "He did not eat at all during those days and on their completion he was hungry" (Lk. 4:2).

This fast of Jesus Christ was humanly possible and so it was not a miraculous abstention from food. We should think that the Lord drank water as often as he needed. The human body cannot survive forty days of thirst. But water does not pertain to fast. From this long fast we learn how perfect and sturdy was the body of Christ. We should be confounded, because during the whole year we have in our country only two days of fasting, namely Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and nevertheless we often are reluctant to comply with these two days of fast, a fast that allows us to take a little in the morning and evening, and to eat our ordinary dinner at noon. We should be more confounded to know that Catholics in other countries have some ten days of fast. Is it because we are physically weaker, or is it due to our inferior moral mettle and fiber? Many fast for the sake of health, others as a tool of protest; we should readily fast and abstain according to the laws of the Church which in our country, as said, have been too much lightened.

Jesus Christ's actions are sermons for us. His body was perfectly obedient to the dictates of his divine mind, and he was, though similar to us, beyond the prospect of committing the least possible sin. So he fasted so that we too should fast. For us it is a means to subdue the body which often covets what is prohibited by our faith and reason. Says the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "The body is to be exercised, and the sensual appetites to be repressed not only by fastings, and particularly by the fasts instituted by holy Church, but also by watchings, pious pilgrimages and other austerities. By these and other such penitential observances is the virtue of temperance chiefly evinced; and to this effect St. Paul writes thus to the Corinthians: 'Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things; and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one' (I Cor. 9:25); and a little after: 'I chastize my body, and bring it into subjec-

tion, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become reprobate' (1 Cor. 5:27); in another place: 'Make not provisions for the flesh in its concupiscence' (Rom. 13:14)."

Another reason why Jesus Christ fasted for forty days and forty nights was to counteract the gluttony of our first parents. Had they kept the simple fast enjoined upon them in Eden, we should not have to keep the much harder fast imposed on us today. After the fall we find that God wants us to fast: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping (for our sins)" he said by the mouth of the prophet Joel (2:12). Moses fasted forty days in the mount of God, and Elijah, in like manner, fasted forty days, before he had the wondrous vision in Horeb. Daniel fasted; the Nivites fasted at the preaching of Jonah.

As men we are partly beast and angel. The beast strongly looks for pleasure of the body, and more so now that we are beset by many temptations against chastity by the media, by the indecent shows, commercial advertising, even literature; by the immense variety of cuisine and alcoholic drinks that abet our beastly passions. If we feed the beast in ourselves fat, we starve the angel in us. We cannot be chaste and temperate without exercising ourselves in acts of mortification, the most common of which is fasting. St. Paul thus couples "fastings" with "chastity" (2 Cor. 6:5-6), for without mortification of the flesh the angelic virtue can hardly, if at all, be preserved and cultivated. So persons who are single, the celibates and unmarried, have more need of fasting.

Fasting also gives us opportunities for almsgiving, so that we may give to the poor what we spare by our fasts. In our world today millions in some Third World countries die yearly due to hunger which could be relieved entirely if the rich in the opulent countries complied with the Christian law of fasting. We already said that fasting even favors bodily health. We read in one of the prefaces of the Mass: "Thou, by means of corporal fast, holdest the vices in check, elevatest the mind and impartest strength and rewards." Says St. Leo: "Fasting has ever been the nourishment of virtue. Abstinence is the source of chaste thoughts, wise resolves and salutary counsel. By mortification the flesh dies to its concupiscences and the spirit is renewed in virtue."

St. Thomas Aquinas explains: "We fast chiefly for three reasons: First, in order to repress fleshly concupiscence... Se-

condly, we fast in order that the mind may be more easily lifted up to the thought of heavenly things...; and thirdly, we fast in order to make satisfaction for our sins."

Benedict XIV says: "By fasting we avert the scourges of Divine Justice. By it we gain strength against the prince of darkness, for it shields us with heavenly help. Should mankind grow remiss in the observance of mortification in general, and of fasting in particular, it would be a detriment to God's glory, a disgrace to the Christian religion, and a danger to Christian souls. Neither can it be doubted but that such negligence would become the source of misery to the world, of public calamity, and of private woe."

In the gospel it is interesting to note that the devil quotes the Bible to lead Christ to sin. This is the perverted use of the word of God by many false preachers and by many who defend their vices with texts from the Bible. A playboy once said that he was going with many women because the Lord enjoins us "to grow and multiply".

Another observation is that the devil said: "All these (the kingdoms and wealth of the world) will I bestow on you if you prostrate yourself in homage before me." The devil like the wise and powerful angel that he had been can earn as much wealth as he wants — he knows where the gold and oil are inside the bosom of the earth, etc. —; but still he is miserable and desperate. Wealth is the greatest and strongest temptation that we should try to conquer, because more often than not it is used for vice rather than for almsgiving.

After allowing Satan to tempt him in a triple manner, Jesus said: "Away with you, Satan! Scripture says, 'You shall do homage to the Lord your God; him alone shall you adore.'" Here Jesus Christ declared his oneness with God: he is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity who should be adored as God.

The gospel concludes: "At that the devil left him, and angels came and waited on him." We too after conquering temptation feel the love of our guardian angels, and enjoy their respect and reward in the form of spiritual joy and strength and peace within ourselves, with God and with our fellowmen. Every temptation vanquished means an immense increase in our merits before God.

March 18, Second Sunday of Lent**Readings:**

Genesis 12:1-4

II Timothy 1:8-10

Matthew 17:1-9

Feast of the Transfiguration

The first reading of this second Sunday of Lent is about Abraham who obeyed the directions of the Lord to leave his natieland and to go to a land shown to him by the Lord. Symbolically, this means that we should leave our worldly country and go to our permanent country which is heaven. The second reading is about the call to holiness, which is the road to heaven. Holiness basically consists in obedience to God as that shown by Abraham. The gospel tells the story of the Transfiguration, when Jesus showed himself to his chosen apostles in his splendor, beauty and majesty.

The body of Jesus Christ was like our own body of flesh, bones, blood, muscles, hair, etc. However beautiful and strong was his physical constitution and figure — and we have proofs of this fact — his body did not shine as the sun, it did not fly like a bird, it did not penetrate closed rooms, it did not have the speed of the ostrich or even a filly. But during the Transfiguration his body became glorious, to teach us that at the general resurrection at the end of the world (or rather at the end of the human race on the face of the earth), every human body of the blessed will be endowed with shining beauty subtlety like that of light penetrating thick glass panes, and speed as that of light which covers the distance of 300,000 kilometers per second, yes, per second. Another attribute of a glorious risen body is impassibility — the freedom from hunger, thirst, suffering, death, and even aging.

But the Transfiguration was just a short phase in the life of Jesus Christ who before his resurrection was subject to suffering, pain, and even death. During his passion he was scourged, he sweated blood abundantly, he was crowned with thorns in derision, and finally he was crucified and he died. He had told his apostles about all these events to come to him as foretold by the prophets, but they thought it impossible and even shameful and degrading for a Messiah. So Jesus transfigured himself before them, so that when all the humiliations

and sufferings would come to him, still they may recall the day of his Transfiguration and believe that his defeat would be only momentary and that in the end he would be as he had been seen during his Transfiguration, which also conveyed to them the message of how their lowly bodies would someday become if they believed in him and followed his commandments.

We may think of the Transfiguration as having lasted not only for minutes but most probably for a whole day, or better still for one whole night, for during the dark the following scene would have been more impressive: "His face became as dazzling as the sun, his clothes as radiant as light." The silent but eloquent message is: "You have been an instance of my glory; believe in me even when you would see me caught by my enemies, tortured, crowned with thorns, scorned, carrying a heavy cross, and finally crucified like a criminal on the cross between two thieves."

During the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah appeared to be with Jesus. Elijah is the prophet who was carried in a chariot to high heavens and is believed to be alive — we cannot pinpoint his residence —, and so Elijah was present there in his own real body. But Moses was there in his soul, with an artificial body formed for the nonce by Jesus himself. They were called as witnesses of the Transfiguration together with the three privileged apostles. I am sure that had Judas Iscariot been one of the apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration, he would not have ended as disastrously as he did.

Out of the cloud came a voice, whose but God's, saying: "This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests. Listen to him." Certainly the apostles, and we too, are enjoined to heed the dogmatic and moral teachings of Christ. The apostles certainly answered deep in their hearts and loud in their throats: "Yes, we shall listen to him!"

The apostles were afraid in awe of reverence, but not scared stiff. It is natural and normal for us to be afraid of what is new and out of the ordinary, but it is abnormal to panic. The apostles, far from panicking, were afraid in peace and even in joy, as I was during the first time I rode in an airplane. Jesus Christ would later tell us not to be afraid of anyone or anything in this world, but only of God who can punish us in hell. Rather we should be afraid of ourselves committing sin and not repenting, for God will punish us without fail either in hell or in purgatory, as the sin be mortal or venial.

"As they were coming down the mountainside Jesus commanded them, 'Do not tell anyone of the vision until the Son of Man rises from the dead.'" Here we see how humble and even self-effacing Jesus was: he wanted his glory hidden — it is enough that the three especially chosen apostles have witnessed it, and would certainly decide to stick to Jesus through thick or thin, until death. This was most needed by the head of the apostles, Peter, who would later waver and deny our Lord three times during his trial. But certainly Peter recalled the Transfiguration, and felt sorry for his qualities, except when to reveal them would be to the advantage or the welfare of our fellow-men.

During the conversation after the Transfiguration, Jesus prophesied that he will rise from the dead, and the apostles firmly believed him, after seeing his Transfiguration. The resurrection of the body is something that the apostles had not witnessed so far, but later Jesus Christ will perform miracles of restoring back to life the son of the widow of Naim, the daughter of Jairus and the four-day dead Lazarus.

By mentioning his future resurrection he assures us that he will make us rise again at the end of the world. Rather he confirms this truth which the Jews already knew and believed, as when Martha said to Jesus: "I know that he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection on the last day" (John 11:24).

And the apostles were shown how the bodies of the just will be after the resurrection: glorious as the body of Jesus during his Transfiguration. This is the goal of our life on earth, and the road to it is taught to us by those words of God himself: "Listen to him!"

March 25, Third Sunday of Lent

Readings:

Exodus 17:3-7

Romans 5:1-2.5-8

John 4:5-42 or 4:5-15. 19-26.39.40-42

I

The theme or underlying topic of all the readings of this Sunday of Lent is water, both in the material and spiritual senses. The material water symbolizes the spiritual one.

The first reading tells us how the Jews, on one occasion lacking water in the desert, were in the warpath against Moses, their leader. The second reading speaks of God's love as having been poured out in our hearts as sort of spiritual water from the Holy Spirit. Then the gospel narrates the conversation of Jesus with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well regarding the topic of material and mystical waters.

Water is much more necessary than food. A man and more so a woman may outlive even a hundred days without any food, but not more than ten days without water. He or she would die of dehydration.

The Jews were very much conscious of the importance of water. Theirs is a country where it is scarce due to its having few rivers and few months of rain. Moreover, they need much water for their ceremonial ablutions, for irrigating their farms and mainly for drink of their own selves and of their livestock.

In the desert which the Jews who left Egypt were passing through toward the promised land of "milk and honey", they found some oases with supply of water. When they lacked food God fed them with the manna and with fowls which rained from the clouds. Somewhere in the desert they could not find a drop of water, and the Jews threateningly shouted at Moses: "Why did you ever make us leave Egypt? Was it just to have us die here of thirst with our children and livestock?" But God came to Moses' rescue, ordering him to strike a big boulder with his staff, and lo! a torrent of pure, wholesome water flowed from the rock.

This is a miracle if there was no deposit of water under the rock, which is apparently the case. A miracle, according to St. Thomas, is a "sensible effect, produced by God, which transcends all the forces of nature." The highest miracle is that which not even all the forces of nature working together can perform, such as for one physical object to be in two places at the same time. Another kind of miracle may absolutely be performed by natural forces, but not under the same circumstances, like the flowering of a dry and dead branch in the depth of winter. The third kind or miracle involves an act which natural forces may indeed produce but not in the same manner, as the instantaneous healing of cancer.

We should not rely too much that God will perform miracles for us. We should do our best, and if our best is not enough

we may pray for a miracle. But if God does not grant it, we can be sure that we shall receive a greater grace or favor than the miracle itself we have been asking for.

II

The gospel narrates how Jesus Christ talked to a lone woman in a public place, the town's well which was the same Jacob's well. From it everybody fetched water at any time of the day and even after dark. This is a lesson for us: to avoid any act that may cast any suspicion on us, as being alone with a person of suspicious morality. We should not only be good or virtuous, but should also appear good. Jesus Christ had many women disciples or followers who were in his company day and night for days or weeks in a row, while he was preaching the good news throughout Palestine. St. Luke (8:3) mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza who was Herod's steward, Susanna, and many others who provided Jesus and his company with all their needs. And yet while some of his enemies called Jesus a glutton and a drunkard, never was anything unchaste suspected of him even by his arch enemies. In this he set an example for all in general, and for the ministers of the gospel in particular.

The Samaritan woman arrived first at the well, and Jesus approached and started talking to her: "Give me a drink." During those times Jews and Samaritans were mortal enemies. And here Jesus talked meekly and humbly to a Samaritan woman who was surprised at such an unexpected courtesy. She replied: "You are a Jew. How can you ask me, a Samaritan and a woman, for a drink?"

The answer of Jesus was above the head of the woman, for it spoke of living water, that is, grace. Jesus later told her about "water leaping into eternal life", which is also grace. Still the woman did not grasp his meaning, and she believed that it would be a sort of fountain that she could bring home.

Jesus said: "Call for your husband, and then come back here." He said this as a preparation for the woman to know him as he was about to tell her most guarded secrets. And with this she confessed him to be a prophet or a man of God, just because he knew all about her.

Then Jesus spoke about the worship of God in all places by all peoples, a worship that consists in love and obedience

rather than in sacrifices offered in any mountainside. This is the meaning of those words: "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth." Then Jesus told her clearly that he was the Messiah, and she believed. Moreover, she became his apostle among the Samaritans whom she called to see and listen to Jesus, and they too believed, saying: "This really is the Savior of the world." This Samaritan woman — whose name is not mentioned — became from sinner a Saint, and an apostle of Jesus Christ. She is indeed worthy of our emulation, however great sinners we may be.

Certainly the Samaritan woman gave Jesus to drink, and then the disciples arrived with food and urged the Lord to eat. But Jesus gave them rather a food for thought with a deep theological discourse, which even now biblical scholars are hard put to interpret. It is a subject for meditation for the ministers of the gospel.

Jesus said: "Doing the will of the Father... is my food." This is like what we say that our work or profession is our bread and butter. Ministers of the gospel should concentrate in doing the will of God and spreading his gospel and glory.

Jesus added: "The fields are shining for harvest." This means the same as when he said: "The harvest is great, the laborers are few." Thus Jesus complained that few of his followers wanted to devote themselves exclusively to the task of spreading the gospel.

If anyone feels that Jesus is inviting him or her to be an apostle, he or she should heed the call. In our country we lack apostles. All of us should work together for the glory of God. Only thus will the Catholic Church thrive in our country, or in any other country, for that matter.