

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

A REFLECTION:
JUBILEE AND EUCHARIST
Jimmy Belita, C.M.

LETTER TO THE BISHOPS
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS
CONCERNING THE MINISTER
OF THE EUCHARIST
Sacred Congregation

CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS
OF THE FAMILY
Holy See

RADICAL SOLUTIONS
TO SOCIAL EVILS
Joseph de Torre

THE POWER OF DIOCESAN BISHOPS
TO DISPENSE FROM
ECCLESIASTICAL LAWS
Bernabe Alonso, O.P.

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IN THIS ISSUE

The second half of March is the time of graduations. In this issue, we publish the homily of one student of the University of Santo Tomas, particularly of the Ecclesiastical Faculties, who returned to his Alma Mater on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his Graduation. We refer to the youngest Bishop of the Philippines, Most Rev. Diosdado Talamayan, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Tuguegarao. We publish his homily "Hail to Our Alma Mater" delivered during the UST Priest Alumni Homecoming Mass concelebrated by Bishop-and-Priest Alumni last January 31. He recalled these phrases of the university hymn: "Lead us in beauty and truth and virtues and passions; ever your valiant legions, imbued with unending grace". May all graduates of catholic schools consider their respective alma mater as the institution that leads them to beauty, truth and virtue.

For April, we offer our readers two articles which center on the Eucharist. The first of the articles is written by Jimmy Belita, C.M., entitled "A Reflection: Jubilee and Eucharist". This article is a tribute to the Holy Year of Redemption that ends on the 22nd of April. Many studies and reflections during this past year have been centered on *penance and reconciliation*. This present article compliments what have been so far written. For after all, *penance and reconciliation* should lead all to a more fruitful participation in the Eucharist.

We also give our readers the document issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith entitled "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Questions Concerning the Minister of the Eucharist". May every pastor and every professor of Theology have recourse to this letter on questions that are raised by the faithful concerning the Eucharist.

FEATURES

hail to Our Alma Mater

Most Rev. Diosdado Talamayan, D.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of Tuguegarao

Your Excellencies

My brothers in the ministry

Alumni of this great university:

I have come back to the halls of the Pontifical University of Sto. Tomas today for two reasons: I have returned, a grateful son, to my alma mater to thank her for all that I have become; I have also come to renew bonds of affection and esteem with my brothers in the Thomasian family. On the day of my episcopal ordination it was my joy to have with me representatives of the academic community of this university, including a former professor and the Rector of the Central Seminary.

From 1611 down through the centuries UST has given the Filipino nation and the world sons and daughters, distinguished in academe, in the world of economics and in the arena of politics, confident in their Catholic and Dominican heritage. We are, however, her priest-sons, and in the Filipino family there is always something distinct, something special about a son in the priesthood. This should also be true of the Thomasian family.

What distinct charism can the son of the University of Sto. Tomas bring to the priesthood? In recent years there has been an observable trend towards de-emphasizing scholastic achievement in favor of pastoral exposure; it is no exaggeration that many seminarians today are not as interested in the basics of Trinitarian and sacramental theology as they are in the mechanics of Basic Christian communities. We have it said that what the Church needs today is not so much scholastically excellent priests

as socially-oriented ministers. It has always been my persuasion that such a disjunction is unfortunate; I think it makes no sense to say that pastorals is more important than dogma. In this regard we may borrow the Kantian formulation: pastorals without dogma is blind, and dogma without pastorals is empty. And this, to my mind, is what distinguishes the presence and the ministry of the Thomasian priest. He works for righteousness in the social order with diligence and conviction, immerses himself in the life-situation of the people, because he knows his theology and has studied it well. Under the watchful and critical gaze of his professors in this university he has been guided to profound truths and sublime insights that allow his pastoral work to be purposeful and rich. In his preaching it behooves the Thomasian to shun from platitudes and slogans, for he has been trained to search diligently, to reflect assiduously on the Word of God, and to respond with relevance and timeliness to the challenges of situation and time. Guided by Thomas of Aquinas he is inspired by that wise principle: "*Contemplata aliis tradere*". His pastoral ministry becomes the handing over of the fruits of study and contemplation. The priest of today combine, faithful to Pope John Paul's admonitions, dogma and service — so he becomes a priest servant.

"God of all nations, merciful Lord of our restless being." With these sublime words of faith begins the hymn of the university we love. These are restless days and the shepherd cannot be spared the turmoil and the upheaval, but we are priests that we may lead our people in calling on the God of all nations in the midst of restlessness and confusion. There is one word the Thomasian has learned to treasure: *Veritas*, and when there is unrest because the world prefers the darkness of untruth to the light of truth, the Thomasian, ordained to teach God's people, will proclaim and stand by the truth. To identify the forces that foam and eddy is knowledge, but to see a clearing through the storm, the blue that reigns beyond the gloom is wisdom. The Thomasian has learned to value knowledge of the laws of nature and of man, but he treasures above all the wisdom that makes him kneel in prayer and supplication before God. Deep prayer can make for priest servant in the midst of the howling winds let the Thomasian's voice then be heard leading his community in prayer to the Merciful Lord of our restless being.

HAIL TO OUR ALMA MATER 147

The beautiful hymn ends with the lines: "Lead us in beauty, in truth and virtue's impassioned embrace; ever your valiant legions, imbued with unending grace." Moses had to remind his people before they took possession of the Land of Promise that it is not by bread alone that man lives but by every word from the mouth of God. In our communities today, among the people we have been sent to minister unto, there is the ceaseless search for the bread of technological expertise and material achievement. But in the classrooms and halls of the university, in lecture sessions and campus activities, the Thomasian has developed a sensitivity for the subtlety of the arts, an appreciation for the breath of letters and wonder in the depths of philosophy. And finding the unmistakable road-markers that point to the plenitude of Being in everything Beautiful, True and Good, the Thomasian can indeed pray: Lead us in beauty, in truth and virtue's impassioned embrace.

And when the priest-son of this great university acts with gentleness and compassion, speaks with wisdom and with grace, thinks with faith and with hope, then in these our troubled times, there will be BEAUTY, TRUTH and VIRTUE.

Hail to UST, hail to our alma mater!

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REAL ESTATE TAXES ON PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

The 1973 Constitution of the Philippines removed the exemption of educational institutions from the real estate tax. With the removal of the exemption, real properties (i.e., lands, buildings and machineries) devoted to educational purposes became subject to real estate tax. However, the actual imposition of the real estate tax took effect only on January 1, 1977, per P.D. 976. Moreover, educational institutions were given certain benefits, such as an assessment level of 15% of fair market value (secs. 18 and 20, P.D. 464) and an exemption from the additional 1% special education fund tax (P.D. 675). In view of these developments, City and Municipal Assessors have been issuing taxable "Declaration of Real Property" covering the lands and buildings used by parochial schools.

These guidelines are intended to acquaint the Parish Priests and Directors of parochial schools with this tax and to give them certain guidelines or instructions on what to do if they should receive notices from City or Municipal Assessors about the taxability of lands and buildings used by parochial schools or, what is even more common, notices from City or Municipal Treasurers that the school is delinquent in the payment of real estate tax.

1. What is the real estate tax?

It is a tax imposed on lands, buildings and machineries and is payable to the City or Municipal Treasurer for every year on a quarterly basis (March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31).

It consists of the *basic* real estate tax (which is usually 1% of assessed value in the provinces and 1½% to 2% in cities) and an additional 1% of assessed value, known as the special education fund tax or simply SEF.

The imposition of the tax involves three major steps: (a) the assessor determines the *fair market value* of the land, building or machinery, (b) he then multiplies the fair market value

by the assessment level, which is 15% for properties used for educational purposes, and the result is the assessed value; (c) the treasurer collects the real estate tax, which is 1% of assessed value in cities; he also collects another 1% of assessed value for the special education fund.

Example: If the municipal assessor, after inspecting the parochial school, determines that the current or *fair market value* of the land and building of the school is ₱100,000.00 for the land and ₱200,000.00 for the building, he will multiply these valuations by the assessment level of 15% and arrive at an assessed value of ₱15,000.00 for the land and ₱30,000.00 for the building. For this purpose, he will issue a paper called "Declaration of Real Property", which would state the owner of the property, the location, the fair market value, the assessed value and the date of effectivity of the declaration.

On this basis, there will be due from the school every year ₱150.00 of real estate tax on the land and ₱300.00 on the building. (As already noted, in the cities, the rate may be 1½% or 2% of assessed value.) *In no case* is the school subject to the additional 1% for special education fund.

In the example given above, if the land belongs to the Archbishop of Manila (which is very often the case) while the building belongs to the school (which is true in some cases), the real estate tax on the land should be paid, but the school should ask for an exemption of tax on the building on the basis of the following special exemption in the Real Property Tax Code (P.D. 464):

"Sec. 93. *Educational institutions exempt from the real property tax.* Non-stock or non-profit educational institutions owning real property, the total assessed value of which does not exceed thirty thousand pesos, as well as Educational Foundations organized under Republic Act No. 6055, shall be exempt from the payment or realty taxes provided for under this Code."

2. Since when were schools subject to real estate tax?

The exemption from real estate tax was removed in the 1973 Constitution. However, by virtue of several Presidential Decrees, the last being P.D. 976, schools became subject to real estate taxes beginning January 1, 1977.

3. What should I do if I receive a "Declaration of Real Property" from the assessor or a notice of delinquency in real estate taxes from the treasurer?

(a) *Obtain* from the City or Municipal Assessor the corresponding "Declaration of Real Property", if he has not sent one to you.

(b) *Examine* this declaration. Does it state accurately who is the owner of the property? (If it covers land, it should be declared in the name of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila; if it is a building, it may be declared in the name of the RCAM or of the school, depending on what the books of the school and parish show.) Does it describe the property accurately? (area of land in square meters; floor area of building, type of construction, etc.) Does it use the correct assessment level of 15% in order to arrive at assessed value? Does it provide for the correct date of effectivity (i.e., 1977 at the earliest)?

If you notice any discrepancy, take this up with the assessor. Moreover, in determining which area is used by the school and which area is used by the church (and therefore exempt), be sure that the assessor is not attributing too much area to the school. In the case of a school building, if a portion is used as convent or residence of the sisters or of the priests, that portion of the building (and a proportionate part of the land) should be declared exempt from real estate tax.

(c) If you cannot agree with the assessor on the accuracy of the declaration, bring the matter to the chancery or the MAPSA office so that our lawyers may examine the matter.

In closing, it is expected that schools will provide for this real estate tax in their budgets, including the real estate tax for past years (i.e. since 1977) in case they have not yet paid such tax.

ATTY. SABINO PADILLA

A REFLECTION: JUBILEE AND EUCHARIST

Fr. Jimmy A. Belita, C.M.

This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when every one of you shall return to his own property, everyone to his own family estate.

Lv. 25,10

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
Recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners,
To announce a year of favor from the Lord.

Lk. 4,18-19

The Church's whole life is immersed in the Redemption and breathes the Redemption. To redeem us Christ came into the world from the bosom of the Father; to redeem us he offered himself on the Cross in an act of supreme love for humanity, leaving to his Church his Body and Blood "in remembrance of him", and making her the minister of reconciliation with the power of remitting sins.

John Paul II, *Aperite Portas Redemptori*, n. 3, hence, A.P.R.

Jubilee and Redemption

On Jubilee, Israelite slaves were set free and landed property was returned to its original owner: two important laws for the restoration of social equality that had gone awry be-

cause of the misfortunes of some and exploitation by others. All the hopes of the jubilee year, when debts were cancelled and all possessions restored to their original owner, are fulfilled in the Messianic presence of Jesus. Universalism characterizes the jubilee year, for the celebration rests on the explanation given by God that "(all) land is mine, and you are all but aliens" (Lv. 25,23). God graciously divides it among all his elect (JBC, 44:56).

God elects and blesses His people because He is merciful. His mercy does not contradict His justice which structures relationships (*Dives in Misericordia*, 42 hence D.M.). Redemption, here, consists in God's gracious offer of reconciliation and man's return through the divine mercy; in consequence, men are reconciled with one another in and through the restoration of freedom and property (cf. D.M.,12).

Jesus has assumed the threefold messianic function of priest, prophet, and king. He redeems the fallen and the alienated man by reconciling him to his Father, proclaiming love, justice, and peace and by structuring and ruling their lives through his humble service (*Redemptor Hominis*, 18). Every liturgical year, according to the Holy Father, is the "celebration of the mystery of Redemption, but the jubilee anniversary of the saving death of Christ suggests that this celebration should be lived in a more intense way" (A.P.R., 2).

The Pontiff points out that the sacraments are our way of living out the meaning of the Jubilee. Redemption which the Jubilee proclaims and celebrates is "communicated to man through the proclamation of the Word of God and through the sacraments" (A.P.R., 3). Focus is on the Eucharist.

The Eucharist, in particular, makes present the whole work of the Redemption which in the course of the year is perpetuated in the celebration of the divine mysteries. In the Eucharist the Redeemer himself, really present under the sacred species, gives himself to the faithful, bringing them ever closer to that "love which is more powerful than sin". He unites them to himself, and at the same time unites them with one another. In this way the Eucharist builds up the Church, for it is the sign and cause of the unity of the People of God, and therefore the source and summit of all Christian life. (A.P.R.,3).

For the event to penetrate more deeply into the thought and action of the whole Church, it has to effect the very structure and dynamics of the person. In the *Bull of Indiction*, the Holy Father uses two images to communicate the meaning: temporal ("there occurs the 1950th anniversary of that supreme event") and spatial ("open the doors to the Redeemer").

The rite and sacrament of the Eucharist, being "the source and summit of Christian life" (S.C.,16), best mediates and realizes Redemption for us. The Eucharist, as sacrament, makes Redemption real and present because it proclaims the death on the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ, through whose paschal mysteries we have been redeemed. The Eucharistic rite with time and space imageries serves as model for understanding of the Jubilee year of Redemption and as a paradigm of pastoral ministry in the Holy Year (cf. S.C.,15).

In this heuristic function of the Eucharist, we are guided by an ancient rule, *lex orandi, lex credendi*. The Eucharist, like any sacrament, radically a prayer and worship of the Risen Lord, discloses the actual meaning of reality. The eucharistic presence of Christ in his Church is the very presupposition of all theology, and the worshippers already form the theological and hermeneutical circle in which the concrete project of theology proceeds.

We take the eucharistic rite as paradigm of pastoral ministry in the Jubilee since the sacrament is a religious language that evokes conversion and creates a community. Sacrament as language is also critical praxis within the world in which defects and shortcomings abound.

Sacramental forms are shaped by culture but their specificity consists in transforming society. To enter the world of sacramental symbols is to criticize one's life and one's practices. This provides impetus and direction for our pastoral ministry in the Holy Year of Redemption.

Eucharist: Effective Symbol of Redemption

Unceasingly contemplating the whole of Christ's mystery, the Church knows with all the certainty of faith that the Redemption that took place through the Cross has definitively restored his dignity to man and given back meaning to his life in the world, a meaning that

was lost to a considerable extent because of sin. And for that reason, the Redemption was accomplished in the paschal mystery, leading through the Cross and death to Resurrection. (R.H.,10).

1. Eucharistic Presence and Redemption

In the New Creation, the healing miracles show a sacramental quality by which bodily healing and forgiveness of sins belong to one whole saving event (cf. Mk 6,30-9,32). Indeed, the sacraments signify and mediate the worshipful response of restored creation.

There is a striking parallelism between biblical accounts and liturgical practices.

The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.

Gen. 2,7.

Thus says the Lord God: From the four winds come, O spirit, and breathe into these slain that they may come to life. I prophesied as he told me, and the spirit came into them; they came alive and stood upright a vast army.

Ez 37, 9b-10.

Then he breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit."
Jn. 20, 22.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

First Epiclesis (Eucharistic Prayer III)

Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.

Second Epiclesis (Eucharistic Prayer II)

In the same manner as in *Genesis* and *Ezekiel*, Jesus gathered his body of disciples and in death and Resurrection blew the Spirit of Life. This first eucharistic epiclesis (invocation of the Spirit) to transform the element is parallel to "breath of life" transforming clay into man, dry bones to living men. Just as in baptism, the earthly element is instrumental in transforming man, in the Eucharist the earthly elements are themselves transformed. In the sacramental order, the Eucharist is the effectual sign of Adam's dominion restored in Christ, who is the

true priest and king of creation. The identification of the bread and wine with Christ's body and blood realizes the true goal of creation. The eucharistic identification of the Church with the Risen Lord in his high-priestly action manifests or proclaims to mankind the fact of the Savior's death in its redemptive power and its cosmic significance. (Cf. R.H., 8).

The validity of this insight on the pneumatological aspect of creation, restoration/redemption, and Eucharist, depends very much on a typological interpretation of the biblical accounts. The restored interest in the Bible and its use in the liturgy promise a richer understanding of cultic worship. In the context, however, of "humanistic challenge" which offers man a future without God, there is an urgency to relate the Resurrection to man's future as an alternative answer.

Our recognition of the bodily resurrection is not only the recognition of continuity involved with the historical body of Jesus but also his exalted presence with us. This implies that the Risen Christ is filled with God's Spirit, a spirit of love and freedom, freedom not from the body, but in the body (Cf. 1 Cor. 15,44). In some way Jesus' body has been transformed into the perfect medium of self-expression and communication. (R.H.,20).

The whole universe, in fact, becomes the self-expression and communication of the Risen Christ — in a word, his Body. The cosmic dimension of Christ's risen or spiritual body implies that individual elements of the universe can mediate his presence. Natural symbols like water, bread, and wine suddenly become willing instruments in his free, total self-giving. People are also invited to go through the same process and become disposed mediators of his presence in the world. (R.H.,10).

The cosmic dimension of the Resurrection is the basis of what Rahner calls the "Copernican model" in eucharistic interpretation. The Eucharist is no longer an enclave for an encounter between God and man in the world but rather a focal point, perhaps, which is to sensitize Christians to his presence throughout the universe. The Eucharist also shares in the impact-giving force of the Resurrection that swept the disciples into renewed hope for their lives in the light of their newly found faith. (S.C.,7).

"See how they love one another" was how they were visibly recognized after the Spirit of the Risen Christ took possession of their lives. The Eucharist, in the process of proclaiming Christ's sacrificial death was also an uncompromising challenge to the early Christians to do likewise. That charismatic action of the Spirit was not optional but concomitant to the authentic Christian conversion which inaugurated a life lived in conformity to Jesus' teachings: faith in the providence that freed them to share their bread with others; practical concern for the neediest and for the marginal and outcast members of society.

2. Table-Fellowship: Jesus' Redemptive Ministry

The "breaking of bread" and the "blessing of the cup", both constitute a human meal. As the *pater familias* of the Jewish family breaks bread and distributes it to each and everyone, the table community is expressed as the communion of life. God is looked upon as the giver of life at the same time that the bread supports life. The blessing of the bread expresses the sacred dimension of the meal. Truly, this Jewish expression has been integrated into the eucharistic celebration in which the people dialogue with nature and elevate it to the level of culture. The bread and wine bear the mark of the sun, the soil, the wind, and water. But, they also bear the fingerprints of the sower, the harvester, the baker, and the wine-maker (Cf. Ps. 104,13-15).

Jesus used table fellowship as a locus of his redemptive ministry, which culminated in his death on the Cross. The Cross, as it were, was the inner principle of Jesus' life and qualified his ministry (cf. A.P.R.,10). The stories surrounding his birth, his poverty, the flight into Egypt, the threats against his life; the loneliness, and suffering, all these culminated in the Cross. The ministry of Jesus was capped by the Cross which became a parabolic scandal. The table fellowship can be seen from this angle.

The table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners was an acted parable, like the Cross, with Jesus using the primordial significance of eating together as symbol of mutual self-acceptance and reconciliation (Lk. 19,1-10). Jesus' eating with the sinners and outcasts was a blow to the "establishment" which claims righteousness to its side, for such table fellow-

ship was also Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom open for the lowly (Lk. 14,13). No wonder the Cross was the terminus of the table fellowship.

The Cross links table fellowship to the Last Supper. Accordingly, Paul lays renewed emphasis on the remembrance of the death of Christ which was already present but which in the eucharistic community at Corinth was in danger of being overlooked. Yet it is from Paul's appeal to present our bodies as living sacrifice (Rom. 12,1) that prompts us to say that worship is inseparable from the Cross.

"In the Eucharist, Paul finds a source not only of the union of Christians with Christ but also of Christians among themselves" (J. Fitzmeyer, JBC 79:145). Paul does not recount the event just for itself, but only refers to it in dealing with other problems. He brings up this sacramental meal to serve as a critique of the abuses that had moved into the Corinthian community suppers accompanying the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11), or associated with the eating of meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 10). In Paul, the Eucharist is above all the Lord's Supper, a memorial and proclamation of Christ's sacrificial death. The sacrificial aspect of that death is brought out by the allusion to covenant blood (1 Cor. 11,25).

The adoption of many extant religious meal should not take away the unique significance of the Lord's Supper and the subsequent "breaking of bread", since for the Christians, the normative meaning of the elements of bread and wine is the cross of the one who "gave his life as a ransom for many".

The eucharistic experience of the Last Supper was, above all, one of love and reconciliation. This experience would counter an interpretation of the Cross as expiatory sacrifice by physical substitution. This frees us also from an exclusive emphasis on the once-for-all character of Christ's death on the Cross, and as a consequence, renders validity to the sacrificial aspect of the daily eucharistic celebrations. After all, reconciliation is not a separate or later activity of God but is present in all His activity. The only thing to be guarded against here is the "spiritualization" of sacrifice which might eliminate the crude aspects of sacrifice but undermines the basis of the Eucharist. The tendency to minimize the sacrificial rite in order to go beyond it by an attitude of interior faith evades the conflicts and tensions within the celebrating community, in the

face of which we have all the more reason to celebrate the sacrament of unity and reconciliation.

Eucharistic Rite: Model of the Jubilee Year of Redemption

The possession of the grace of the Redemption, which is ordinarily lived in and through the very structure of the Church, becomes something extraordinary through the special nature of the celebration which has been decreed. In this way, the Church's life and activity take on, this year, a "jubilee" nature: the Year of the Redemption should leave a special imprint on the Church's whole life, so that Christians may learn to rediscover in their daily experience all the riches of the salvation which is communicated to them from the time of their baptism. (A.P.R.,3).

1. Time-Space Dimension of the Eucharist

Our redemption is God's work transcending space and time, but operating as an event within the same for we are the redeemed. For the realization of our redemption, the Eucharist is a sacrament of unity and reconciliation, that is, bringing together and being together (the "space" dimension); it is also a sacrament of renewal, that is, of making a new start and re-making (the "time" dimension). The Eucharist can be looked at in the concrete images of time and space.

We see in a personalistic way holy communion as a meeting in time and space with the glorified Savior who has already began his work of renewing us in anticipation of his Second Coming. He draws us into closer union with Himself, gradually transforms us, faithful communicants, into his "image and likeness", and gives us a foretaste of the life to come.

It is equally clear, however, that the fullness of time is delayed, for sin has not yet fully been eradicated, even from Christ's followers. The Parousia has not taken place yet. The Eucharist manifests his incompleteness: we do not yet encounter Christ face to face, only sacramentally; our celebration is periodic, not yet perpetual; the service offered is partial, not yet total; it is not yet the whole of the many for whom Christ's blood was shed, but only a part, which gathers at the Messiah's table.

The tension between the "already" and the "not yet" of our renewal is often the theme of the liturgies and the eucharistic hymns. A "pledge", a "foretaste", and a "promise", these terms express both a link and a distinction between present and future. As a meal, the Eucharist is a foretaste of the life to come. To taste is to have a "glimpse" of what is "the real thing". To say that the Eucharist is a foretaste of the eternal kingdom is to recognize that we are in time even whilst we are sharing in the eternal kingdom which gives value to the present.

The time-space dimension of the Eucharist goes beyond the time and space of the eucharistic ritual. The *amnesia* becomes a "recalling" of the total past and the *maranatha* becomes vigilance for the future. Recalling is an act of human consciousness and expression. Through recalling we make time, thus, transcending time. It is an event which is recalled, and the way which those who keep the memorial alive celebrate the present.

Peter, in his letter, uses time-metaphor to call the Christians to vigilance: "The consummation of all is close at hand. Therefore do not be perturbed; remain calm so that you will be able to pray" (1 Pt. 4,7). The same is true with the parables on stewardship and the coming kingdom (Mt. 24,37-44; Lk. 17,26-27). "To be sober" is to be aware of what is going on; "to be in vigil" is simultaneously taken both in the liturgical and secular sense (cf. A.P.R.,9).

Peter's second point related to the space dimension is "hospitality", which can be paraphrased as creating a place for one another, welcoming the stranger, sharing what one has. "Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be mutually hospitable without complaining. As generous distributors of God's manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received" (1 Pt. 4,8-10). This spirit of welcome is understood in the table fellowship which is one prominent New Testament image of worship. Here one feels the tension between reciprocal hospitality and the temporariness of the meeting place. This reality is condensed in the eucharistic rite.

The Eucharist is the place where the faithful "with one heart and voice" glorify God (Rom. 15,6). Gathered together as one, we have been reconciled by Christ to God. Christ is our reconciliation not only with God but also among ourselves.

Ritually, the raising of the bread and wine at various points symbolizes, among other things, the vertical dimension of reconciliation, that is, between man and God once effected through Jesus Christ but still being realized in him. (R.H.,20).

There is also the image of descent. The upward *Sursum Corda* finds its principal counterpart in the downward epiclesis of the Holy Spirit. God is invoked to send His Spirit upon the people and the eucharistic elements. Still in the image of space, Christ is also invoked to come in the midst of the people gathered together in his name (Mt. 18,20). The primitive *Maranatha* must have carried a eucharistic as well as a parousiac reference, as testified by Paul (1 Cor. 16,22) and the memorial acclamations.

The early usage of the phrase "come together in one place" seems to be almost a technical term for liturgical assembly (cf. 1 Cor. 11,20;14,23). As in Mt. 5,23-24, the significant relation between meeting together and horizontal reconciliation is pointed out in *Didache* 14,2: "No one who has a dispute with his fellow should come together with you until he has made it up, in order that your sacrifice be not polluted." In the eucharistic rite, the exchange of peace just before communion is an appropriate gesture of good fraternal relations, a practice that dates from New Testament times (Rom. 16,16; 1 Cor. 16,20; 2 Cor. 13,12).

Those who, by participating in the one Bread, express their unity are in their daily life dispersed throughout the world. The anaphora of Serapion, inspired by the *Didache*, 9,4, uses the theme of the one bread in a prayer to gather together the geographically dispersed faithful in Catholic unity: "as this bread was once scattered on the mountains and then, gathered together, become one, so also gather thy holy Church out of every nation and every land and every city and village and house and make one living catholic Church."

The *Ite, Missa Est* is a logical sequence to the coming together. Every one now is sent to be an agent of reconciliation which is to be extended throughout society. This probably was the motive behind the practice of the early Christians taking the bread home for communion during the week. (cf. S.C.,49). The sacramental sign of reconciliation was thus located in the heart of daily life and made the communicant a living invita-

tion to the extension of both vertical and horizontal reconciliation among those who were not yet at peace with God and fellowmen.

If the Eucharist is the foretaste of God's kingdom, it must bear some characteristic marks of that kingdom: justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14,17). The Eucharist exemplifies justice because believers are all welcomed to His heavenly banquet foreshadowed by the table fellowship here on earth. It exemplifies peace because such is the result of being reconciled with God and men. The Eucharist exemplifies joy in the Holy Spirit, because the cup of blessing conveys to all who partake in it a certain "joy of living" which the Spirit gives (cf. Eph. 5,18).

The Eucharist is the teaching and the witnessing paradigm of justice, peace, and joy that characterize God's kingdom. Be that as it may, the Church then is committed to an everyday witness in speech and deed which summons all material resources of creation and all occasions of human contact to become mediations of God's encounter with men and the latter's communion with one another. Since the Eucharist is the focus of the wider eucharistic life, the so-called sacramental fruitfulness depends, too, on the peace and justice in the structure of society.

2. Eucharist: "Where Charity and Justice Abound"

The universal call to conversion fits precisely into this context. Since all are sinners, all need that radical change of spirit, mind and life that the Bible calls *metanoia*, conversion. And this attitude is created and fostered by the word of God—the revelation of the Lord's mercy—is actuated above all, by sacramental means, and is manifested in numerous forms of charity and fraternal service.

A.P.R., 5.

The Church has traditionally taught that for communion it is necessary to be in the state of grace. From this point of view, it can be said that justice is a constitutive condition for being able to participate in the Eucharist, just as the bread, wine, and the words of the priest. Theologians have insisted frequently that charity and unity are very proper fruits of this sacrament, and therefore, justice is a natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration. (Cf. L.G.,4,7,11).

In the early Church, until the 7th century, there were two popular practices which strike our attention: public penance and the offering of the faithful. Both maintained the necessary link between the eucharistic celebration and the socio-ethical behavior of the Christians. Public penance excluded from eucharistic participation those who soiled with their conduct the holiness of the believing community. (Cf. Ambrose, *De Poenit.* 11,9,89 CSEL 73,198). We should bear in mind that the excommunication associated with penance consisted essentially in the exclusion from the Eucharist, that is, not only from communion but also from the offerings. That is why a special place called *locus poenitentium* was assigned to sinners. The sins that excluded the believer from the Eucharist were scandalous sins, among which were sins against the neighbor, not only homicide and theft but also avarice and injustice. (Cf. Acts 5; 1 Cor. 5,11;6,9f).

In the Eucharist, the secular was expressed in the offertory, namely, by the mutual assistance through the sharing of goods with the needy and the weak. *Didache* 13, 1-7 speaks of the first fruits that are to be offered to the prophets, and if there are no prophets, they are to be given to the poor. The text does not refer explicitly to cultic worship; however it is probable that the prophets were closely associated with priests. In the cultic celebration not only bread and wine were carried to the altar but also clothes and objects to alleviate the needs of the community. (Cf. Justin, *Apol.* 1,65,1-5).

Above all, the eucharistic celebration is essentially associated with common aid to bring assistance to the orphans and widows, to those who are in prisons, in a ward, whoever is in need (*Apol.* 1,67,6). Justin categorically says that God has no need for any material offering but what He wills is the practice of justice and love for men (*Apol.* 1,10,1). Ireneus affirms the same thing when he says that God does not need our sacrifices nor our offerings, but they are necessary and have meaning because they are for our good, provided they are accepted (*Adv. Haer.* iv, 175). For Ireneus the Church is the eucharistic community that puts all she has in common with others (*Adv. Haer.* 18,3). In this manner, the serious problem that interested the Church very much was the problem of the community that considered the Eucharist incompatible with division among men and with injustice that ignores the poor and the oppressed (A.P.R., 11).

Summary and Conclusion

Restoration of liberty and land property marks the Jubilee year in the Old Testament. It was man's humble gesture of recognizing and thanking Him who is the "Lord of all". The earthly Jesus restored dignity to the poor and captives, and to the blind and the handicapped freedom from darkness.

For whom is restoration due today? They are the underpaid workers who remain in bondage because they are perpetually indebted to the employer; those who have lost their lands to landgrabbers and artisans of progress; the poor who can hardly live for lack of food; those blinded by ignorance and illiteracy; prisoners committed to prison for political reason; all these should have their dignity and freedom returned through justice and charity.

Reconciliation is the theme of the Jubilee Year; for this the Holy Father encourages the faithful to avail of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. The latter, being the summit and the source of Christian life, serves as good model for today's understanding of Redemption, and its ritual structure provides the symbolic language and gesture to effect that mystery on those who believe.

In linking the Last Supper with the Sacrifice of the Cross we have established the dogmatic content of the Eucharist. Redemption is only through the Blood shed in the Cross not through political ideologies, modern technologies, psychic techniques, spiritual fads, tourist-oriented pilgrimages.

Something else was added to the Last Supper; the *eucharistia*, "a prayer of remembrance structured as thanksgiving". The eucharistic prayer becomes the Church's entrance into the Word's sacrifice of himself to the Father. The things here offered in the oblation can be more accurately viewed as paradigms of God's gift of Himself to men, which culminates in His Son, Jesus. This is the very presupposition of all theologies, and man's grateful response to God is the principle of all prayers and ethics. It is not coincidental that the layman's concept of Jubilee is a thanksgiving anniversary.

In this Jubilee Year of Redemption, with reconciliation as theme, we pose these rhetorical questions: Could we announce that in the Eucharist the Risen Lord gives himself as food and still remain indifferent to the hungry and starving? Could we proclaim that Christ's presence in the Eucharist is a microcosm of his presence in the whole material universe and be insensitive to the abuse and misuse of the environment? Could we celebrate the Risen Christ's presence in people as well as in bread and wine and be blind to the need many people still have for peace and justice?

"May the work of Your Redemption, show itself more powerful, both in humanity and in the world. Amen." — John Paul II.

Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Questions concerning the Minister of the Eucharist

We give our translation of the Latin text which remains the official text to which reference must be made for interpretation, should the need arise.

I. Introduction

1. In teaching that the priestly or hierarchical ministry differs essentially and not only in degree from the common priesthood of the faithful, the Second Vatican Council expressed the certainty of faith that only Bishops and Priests can confect the Eucharistic mystery. Although all the faithful indeed share in the one and the same priesthood of Christ and participate in the offering of the Eucharist, it is only the ministerial priest who, in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, can confect the Eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ and offer it in the name of all Christian people.¹

2. In recent years, however, certain opinions have come to be promulgated, and at times translated into practice, which deny the above teaching and consequently cause harm to the innermost life of the Church. Such opinions which are widespread in various forms and with different lines of argument have begun to attract some of the faithful themselves, either because they claim to be based on a scholarly foundation, or because they are presented as responding to the needs of the pastoral care and sacramental life of Christian communities.

¹ Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 10, 17, 26, 28; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7; *Christus Dominus*, n. 15; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, nn. 2, 3. Cf. also Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, Sept. 3, 1965: AAS 57 (1965) 761.

3. This is why the Sacred Congregation, prompted by a desire to offer its particular services to the Bishops in a true collegial spirit, wishes to restate here some of the essential points of the Church's doctrine on the minister of the Eucharist, transmitted by her living Tradition and expressed in previous documents of the Magisterium.² The Congregation takes full account of the integral vision of the priestly ministry as presented by the Second Vatican Council, but in the present situation it considers it a matter of urgency to make clear the essential role of the priest.

II. Erroneous Opinions

1. The promoters of these new opinions maintain that every Christian community, from the very fact that it is united in the name of Christ and thus enjoys his undivided presence (cf. Mt. 18:20), is endowed with all the powers which the Lord wished to give to his Church.

It is asserted, moreover, that the Church is apostolic in the sense that all those who have been washed in Baptism and incorporated into her, having been made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ, are also truly successors of the Apostles. From the fact that the whole Church was pre-figured in the Apostles, it would then follow that the words of institution of the Eucharist addressed to them were intended for everyone.

2. As a consequence, although necessary for the good ordering of the Church, the ministry of Bishops and Priests would not differ from the common priesthood of the faithful with respect to the participation in the priesthood of Christ in the strict sense, but only in so far as its exercise is concerned. The so-called role of moderating the community — including also that of preaching and presiding at the Eucharist — would, there-

² Cf. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947: AAS 39 (1947) 553; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Quinque iam anni*, Dec. 8, 1970: AAS (1971) 99; Document of the Synod of Bishops in 1971: *De sacerdotio ministeriali*: Part One: AAS 63 (1971) 903-908; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, June 24, 1973, n. 6: AAS 65 (1973) 405-407; Declaration *De duobus operibus Professoris Joannis Köng*, Feb. 15, 1975: AAS 67 (1975) 204; Declaration *Inter Insigniores*, Oct. 15, 1976, n. V: AAS 69 (1977) 108-113; John Paul II, Letter *Novo incipiente nostro*, to all the priests of the Church, Apr. 3, 1979, nn. 2-4: AAS 71 (1979) 395-400; Letter *Dominicae Cenae*, to all the Bishops of the Church, Feb. 24, 1980, nn. I-II: AAS 72 (1980) 115-134.

fore, be only a simple mandate conferred for the orderly functioning of the community itself, but it ought not to be "sacralized". The call to such a ministry would not amount to a new "priestly" capacity — strictly speaking — and for that reason the term "priesthood" is generally avoided — nor would it impart any character with ontological significance for the state of the ministers, but would simply give expression before the community that the original power conferred in the sacrament of Baptism had become effective.

3. In virtue of the apostolicity of the single local communities, in which Christ would be no less present than in an episcopal structure, each community, no matter how small, in the event of its being deprived for some time of such a constituent element as the Eucharist, could "re-appropriate" its original powers. Also it would have the right of designating its own president and animator and conferring on him all the necessary faculties for leading the community itself, including that of presiding at and consecrating the Eucharist. It is moreover asserted that God himself would not refuse, in such circumstances, to grant, even without a sacramental rite, the power he normally gives through sacramental ordination.

Such is the conclusion also reached by the fact that the celebration of the Eucharist is often understood simply as the action of the local community, which is gathered together to commemorate in the breaking of bread the Last Supper of the Lord. It would therefore be more a fraternal celebration in which the community comes together and gives expression to its identity, than the sacramental renewal of the Sacrifice of Christ, whose saving power extends to everyone, be they present or absent, living or dead.

4. Ironically, erroneous opinions regarding the necessity of ordained ministers for the celebration of the Eucharist have even led some to place less and less value upon the sacraments of Orders and the Eucharist in their catechesis.

III. The Doctrine of the Church

1. Although they may be expressed in various ways with different nuances, all these opinions lead to the same conclusion: that the power to confect the sacrament of the Eucharist is not necessarily connected with sacramental ordination. It is evident that such a conclusion is absolutely incompatible with

the faith as it has been handed down, since not only does it deny the power conferred on priests but it undermines the entire apostolic structure of the Church and distorts the sacramental economy of salvation itself.

2. According to the teaching of the Church, the world of the Lord and the divine life which he has given to us have been destined from the very beginning to be lived and shared in a single body, which the Lord builds up for himself throughout the ages. This body, which is the Church of Christ, is continually endowed with the gifts of ministries by him "from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God" (Col. 2:19).³

This structure of ministries finds clear expression in Sacred Tradition in the powers entrusted to the Apostles and their successors: to sanctify, to teach and to govern in the name of Christ. The apostolicity of the Church does not mean that all believers are Apostles,⁴ not even in a collective sense, and no community has the power to confer apostolic ministry which is essentially bestowed by the Lord himself. Therefore when the Church in her creeds calls herself apostolic, she expresses, besides the doctrinal identity of her teaching with that of the Apostles, the reality of the continuation of the work of the Apostles by means of the structure of succession in virtue of which the apostolic mission is to endure until the end of time.⁵

This apostolic succession which constitutes the entire Church as apostolic is part of the living tradition which has been for the Church from the beginning, and continues to be, her particular form of life. And so, those who cite isolated texts of Scripture in opposition to this living tradition, in trying to justify new structures, have strayed from the truth.

3. The Catholic Church, which has developed through the ages and continues to grow by the life given to her by the Lord through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, has always maintained her apostolic structure, faithful to the tradition of the Apostles which lives and endures in her.

³ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 7, 18, 19, 20; *Christus Dominus*, nn. 1, 3; *Presbyterorum Ordinis* n. 2.

⁴ Council of Trent, *Doctrina de sacramento ordinis*, Chap. 4: DS 1767.

⁵ Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 20.

When she imposes hands on those to be ordained and invokes upon them the Holy Spirit, she is conscious of handing on the power of the Lord who makes the Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, partakers in a special way of his threefold priestly, prophetic and royal mission. In turn, the Bishops impart, in varying degrees, the office of their ministry to various persons in the Church.⁶

And so, even though all the baptized enjoy the same dignity before God, in the Christian community, which was deliberately structured hierarchically by its Divine Founder, there have existed from its earliest days specific apostolic powers deriving from the sacrament of Holy Orders.

4. Included among these powers which Christ entrusted exclusively to the Apostles and their successors is the power of confecting the Eucharist. To the Bishops alone, and to the Priests they have made sharers in their ministry which they themselves have received, is reserved the power of renewing in the mystery of the Eucharist what Christ did at the Last Supper.⁷

In order that they may be able to carry out their work, especially a work so important as confecting the Eucharistic mystery, our Lord marks out in a spiritual manner those whom he calls to the Episcopate and to the Priesthood. He does this with a special sign through the sacrament of Orders, a sign also called a "character" in solemn documents of the Church's Magisterium.⁸ In this way, he so configures them to himself that, when they pronounce the words of consecration, they do not act on a mandate from the community but "*in persona Christi*", which means more than just 'in the name of Christ' since the celebrant, by reason of this special sacrament, identifies himself with the Eternal High Priest, who is both author and principal agent of his own sacrifice in which truly no one can take his place".⁹ Since it is of the very nature of the Church that the power to consecrate the Eucharist is imparted only to the Bishops and Priests who are constituted its ministers by the reception of Holy Orders, the Church holds that the

⁶ Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 28.

⁷ This is confirmed in the established usage of the Church in calling Bishops and Presbyters *priests* of sacred worship, especially since in them alone has the power to confect the Eucharistic mystery been recognized.

⁸ Cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 21; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 2.

⁹ John Paul II, *Letter Dominicae Cenae*, n. 8: AAS 72 (1980) 128-129.

Eucharistic mystery cannot be celebrated in any community except by an ordained Priest, as expressly taught by the Fourth Lateran Council.¹⁰

Individual faithful or communities who, because of persecution or lack of Priests, are deprived of the Holy Eucharist for either a short or longer period of time, do not thereby lack the grace of the Redeemer. If they are intimately animated by a desire for the sacrament and united in prayer with the whole Church, and call upon the Lord and raise their hearts to him, by virtue of the Holy Spirit they live in communion with the whole Church, the living body of Christ, and with the Lord himself. Through their desire for the sacrament in union with the Church, no matter how distant they may be physically, they are intimately and really united to her and therefore receive the fruits of the sacrament; whereas those who would wrongly attempt to take upon themselves the right to confect the Eucharistic mystery end up by having their community closed in on itself.¹¹

None of this derogates from the responsibility of Bishops and Priests and all members of the Church to pray that "the Lord of the harvest" will send workers according to the needs of the people and the times (cf. Mt. 9:37 ff.), and to work with all their energy to make the Lord's call to the priestly ministry heard and welcomed, with humble and generous heart.

IV. Call to Vigilance

In recalling these points to the attention of the Pastors of the Church, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith desires to assist them in the ministry of feeding the flock

¹⁰ Lateran Council IV, Const. de Fide catholica *Firmiter credimus*: "Una vero est fidelium universalis Ecclesia, extra quam nullus omnino salvatur, in qua idem ipse sacerdos est sacrificium Iesus Christus cuius corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina: ut ad perficiendum mysterium unitatis accipiamus ipsi de suo, quod accepit ipse de nostro. Et hoc utique sacramentum nemo potest conficere, nisi sacerdotes, qui rite fuerit ordinatus, secundum claves Ecclesiae, quas ipse concessit Apostolis eorumque successoribus Iesus Christus" (DS 802).

¹¹ Cf. John Paul II, Letter *Novo incipiente nostro*, n. 10: AAS 71 (1979) 411-415. Concerning the value of the desire for the sacrament, cf. Council of Trent, Decree *De iustificatone*, chap. 4: DS 1524; Decree *De Sacramentis*, can. 4: DS 1604; Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 14; Holy Office, Letter to the Archbishop of Boston, Aug. 8, 1949: DS 3870, 8372.

of the Lord with the food of Truth, of safeguarding the deposit of Faith and of keeping intact the unity of the Church. It is necessary to be strong in faith and to resist error even when it masquerades as piety, so that by professing truth in love, we may embrace in the love of the Lord those who have strayed (cf. Eph. 4:15).

Catholics who attempt to celebrate the Eucharist outside the sacred bond of apostolic succession established by the sacrament of Orders exclude themselves from participating in the unity of the single body of the Lord: they neither nourish nor build up the community, they tear it apart.

Therefore it is the responsibility of the Bishops to see to it that the erroneous opinions mentioned above do not continue to be spread either in catechetics or in the teaching of theology and, above all, to see to it that such theories are not put into practice. Whenever cases of this sort are discovered, it is their sacred responsibility to denounce them as completely foreign to the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice and offensive to the community of the Church. If they should find that some catechists are even minimizing the central importance for the Church of the sacraments of Holy Orders and the Eucharist, they should likewise do all they can to correct so distorted a teaching. For in fact it is to us that these words were addressed; "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching . . . always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2,53).

In these circumstances, therefore, let this collegial concern find such a concrete application that the undivided Church, even in the variety of local Churches working together,¹² may keep safe what was entrusted to her by God through the Apostles. Fidelity to the will of Christ and the Christian dignity itself require that the faith handed down remain the same so that it may bring peace to all believers (cf. Rom. 15:13).

The Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, in an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, gave his approval to this

¹² Cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 23.

letter, drawn up in the ordinary session of this Sacred Congregation, and ordered its publication.

At Rome, from the offices of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 6 August 1983, Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord.

JOSEPH Cardinal RATZINGER
Prefect

✠ Fr. JEROME HAMER, O.P.
Titular Archbishop of Lorium
Secretary

OUR ministry of RECONCILIATION

The Synod of 1983, as we know, will open in the last week of September, and before I leave to attend its sessions, I wanted to write a letter to you, my dear brother-priests, to ask you to pray for God's blessings on the Synod. Pray for the abundant outpouring of light from the Holy Spirit on all the sessions of the assembly. Pray also for myself and for those of us who are representing the hierarchy of the Church in the Philippines in Rome, that we might both learn much from and contribute our part to its discussions. Hopefully our own pastoral experience can be of benefit to other areas of the Church. This letter, which I now place in your hands, can also serve as a follow-up to my earlier text. "Christ's reconciliation and ours", which has received, I am told, a warm welcome from many of the faithful in our archdiocese.

The theme of the Bishops' Synod is *Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church*; that was also the theme of the earlier Pastoral Letter addressed to our beloved people. This second letter (which presupposes the first) will touch on a few scattered points only: I would like simply to offer some reflections on our part as priests, as ministers in a Church whose mission is reconciliation (2 Cor. 5, 18-20).

It has been suggested to me that I deal at some length with the subject of national reconciliation. During the last few weeks I have at times touched on that urgent topic, but I cannot speak at length on it here. True, the tragic and senseless slaying of former Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr. is still very much present to our consciousness and weighs heavily on our minds and hearts, as I prepare to leave for Rome. We all remember that Ninoy's last wish was *reconciliation*: "National reconciliation and unity can be achieved, but only with justice." "I... pray and will strive for genuine national reconciliation founded on justice." "Must we relive the agonies and blood-letting of the past that brought forth our republic, or can we sit down as brothers and sisters and discuss our difference with

reason and goodwill?" This appeal rings still in our minds; we want to make a response to it worthy of the sacrifice given in its support.

We continue our Masses and prayers to the Father of Reconciliation for the eternal repose of Ninoy Aquino, and extend again our prayerful sympathy to his wife and children, his mother and other members of the family. But we must also do whatever we can, according to our proper sphere of action as religious pastors of our people, to foster the goals of concerted and solidary non-violent action for the realization of justice in our country, for the safeguarding and reverence for human rights amongst us, for the full restoration of freedoms to our people in keeping with the duly enacted laws of our land.

In this very difficult and crucial period, we have an imperative task, more urgent than ever, to help create a climate of dialogue toward that reconciliation with justice for which Ninoy Aquino gave his life. In a country like our own, of so many Catholics and Christians, our part is not without importance. Let this be the daily theme of our prayer and intercession before the Lord. Let us reflect and discern together on what genuinely priestly service is demanded of us in this time of crisis.

Let me now turn to other dimensions of our ministry of reconciliation as priests in the Church. Let me take up a few points under the headings of (a) penance and reconciliation in our personal lives with God our Father; (b) reconciliation within the brotherhood of the ordained priesthood; (c) our ministry of reconciliation, especially in the Sacrament of Penance, in the midst of our beloved People of God. I need not say that I do *not* intend to give you a systematic treatise of any sort, for I touch deliberately only on a few random points. Hopefully what is here said will serve as "points" for your own reflection and prayer, and that they will lead to fruitful pastoral action in your ministry.

I. OUR RECONCILIATION WITH THE FATHER IN CHRIST

First, our ministry of penance and reconciliation must begin in our lives. If the Church's mission, as St. Paul tells us, can be truly summed up as a ministry of reconciliation: *at-*

one-ment between God and sinful humanity, *at-one-ment* of men and women with one another in a community of conversion, forgiveness and communion, this must begin in the hearts of each one of us. For at the heart of the reconciled community must be the reconciled heart of the priest.

Dear brother-priests, we are very conscious of the danger of a triumphalist exaltation of the priest and his role which derived not from the Gospel as from the exaggerations of past ages. But we do not want to fall into the opposite trap, a view of the priesthood which looks on the priest with disdain and tries to make his place in the Church an anachronistic and meaningless one. We do believe in faith that the priest is called, by his consecration in the sacrament of Order, to be for the community he serves "a sacrament of the presence of Jesus among his people." The Second Vatican Council, in its decrees, images the priest as representative of the Good Shepherd in the midst of the Lord's flock. As shepherd, he must be made *forma gregis*. He is the visible sacrament, so to speak, of Christ as Head of the Body which is the Church.

Thus, if the realities of conversion, penance and reconciliation are to enter significantly into the life of the Christian community, they must first enter — and enter profoundly into the life of the priest. Our daily prayer must lead us, when we come in all honesty face to face with our sinfulness and mediocrity, to ever more authentic repentance and conversion. This calls for a growing purification of mind and spirit, a growing sensitivity to the demands God makes of us. This theme, I am sure, is often developed by retreat masters. Maybe it has been touched on so often in exhortations that it no longer moves us. But it is an important truth: *our need of ongoing conversion*.

We priests need to renew our practice of sacramental penitence in our personal lives. If you will pardon a personal reminiscence: once I was told that an old priest here in the Philippines, for many years a spiritual director in the seminary, when asked for advice by young priests about to leave the seminary to "go forth into the world", would invariably give the same counsel: "Try to make a really good confession at least once every month, and a good retreat every year. Keep in touch with some good priest-friends, and if at all possible, stay on good terms with your bishop. If you should have strained rela-

tions with him, never let those go on for long." Down-to-earth advice, from an old man with much knowledge of priestly life, and much wisdom. His first rule is what is to our point here: that the priest himself should approach the sacrament of penance with regularity and the right dispositions. A good "rule of thumb" for priestly life. Have we not, all of us, to examine ourselves on this?

The sacrament of penance should be for us, and increasingly as the years pass, a key point in our life: an encounter, more and more real, with the merciful and compassionate Redeemer. Let us recall that two recent Popes whose causes for beatification have already been introduced, Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII, never let a week pass without going to confession. We are told Pope Pius XII went to confession twice a week, regularly, after deeply prayerful preparation, and with much devotion. We are all sinners, in one way or the other, and our experience of God is so frequently our experience of a compassionate and forgiving Father. As the years pass, they should deepen that experience of God giving us his mercy and healing our woundedness.

If this is not true of us, how can we somehow, even poorly, be genuine mediators of the mercy and compassion of God to others? If our pride is not brought low within us, time after time, by compunction of spirit; if our hardness of heart is not softened by our experience of our own weakness; if our callousness is not shaken by the purifying process of sorrow before God's justice and love, how can we be bearers of the mercy of God who does not will the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live? How can we 'stand in' for the forgiving Father of the prodigal son, and prolong for others the hands of Jesus who taught us "to forgive, not seven times only, but seventy times seven times?"

Thus our personal *metanoia* and sacramental penitence, not as a matter of habit, but as genuine ongoing conversion, is the first step in the effort to renew the spirit and the sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance in our communities and parishes. We know that the grace of the sacrament, healing and making whole our inner selves, can be God's instrument in the integration of our whole lives.

We are of course conscious of the danger of what is sometimes called "disincarnate supernaturalism" — as if the grace

of God works wholly outside and above our human nature, with its life of sense and emotion, its psychic laws and functions, its needs for human relationships in community, and the like. No, it would be foolish for us to disregard "our human condition", its parts and its whole. Our seminary books used to say, pithily, *Gratia supponit, non destruit naturam*. Grace works within nature, healing it, fulfilling it, not destroying it.

Our lives as priests are, I believe, basically happy and meaningful ones. One who, as priests try to do, give their days to the service of the Lord and the service of others, to help and strengthen them, to give support and consolation in times of need, to bring the sacramental touch of God in times both happy and sad, in sunlit hours or gray, has the ingredients of a good and fulfilled life even on this earth. But we all know (only too well!) that there are factors that can impede or restrict our happiness as priests. Physical illness; loss of vigor or healthy optimism and dimming sense of purpose in one's work; the slipping away of personal prayer from our lives, others' lack of appreciation or response, or worse — rejection, of what we do; boredom and loneliness in so many forms; personal struggles with faith or vocation; temptations of various kinds; relationships which go counter to our entire self-gift to God; overwork; failure in our efforts — these are only some of the possible difficulties and hindrances to the growth and deepening of our priesthood and its joy.

The sacrament of penance will not "automatically" remove these obstacles from our way. We may need medical attention. Often we need wise and compassionate counsel, sometimes even expert professional help. We may have to bestir ourselves to read and study more, enter the arduous way of "updating" our knowledge and skills, learn new methods of doing what we have been doing, in our own way, for many years. Perhaps we may even need to rediscover prayer, under the direction of competent guides. And always we should have the companionship and support of fellow priests and understanding friends among the laity. (Of our friendships with our fellow-priests we will have more to say later in this letter.) The sacrament of penance and its fruits in our lives will not render these means unnecessary. But confession and the spiritual direction which for us priests should often accompany it can be a valuable help for moving toward that integration of our lives which grows, as these difficulties lose their grip, even if little, on us.

We must also recall for a moment *the need of self-denial and acts of penitence in our lives*. In our seminary days we heard much of self-denial, undoubtedly. How little we hear about it these days. There is a lot of talk today about self-expression and self-development and our need of becoming fully human and fully free. Much of this is quite valid. Does not Jesus himself teach us, by his own life, to be truly and fully human? His life was the realization of God's notion of what being fully human means. But we must remember that to be truly human and to be truly holy are not contrary realities. True holiness, we believe, is the fullest realization of humanness. But to be truly human does not mean to give in to every feeling and desire, to give expression to every mood, and free rein to our impulses and emotions, as long as these do not involve sin. That way lies rather the betrayal and disintegration of the best and noblest in us as human persons. We know from our own painful experience that to be of authentic service to God and to our neighbor, to be truly "for others" calls for courageous self-denial, for constant self-discipline. There is no "cleaving to God" (*adhaere Deo*) without "leaving self". The two poles: self-denial and self-affirmation, self-discipline and self-fulfillment, will ever be in tension in our lives. It is in moving back and forth, so to speak, between these two poles that we respond to the grace of the Spirit directing our lives.

Let us not be mistaken: more than ever in our age we need self-denial and daily conversion from our self-seeking, if we are to remain reconciled with the Father, and if we are to live as our calling asks of us. The process of the daily carrying of the cross is a necessary dimension of our priesthood. To want to change this is to want to change something essential to the Gospel of Jesus.

In my earlier pastoral letter, I spoke of the Eucharist completing and deepening the work of the sacrament of Penance. What penance begins in our souls the Eucharist brings to all the fulfillment we are capable of receiving. The Body and Blood of Christ breaks down barriers to full reconciliation with God. As the post-communion prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas says, the Eucharist in us works for our forgiveness and salvation; becomes for us our armour of faith and a shield of good purpose, a ridance of all vices, a rooting out of all evil desires; builds in us an increase of patience, of humility, of obedience,

of love and all virtues, a firm defense against the deceits of all our enemies, visible and invisible, a perfect quieting of all our impulses both carnal and spiritual, and a cleaving unto the one true God.

II. RECONCILIATION WITHIN THE PRESBYTERAL COMMUNITY

Reconciliation within the presbyteral community should concern us, too, as an essential aspect of our ministry of reconciliation as priests. This is, especially today, more important than it might seem at first. As many structures of Church life are changing and even disappearing, priests — in our country too! — can get a sense of being sidelined or marginalized. The sturdy supports of priestly existence in earlier times: the untroubled faith and strong sense of the sacred among our people, the solidity of traditional family life, the secure role of the priest in society, — these we cannot count on any longer, at least not in the same measure. We need to build new relationships, new structures for Catholic life, and among them in a new sense of unity and friendship among priests.

This means first of all a serious effort to make real the bonds of solidarity between bishops and priests, among priests themselves. It calls for a serious effort to be on sincerely amicable terms with our fellow-priests in the Archdiocese. I believe this is by no means a minor concern. Most of you, I believe, do not have serious problems in this area, but for those who might: let us together pray that this Year of Reconciliation may bring them the grace of forgiving all offenses they may have suffered from others, of breaking down whatever barriers of division may have been raised up, — whether based on conflicting interest, enmity or misunderstanding, or active antipathy. Let us beg the Lord for, and work for, an increase of true fraternity among ourselves as priests. Most of us (I say) get along well enough with each other, although perhaps beneath our easy camaraderie, bonds of true friendship should grow deeper and stronger still. But if we know that someone or other among us may be isolated or ill, or troubled or lonely, — perhaps among the older ones, or perhaps among those being tested by “the noonday devil” — let us be of help and support to them, as true brothers. How often has it been said that when a priest falls away, we are all in some way to

blame for it. Let us not be, as we are accused too often of being, self-sufficient "islands" at a distance from other priests.

It is my hope and prayer that this Holy Year may mark a milestone of our priestly brotherhood in our Archdiocese. That it will enable us to learn to know each other better, and work better together. That increasingly closer relationships may grow between priests in religious orders and congregations and their neighbor-priests in the parishes; that "regulars and seculars" may find ways of collaborating more in their ministries and thus realize more effectively the ideal of priestly solidarity which Vatican II has so strongly encouraged. Would it be too much to ask, I wonder, that at least some religious communities of men take significant initiatives in this area? The Holy Father has more than once urged religious to insert themselves more fully in the local church and help the local ordinaries; this area of collaboration would bear looking into. My hope is that from time to time there may be gatherings for common prayer, reflection and discussion, for true sharing in an atmosphere of priestly fraternity, where growth in our life and ministry may be fruitfully fostered. I know that in some vicariates some happy steps have already been taken in this direction. I have been told that in other countries structures have been created where these presbyteral gatherings, across boundaries ("secular/regular", "diverse religious congregations", etc.), have become not only possible but frequent and truly helpful.

My dear brother-priests: you may be somewhat surprised that in a letter on Penance and Reconciliation I have gone off, seemingly, on a tangential theme — the presbyteral community. This is because I am convinced that so much of the reconciling power of the Spirit can be hindered, not only by our own lack of reconciliation with God, but also by divisions and indifference within the ranks of our priests. Many years ago I read some letters of the saintly Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard, archbishop of Paris, letters he addressed to his priests. I remember his writing that wherever priests in a parish or diocese are not only men of prayer, self-denial and deep charity, but above all where priestly brotherhood is real and authentic, and priests are joined together by prayer and zeal for souls, by mutual courtesy, esteem and concern, by visible bonds of oneness in mind and heart, — there the Christian community of parish or diocese itself grows into a deeply Christian community, there Christian life and sacramental life will flourish; there grace can "flow in torrents".

If the touchstone Our Lord himself gave for his followers, "that you have love one for another"; if the early Christian communities could be recognized by this sign, "See how these Christians love one another", — how much more should this unity and mutual love be true of the brotherhood of priests? And if among us sinners, unity can only be realized through our daily forgiveness of one another, is not the reality of conversion and reconciliation within the presbyteral community the very wellspring of true Christian community, the ground of the realization of the redemption — the reconciling love of God at work — in the midst of the world?

III. RECONCILIATION AND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

In this last section I would like to deal briefly with what we might try to do to renew the practice of sacramental penance in our parishes and other communities. Once again, my intent is simply to indicate some lines for your own reflection and practical action; what I set down are merely indications you will, I hope, pursue further.

We are told that there has been a significant "rediscovery" of the history and theology of the Sacrament of Penance. I myself look forward to learning more about this at the Synod. I hope you yourselves may set time aside to study and reflect on the Synod's teachings and conclusions as soon as these become available.

You all have the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the working-paper of the forthcoming assembly in Rome. It is itself a rich storehouse for theological study and pastoral practice. It repays careful reading, perhaps with the help of competent theologians who can take us through its key themes. It will provide many points for consideration of our task as confessors. The exercise of our role as ministers of the sacrament is inevitably modified by renewed theological insights and by the new needs of Catholics of our time.

We are told that more and more people, especially those who have had more formal education, expect their confessions to be "more personally meaningful", i.e., in terms of personal

experience. Especially for such people, but not only for them, penitential services, not long and elaborate, but carefully prepared and well celebrated, would be helpful as a means of preparation for more fruitful confessions.

Some of us may make time in our schedules for confessions where some spiritual guidance is possible: perhaps on some retreat days, or evenings of recollection organized for smaller groups in the parish. Some among you have already moved in this direction, especially with marriage encounter groups or gatherings of young adults, college students, and the like, and have reported most encouraging response. At times like these the collaboration of several priests is of course called for. And the objectives of the sacramental rite: fuller conversion, interiorization of Christian values, growth in prayer and authenticity, increased apostolic zeal, — are fostered in significant ways.

In my first letter I spoke of the sacrifice of time and energy to make ourselves available to the faithful for confession, I know well how difficult and taxing this can be for many of you, who are already overburdened with work, I can only repeat what you all know: that our sacramental ministry is at the core of our presbyteral office, and that in the lives of holy priests, canonized saints like John Vianney, as well as priests we have ourselves known (I myself can name several such priests, and I am sure you can, also!) the ministry of the confessional has been the most fruitful work of their priesthood. "In the box" God has worked miracles of grace through them. Through their patience, compassion and wisdom, God has touched countless souls, brought light in hours of darkness, healing to wounded hearts, reconciliation to broken families, summons to begin new lives or to rise even to heroic fidelity to God. For this ministry one does not have to be outstandingly learned or have highly specialized training. One need only be compassionate, patient, humble, constantly open and vulnerable to the grace of conversion which God ever asks of us. To become an authentic mediator of God's forgiveness and mercy is to open oneself to the transformation that God's grace operates in its sincere recipient as well as in its docile instrument. The good confessor is already on the way to becoming a saint, a man after God's own loving and forgiving heart.

A recent book has enumerated the *five basic tasks of the confessor*: (a) to pray with and for the penitent; (b) to listen with deep compassion on behalf of God and the community; (c) to discern the spiritual situation of the penitent from what the latter has freely revealed (and perhaps gently to educate the conscience of the penitent); (d) to convey the forgiveness of God; (e) and to express the exigence of God's call to conversion.

Though I do not intend to develop these points here, you will readily enough guess what they imply. It may seem an impossible demand to fulfill these requirements with regard to most confessions: "There is not even enough time to just hear the confessions, let alone do all these!" — one is tempted to exclaim. But at least we can try to examine our *praxis* as confessors, striving to be ever more Christlike in what we do and how we act "in the box", as we try to 'stand in', conscious of our own inadequacy, for the compassionate Master, begging him that we may not place unnecessary obstacles to the outpouring of his mercy towards sinners.

Some thoughts might be added here on the "*social dimensions*" of *penitence and reconciliation*. Reconciliation, we have said, can be seen as the total mission of the Church, synonymous with Redemption itself. As such it is concerned not only with personal or interpersonal aspects; it reaches out to social realities too. Spirituality, for the Christian, cannot bypass our responsibility for one another even in the social structures, — economic, cultural, political. "The search for holiness and the search for justice," the well-known 1974 statement of the Asian Bishops said, "are not only not opposed, but make up today the integral preaching of the Gospel."

In my first letter on Reconciliation and Renewal I invited those who teach theology in seminaries and colleges to enlarge and deepen some aspects of our present theme; the social aspects especially should call their attention. Here we can only say that penitential celebrations in community would be one setting which would lend itself to common prayer, reflection, self-examination on the obligations of Christians towards reconciliation in society.

We need to see, in the light of the Gospel, the distorted values present in our lives and present in the social environment which surrounds us. Consumerism, the false gods of wealth and power which are used to dominate others, the unjust distribution of material goods — even the basic essentials for human life and health, the crushing and exploitation of the poor and the defenseless, the degradation of women and the Mother of our Redeemer. I leave these pages with you on the Feast of the Sorrows of Mary, and I place our Archdiocese in her care in a particular way during the rest of this Holy Year of Renewal and Reconciliation. May she accompany us, with her Son, on this pilgrimage of the anniversary year of the Redemption. May she lead us to that peace with justice, that reconciliation and oneness we and our suffering people long for.

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae, vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.

Given at Manila, on the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother,
15 September 1983.

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Archbishop of Manila

Charter of the Rights of the Family

Presented by the Holy See to all persons, institutions and authorities concerned with the mission of the family in today's world — 22 October 1983.

INTRODUCTION

The "Charter of the Rights of the Family" has its origin in the request formulated by the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 1980 on the theme "The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World" (cf. *Propositio* 42). His Holiness Pope John Paul II, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (no. 46), acceded to the Synod's request and committed the Holy See to prepare a Charter of the Rights of the Family to be presented to the quarters and authorities concerned.

It is important to understand correctly the nature and style of the Charter as it is now presented. The document is not an exposition of the dogmatic or moral theology of marriage and the family, although it reflects the Church's thinking in the matter. Nor is it a code of conduct for persons or institutions concerned with the question. The Charter is also different from a simple declaration of theoretical principles concerning the family. It aims, rather, at presenting to all our contemporaries, be they Christian or not, a formulation — as complete and ordered as possible — of the fundamental rights that are inherent in that natural and universal society which is the family.

The rights enunciated in the charter are expressed in the conscience of the human being and in the common values of all humanity. The Christian vision is present in this Charter as the light of divine revelation which enlightens the natural reality of the family. These rights arise, in the ultimate analysis, from that law which is inscribed by the Creator in the heart of every human being. Society is called to defend these rights against all violations and to respect and promote them in the entirety of their content.

The rights that are proposed must be understood according to the specific character of a "Charter". In some cases they recall true and proper juridically binding norms; in other cases, they express fundamental postulates and principles for legislation to be implemented and for the development of family policy. In all cases they are a prophetic call in favour of the family institution, which must be respected and defended against all usurpation.

Almost all of these rights are already to be found in other documents of both the Church and the international community. The present Charter attempts to elaborate them further, to define them with greater clarity and to bring them together in an organic, ordered and systematic presentation. Annexed to the text are indications of "Sources and References" from which some of the formulations have been drawn.

The Charter of the Rights of the Family is now presented by the Holy See, the central and supreme organ of government of the Catholic Church. The document is enriched by a wealth of observations and insights received in response to a wide consultation of the Bishops' Conferences of the entire Church as well as of experts in the matter from various cultures.

The Charter is addressed principally to governments. In reaffirming, for the good of society, the common awareness of the essential rights of the family, the Charter offers to all who share responsibility for the common good a model and a point of reference for the drawing up of legislation and family policy, and guidance for action programmes.

At the same time the Holy See confidently proposes this document to the attention of intergovernmental international organizations which, in their competence and care for the defence and promotion of human rights, cannot ignore or permit violations of the fundamental rights of the family.

The Charter is of course also directed to the families themselves: it aims at reinforcing among families an awareness of the irreplaceable role and position of the family; it wishes to inspire families to unite in the defence and promotion of their rights; it encourages families to fulfil their duties in such a way that the role of the family will become more clearly appreciated and recognized in today's world.

The Charter is directed, finally, to all men and women, and especially to Christians, that they will commit themselves to do

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everything possible to ensure that the rights of the family are protected and that the family institution is strengthened for the good of all mankind, today and in the future.

The Holy See, in presenting this Charter, desired by the representatives of the World Episcopate, makes a special appeal to all the Church's members and institutions, to bear clear witness to Christian convictions concerning the irreplaceable mission of the family, and to see that families and parents receive the necessary support and encouragement to carry out their God-given task.

CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY

Preamble

Considering that:

A. the rights of the person, even though they are expressed rights of the individual, have a fundamental social dimension which finds an innate and vital expression in the family;

B. the family is based on marriage, that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman which is constituted in the freely contracted and publicly expressed indissoluble bond of matrimony, and is open to the transmission of life;

C. marriage is the natural institution to which the mission of transmitting life is exclusively entrusted;

D. the family, a natural society, exists prior to the State or any other community, and possesses inherent rights which are inalienable;

E. the family constitutes, much more than a mere juridical, social and economic unit, a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society;

F. the family is the place where different generations come together and help one another to grow in human wisdom and to harmonize the rights of individuals with other demands of social life;

G. the family and society, which are mutually linked by vital and organic bonds, have a complementary function in the defence and advancement of the good of every person and of humanity;

H. the experience of different cultures throughout history has shown the need for society to recognize and defend the institution of the family;

I. society, and in a particular manner the State and International Organizations, must protect the family through measures of a political, economic, social and juridical character, which aim at consolidating the unity and stability of the family so that it can exercise its specific function;

J. the rights, the fundamental needs, the well-being and the values of the family, even though they are progressively safeguarded in some cases, are often ignored and not rarely undermined by laws, institutions and socio-economic programmes;

K. many families are forced to live in situations of poverty which prevent them from carrying out their role with dignity;

L. the Catholic Church, aware that the good of the person, of society and of the Church herself passes by way of the family, has always held it part of her mission to proclaim to all the plan of God instilled in human nature concerning marriage and the family, to promote these two institutions and to defend them against all those who attack them;

M. the Synod of Bishops celebrated in 1980 explicitly recommended that a Charter of the Rights of the Family be drawn up and circulated to all concerned;

the Holy See, having consulted the Bishops' Conferences, now presents this

ARTICLE 1

All persons have the right to the free choice of their state of life and thus to marry and establish a family or to remain single.

a) Every man and every woman, having reached marriage age and having the necessary capacity, have the right to marry

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and establish a family without any discrimination whatsoever; legal restrictions to the exercise of this right, whether they be of a permanent or temporary nature, can be introduced only when they are required by grave and objective demands of the institution of marriage itself and its social and public significance; they must respect in all cases the dignity and the fundamental rights of the person.

b) Those who wish to marry and establish a family have the right to expect from society the moral, educational, social and economic conditions which will enable them to exercise their right to marry in all maturity and responsibility.

c) The institutional value of marriage should be upheld by the public authorities; the situation of non-married couples must not be placed on the same level as marriage duly contracted.

ARTICLE 2

Marriage cannot be contracted except by the free and full consent of the spouses duly expressed.

a) With due respect for the traditional role of the families in certain cultures in guiding the decision of their children, all pressure which would impede the choice of a specific person as spouse is to be avoided.

b) The future spouses have the right to their religious liberty. Therefore to impose as a prior condition for marriage a denial of faith or a profession of faith which is contrary to conscience, constitutes a violation of this right.

c) The spouses, in the natural complementarity which exists between man and woman, enjoy the same dignity and equal rights regarding the marriage.

ARTICLE 3

The spouses have the inalienable right to found a family and to decide on the spacing of births and the number of children to be born, taking into full consideration their duties towards themselves, their children already born, the family and society, in a just hierarchy of values and in accordance with the objective moral order which excludes recourse to contraception, sterilization and abortion.

a) The activities of public authorities and private organizations which attempt in any way to limit the freedom of couples

in deciding about their children constitute a grave offence against human dignity and justice.

b) In international relations, economic aid for the advancement of peoples must not be conditioned on acceptance of programmes of contraception, sterilization or abortion.

c) The family has a right to assistance by society in the bearing and rearing of children. Those married couples who have a large family have a right to adequate aid and should not be subjected to discrimination.

ARTICLE 4

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

a) Abortion is a direct violation of the fundamental right to life of the human being.

b) Respect of the dignity of the human being excludes all experimental manipulation or exploitation of the human embryo.

c) All interventions on the genetic heritage of the human person that are not aimed at correcting anomalies constitute a violation of the right to bodily integrity and contradict the good of the family.

d) Children, both before and after birth, have the right to special protection and assistance, as do their mothers during pregnancy and for a reasonable period of time after childbirth.

e) All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, enjoy the same right to social protection, with a view to their integral personal development.

f) Orphans or children who are deprived of the assistance of their parents or guardians must receive particular protection on the part of society. The State, with regard to foster-care or adoption, must provide legislation which assists suitable families to welcome into their home children who are in need of permanent or temporary care. This legislation must, at the same time, respect the natural rights of the parents.

g) Children who are handicapped have the right to find in the home and the school an environment suitable to their human development.

ARTICLE 5

Since they have conferred life on their children, parents have the original, primary and inalienable right to educate them, hence they must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children.

a) Parents have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions, taking into account the cultural traditions of the family which favour the good and the dignity of the child; they should also receive from society the necessary aid and assistance to perform their educational role properly.

b) Parents have the right to choose freely schools or other means necessary to educate their children in keeping with their convictions. Public authorities must ensure that public subsidies are so allocated that parents are truly free to exercise this right without incurring unjust burdens. Parents should not have to sustain, directly or indirectly, extra charges which would deny or unjustly limit the exercise of this freedom.

c) Parents have the right to ensure that their children are not compelled to attend classes which are not in agreement with their own moral and religious convictions. In particular, sex education is a basic right of the parents and must always be carried out under their close supervision, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them.

d) The rights of parents are violated when a compulsory system of education is imposed by the State from which all religious formation is excluded.

e) The primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between parents, teachers and school authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give citizens a voice in the functioning of schools and in the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

f) The family has the right to expect that the means of social communication will be positive instruments for the building up of society, and will reinforce the fundamental values of the family. At the same time the family has the right to be adequately protected, especially with regard to its youngest members, from the negative effects and misuse of the mass media.

ARTICLE 6

The family has the right to exist and to progress as a family.

a) Public authorities must respect and foster the dignity, lawful independence, privacy, integrity and stability of every family.

b) Divorce attacks the very institution of marriage and of the family.

c) The extended family system, where it exists, should be held in esteem and helped to carry out better its traditional role of solidarity and mutual assistance, while at the same time respecting the rights of the nuclear family and the personal dignity of each member.

ARTICLE 7

Every family has the right to live freely its own domestic religious life under the guidance of the parents, as well as the right to profess publicly and to propagate the faith, to take part in public worship and in freely chosen programmes of religious instruction, without suffering discrimination.

ARTICLE 8

The family has the right to exercise its social and political function in the construction of society.

a) Families have the right to form associations with other families and institutions, in order to fulfill the family's role suitably and effectively, as well as to protect the rights, foster the good and represent the interests of the family.

b) On the economic, social, juridical and cultural levels, the rightful role of families and family associations must be recognized in the planning and development of programmes which touch on family life.

ARTICLE 9

Families have the right to be able to rely on an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in the juridical,

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economic, social and fiscal domains, without any discrimination whatsoever.

a) Families have the right to economic conditions which assure them a standard of living appropriate to their dignity and full development. They should not be impeded from acquiring and maintaining private possessions which would favour stable family life; the laws concerning inheritance or transmission of property must respect the needs and rights of family members.

b) Families have the right to measures in the social domain which take into account their needs, especially in the event of the premature death of one or both parents, of the abandonment of one of the spouses, of accident, or sickness or invalidity, in the case of unemployment, or whenever the family has to bear extra burdens on behalf of its members for reasons of old age; physical or mental handicaps or the education of children.

c) The elderly have the right to find within their own family or, when this is not possible, in suitable institutions, an environment which will enable them to live their later years of life in serenity while pursuing those activities which are compatible with their age and which enable them to participate in social life.

d) The rights and necessities of the family, and especially the value of family unity, must be taken into consideration in penal legislation and policy, in such a way that a detainee remains in contact with his or her family and that the family is adequately sustained during the period of detention.

ARTICLE 10

Families have a right to a social and economic order in which the organization of work permits the members to live together and does not hinder the unity, well-being, health and the stability of the family, while offering also the possibility of wholesome recreation.

a) Remuneration for work must be sufficient for establishing and maintaining a family with dignity, either through a suitable salary, called a "family wage", or through other social measures such as family allowances or the remuneration of the work in the home of one of the parents; it should be

such that mothers will not be obliged to work outside the home to the detriment of family life and especially of the education of the children.

b) The work of the mother in the home must be recognized and respected because of its value for the family and for society.

ARTICLE 11

The family has the right to decent housing, fitting for family life and commensurate to the number of the members, in a physical environment that provides the basic services for the life of the family and the community.

ARTICLE 12

The families of migrants have the right to the same protection as that accorded other families.

a) The families of immigrants have the right to respect for their own culture and to receive support and assistance towards their integration into the community to which they contribute.

b) Emigrant workers have the right to see their family united as soon as possible.

c) Refugees have the right to the assistance of public authorities and International Organizations in facilitating the reunion of their families.



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- C. *Gaudium et Spes*, 50; *Humanae Vitae*, 12; *Familiaris Consortio*, 28.
- D. *Rerum Novarum*, 9 and 10; *Familiaris Consortio*, 45.
- E. *Familiaris Consortio*, 43.
- F. *Gaudium et Spes*, 52; *Familiaris Consortio*, 42 and 45.
- I. *Familiaris Consortio*, 45.
- J. *Familiaris Consortio*, 46.

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K. *Familiaris Consortio*, 6 and 77.

L. *Familiaris Consortio*, 3 and 46.

M. *Familiaris Consortio*, 46.

ARTICLE 1

Rerum Novarum, 9; *Pacem in Terris*. Part 1; *Gaudium et Spes*, 26; *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 16, 1.

a) *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 1058 and 1077; *Universal Declaration*, 16, 1.

b) *Gaudium et Spes*, 52; *Familiaris Consortio*, 81.

c) *Gaudium et Spes*, 52; *Familiaris Consortio*, 81 and 82.

ARTICLE 2

Gaudium et Spes, 52; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 1057; *Universal Declaration*, 16, 2.

a) *Gaudium et Spes*, 52.

b) *Dignitatis Humanae*, 6.

c) *Gaudium et Spes*, 49; *Familiaris Consortio*, 19 and 22; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 1135; *Universal Declaration*, 16, 1.

ARTICLE 3

Populorum Progressio, 37; *Gaudium et Spes*, 50 and 87; *Humanae Vitae*, 10; *Familiaris Consortio*, 30 and 46.

a) *Familiaris Consortio*, 30.

b) *Familiaris Consortio*, 30.

c) *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

ARTICLE 4

Gaudium et Spes, 51; *Familiaris Consortio*, 26.

a) *Humanae Vitae*, 14; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion*, 18 November 1974; *Familiaris Consortio*, 30.

b) Pope John Paul II, *Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*, 23 October 1982.

d) *Universal Declaration*, 25, 2; *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Preamble and 4.

e) *Universal Declaration*, 25, 2.

f) *Familiaris Consortio*, 41.

g) *Familiaris Consortio*, 77.

ARTICLE 5

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a) *Familiaris Consortio*, 46.

b) *Gravissimum Educationis*, 7; *Dignitatis Humanae*, 5; Pope John Paul II, *Religious Freedom and the Helsinki Final Act* (Letter to the

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Heads of State of the nations which signed the Helsinki Final Act), 4b; *Familiaris Consortio*, 40; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 797.

c) *Dignitatis Humanae*, 5; *Familiaris Consortio*, 37 and 40.

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e) *Familiaris Consortio*, 40; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 796.

f) Pope Paul VI, *Message for the Third World Communications Day*, 1969; *Familiaris Consortio*, 76.

ARTICLE 6

Familiaris Consortio, 46.

a) *Rerum Novarum*, 10; *Familiaris Consortio*, 46; *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 17.

b) *Gaudium et Spes*, 48 and 50.

ARTICLE 7

Dignitatis Humanae, 5; *Religious Freedom and the Helsinki Final Act*, 4b; *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 18.

ARTICLE 8

Familiaris Consortio, 44 and 48.

a) *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11; *Familiaris Consortio*, 46 and 72.

b) *Familiaris Consortio*, 44 and 45.

ARTICLE 9

Laborem Exercens, 10 and 19; *Familiaris Consortio*, 45; *Universal Declaration*, 16, 3 and 22; *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 10, 1.

a) *Mater et Magistra*, Part II; *Laborem Exercens*, 10; *Familiaris Consortio*, 45; *Universal Declaration*, 22 and 25; *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 7, a, ii.

b) *Familiaris Consortio*, 45 and 46; *Universal Declaration*, 25, 1; *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 9, 10, 1 and 10, 2.

c) *Gaudium et Spes*, 52; *Familiaris Consortio*, 27.

ARTICLE 10

Laborem Exercens, 19; *Familiaris Consortio*, 77; *Universal Declaration*, 23, 3.

a) *Laborem Exercens*, 19; *Familiaris Consortio*, 23 and 81.

b) *Familiaris Consortio*, 23.

ARTICLE 11

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ARTICLE 12

Familiaris Consortio, 77; *European Social Charter*, 19.

Radical Solutions to Social Evils

By JOSEPH M. DE TORRE

There is a well-known 19th century incident about a certain anarchist who threw a bomb at a large crowd of spectators in a famous theater in Europe from one of the upper boxes while yelling, "None of us is innocent!" This is the radical reply of terrorists of all times when they are criticized on the grounds that they are killing innocent lives. The anarchists, however, who are but radical liberals, differ also radically from the marxists, who are but radical socialists, both in their program of regeneration of society and in their tactics to implement it.

Both of them agree that society is sick, and that it is divided into oppressors and oppressed, but while for the anarchists the individual is an end in himself and the only thing that prevents him from happily enjoying his original goodness is the curtailment of his freedom by the powers that be, for the marxists the individual is evil by himself, for then he is nothing, and he is good and happy only when fully integrated in society in a sort of nirvana of self-annihilation.

The anarchist thinks that no one is innocent in a society without absolute freedom, and he is ready to blow himself up along with society as a new Samson, so that a new society will emerge made up of individuals with an original good nature unspoiled by the "socially-transmitted" evils of greed and envy. This philosophy was formulated in its classical form by Rousseau, Stirner and Herzen.

The marxist, on the other hand, changes the moral nature of innocence and guilt into *physical* qualities and locates them in the two antithetical classes of proletarians and capitalists (oppressed and oppressors). For him the program or strategy (Lenin) for the rebirth of society consists in the revolutionary praxis of the class-struggle leading to the classless society, to be achieved by the most convenient tactics. What makes man

innocent for marxism is not absolute freedom, which is illusory and only leads to abuse of power and exploitation of the workers, but full integration in a classless society without any private property (communism).

In other words, while both anarchist and marxist agree that capitalist society is riddled with greed and envy, and the consequent exploitation of the weak by the strong, they differ in prescribing the solution for the eradication of greed and envy: the anarchists propose the imposition of absolute freedom, and the marxists the total abolition of private property; the anarchist is ready to use violence always, while the marxist only when convenient.

These radical differences explain the ferocious confrontations of anarchists and marxists during the Russian Revolution of 1917 and ensuing civil war, when the Bolshevik government identified the anarchists as the most dangerous counter-revolutionaries or reactionaries¹. In 1920 Lenin published a booklet entitled *Left-wing Communism*², where he refers to the anarchists as extreme leftists, and calls them infantile, charlatans and clowns. This confrontation reached dramatic heights also in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, which coincided with the Stalinist purges in Russia, and precipitated the collapse of the Spanish republic, which had been taken over by the "popular front" alliance of socialists, anarchists and communists³.

The trouble with these two ideologies⁴, which have been rocking mankind with an escalation of socio-economic and political upheavals for the last five or six centuries, is that they are not radical enough. They do see the evil, the cockle growing among the wheat. Indeed, who can fail to see the refinements of human wickedness in the world, now particularly magnified by the growing sophistication of the means of social communication? Who can fail to see the ugly and somber picture of a society where selfishness seems to be the dictating force, where hatred and callous indifference are on the loose with their dynamics of exploitation, violence, revenge and despair?

But both anarchism and marxism refuse to accept that the root of those evils is not in the structures of society as such

¹ Cf. my book *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity*, 2nd ed., Sinag-tala, Manila, 1983, ch. VI.

² Cf. *Lenin's Works*, ed. Laurence & Wishart, London, and Progress Publishers, Moscow, vol. 31, 1966.

³ Cf. *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity*, ch. VIII.

⁴ Cf. my book *The Roots of Society*, Sinag-tala, Manila, 1977, ch. II.

but in the very heart of man, of every human being. The exclamation of the anarchist throwing the bomb was indeed correct in this sense, though of course not the accompanying gesture of criminal violence.

Those two ideologies are not radical enough because they do not go to the root (*radix*) of the problem. The problem of man is that he is a creature of love (even if this love may be prostituted or corrupted by selfishness) between a man and a woman, and if he is not educated by a father and mother in love, he easily yields to his own selfishness in its several outlets of greed, envy, anger, lust, intemperance or sloth, and so contributes to the further pollution of the social environment which thus continues to be a source of further infection for the human heart.

It is from the human heart that all evil comes⁵ whenever the human heart fails to love the ultimate good and slides back into itself with a perverse act of self-deification. And the radical cure of the human heart must consist therefore in a total conversion to that fulness of good which alone can satisfy the human heart's incalculable capacity for love.

The education of man to love, which alone can form the citizens of a healthy society where the paramount concern of everyone is the common good, thus constituting a real *community*, must begin at the very mainsprings of human life. As Pope John Paul II said during his pastoral visit to Milan last May: "By giving life to your children you, parents, have assumed by this act of love the responsibility of explaining to them the meaning, the value and the hope which are included in that gift; that is, of explaining the marvellous gift of life which is renewed from generation to generation and which has a future, if it is accomplished in faith, in gratitude and in response to God's love, which is the principle of life. You parents are the witnesses and ministers of this divine love. In fact, you do not choose to give life to children for personal selfish reasons, but by virtue of a love and of a commandment greater than yourselves, according to which procreation is an act of faith and of hope. Only in this supernatural light is it possible to build up a family that is a clear sign of the mystery of God who raises it up and sustains it, and a revelation of that eternal life which is above man and beyond the transience of time and generations, but needs time and generations to manifest itself to the world."⁶

⁵ Cf. Mt. 15:18-20, Mk. 7:20-23.

⁶ *L'Osservatore Romano*, English, 6 June 1983, p. 5.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, carried on in its integrity by the Catholic Church⁷, God, who is the fulness of existence⁸, the fulness of life⁹, the fulness of love¹⁰, and the beginning and end of all things¹¹, has revealed himself by sending his own Son, born of a woman¹², who conceived him by the power of that divine love whose name is the Holy Spirit¹³. This Son of God, named Jesus (Savior) for he is to save men from their sins¹⁴, is the Messiah (Christ or Anointed) announced by the prophets, who comes to teach us how to love God and one another by his own example, and thus to eradicate that selfishness of the human heart which is the sin of the world¹⁵. This Messiah gathers in his person the roles of priest, patriarch, lawgiver, judge, king and prophet, thus fulfilling all the divine promises of the Old Covenant.

This revelation comes to a climax in the events of Holy Week: the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The first is the promulgation of the New Commandment along with the institution of the Eucharist and of the ministerial priesthood of the New Covenant, all under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit¹⁶. The second is the perfect sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and petition. The third is the definitive triumph over death and sin. And the three are all present in the Holy Mass, which perpetuates them.

The Eucharist appears thus as the kernel of social love. At the Last Supper, the *agape* enjoined by Jesus on all his disciples¹⁷ surpasses both the Platonic *eros* or love of desire for the good, and the Aristotelian *philia* or love of friendship, while perfecting them¹⁸. It is no less than the love of God for his creatures, i.e. a love which is sheer self-giving, overflow of good, since God has nothing to gain from it in exchange as he is the fulness of good: "as I have loved you".

⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 8.

⁸ Cf. Ex. 3:14.

⁹ Cf. Jn. 1:4 and 5:26.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Jn. 4:8 and 16.

¹¹ Cf. Is. 41:4 and 44:6, Rev. 1:8 and 17, 2:8, 21:6, 22:13.

¹² Cf. Gal. 4:4.

¹³ Cf. Mt. 1:18, 20 and 23, Lk. 1:31-35 and 41.

¹⁴ Cf. Mt. 1:21.

¹⁵ Cf. Jn. 1:29.

¹⁶ Cf. Jn. 13 to 17.

¹⁷ "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another (*agape allelous*): that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (*agapen echete en allelois*)."
(Jn. 13:34-35)

¹⁸ Cf. *The Roots of Society*, p. 5.

This love is initiated on the part of man with an attitude of thanksgiving to the giver of it. "Eucharist" literally means just that: thanksgiving. It brings with it the call to gratitude to God and generosity to all men; "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors"¹⁹; "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will"²⁰. Here is the essence of Christianity and the most radical principle for the pursuit of the common good and of the social justice inherent to it. This was the theme of Pope John Paul II's meditation at the eucharistic adoration in Piazza del Duomo, Milan, last May. Let me quote the highlight of his powerful statement:

"The Eucharistic mystery therefore establishes the community on the need for and the duty of a *perpetual act of thanksgiving* to the Father, in which is contained the meaning and value of all personal and social life. The word "Eucharist" means thanksgiving, profession of gratitude without reserve. This is the act which must characterize the Christian.

"This grateful attitude seems to be very far from the current one prevalent in our daily lives, often painfully confronted with what we lack, with what, laboriously sought, later falls short of our expectations and desires. Gratitude seems to be so far away from being the first and fundamental word around which and upon which to establish our relationship with God and with the community.

"The man who frequently complains, the man who sees always and only what he lacks in his own life, is the man who does not know how to see his own existence as a gift of an infinite love, nor does he know how to accept the presence of divine goodness in the community in which he lives. The most holy Eucharist teaches us instead to give thanks, to make return by giving...

It is from this "Eucharistic" ethic, that is, of giving thanks, that our correct relationship with God and with the community arises.

"Eucharistic worship teaches us the secret of communal relationship: the joy which comes from giving rather than receiving (cf. Acts 20:35); from giving a primary place to love with regard to justice, learning to be thankful even when we are given what is due to us as our strict right. It also teaches us

¹⁹ Mt. 6:12.

²⁰ Lk. 2:14.

that by giving we receive from God more and better than what we could have obtained or desired according to our plans or claims.

"The ethic of giving, which flows from Eucharistic worship, teaches us trust in God, even when for a while he leaves us in need or in difficulty, and gives peace and patience to our spirit even in the midst of tribulations...

"Love for the Eucharist also teaches us the right scale of values: not to put our will and earthly realities in the first place, but the will of God and heavenly goods. In fact, it teaches us a 'hunger' which surpasses that for material food and merely human needs, a hunger which presupposes the primacy of the spiritual and directs us towards it as to the truly superior order of reality and value. In fact, man does not live by bread alone, but by the Word which comes from the mouth of God (cf. Deut. 8: 3-16)."²¹

This is then the radical solution to all social evils: falling in love with God. But how can one fall in love with someone one is not well acquainted with? It is in this light that the need for a constant and thorough exposure to the full splendor of pure Christian doctrine appears in all its poignancy. "Why then do so many people not know him? Why do we still hear that cruel protest: 'We do not want this man to reign over us' (Lk. 19:14)? There are millions of people in the world who reject Jesus Christ in this way; or rather they reject his shadow, for they do not know Christ. They have not seen the beauty of his face, they do not realize how wonderful his teaching is."²²

Hence the grave duty of sacred ministers to teach the social doctrine of the Church as an intrinsic part of their work of evangelization: the primacy of the common good, the dignity of the human person, the obligation to work, the sacredness of human life, the moral imperative of social justice, the indissolubility of marriage, the rights of the family, the responsibility of educators, the promotion of culture with an economic development (also obligatory, for man is not an angel; but subject to the moral laws inherent to the dignity of the human person from the first moment of conception) where material goods are for the sake of spiritual goods, and so forth. And hence also the grave duty of the lay members of the Church to learn this

²¹ *L'Osservatore Romano*, English, 6 June 1983, pp. 3-4.

²² J. Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, Sinag-tala, Manila, 1974, no. 179.

doctrine in order to implement it in this temporal world, if they want to go into eternal life. This implementation of the social doctrine of the Church in secular society, with personal responsibility and respecting the plurality of options inherent to temporal things, is the proper and distinctive role of the laity, not of the clergy or religious, as the II Vatican Council stated in almost all its documents, particularly in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*²³.

It is not a matter of confronting a liberal radicalism and a social radicalism with a Christian radicalism in the political or military arena as such. Christianity, let alone the Church, cannot be identified with a political party or with a political regime.²⁴ It is rather a question of an ethical (nonviolent) struggle to create a *civilization of love*, in the expression coined by Pope Paul VI and so much cherished by the present Pope: a civilization where the twin moral commandments of love of God and neighbor, practiced according to the *perfection* demanded by Christ²⁵, would be universally recognized, and where social justice would therefore be promoted by the thrust of social love, and the consequent practice of the moral (and thereby social) virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

In such a civilization there is room for a plurality of political parties, economic policies, social systems and cultural expressions without breaking the fundamental ethical unity of all mankind. And within the Church, while it is the special task of the clergy and religious to preserve and foster the latter, "the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God."²⁶

Manila, August 1983

²³ Cf. my book *The Leaven of the Gospel in Secular Society*, Vera-Reyes, Manila, 1983.

²⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 76.

²⁵ "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). Cf. Eph. 5:1-2.

²⁶ II Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 31.

CANON LAW

The Power of Diocesan Bishops to Dispense From Ecclesiastical Laws

What is dispensation

Codex of 1917, can. 88, says: "The relaxation of a law in a special case."

Codex of 1983, can. 83: "The relaxation of a merely ecclesiastical law in a particular case."

The two definitions are similar, though the second seems to be more precise. Dispensation is an exemption from the law in a particular determinate case or situation, in virtue of which the law does not objectively reach or apply to a case or to a person which or who is dispensed. It refers only to ecclesiastical laws, as it is obvious in the 1917 Codex, though it was not expressly said so.

THE DISCIPLINE BEFORE THE NEW (1983) CODEX

In the 1917 Codex Who had power to dispense from ecclesiastical laws

According to canon 80 the following could dispense: a) the author of the law or the legislator; b) his successor; c) his superior; d) those to whom any of the aforementioned (legislator, successor or superior) might have granted the faculty to dispense.

Who could be dispensed

The 1917 Codex did not determine this matter when dealing with dispensation. It is obvious that the power can only be exercised towards one's subjects; but such subjects might be

absent from the territory, or the Ordinary is the one absent, and also it may happen that in his territory there be found persons who are not his subjects, such as pilgrims.

Canon 201, § 2, of the 1917 Codex set the following principle: "Unless by the nature of the matter or by disposition of the law it be otherwise obvious, the power of *voluntary jurisdiction*, that is, a non-judicial one, may be exercised in favor of oneself; or when one is outside the territory; or in favor of a subject who is absent from the territory." Now, the power to dispense is a **voluntary power of jurisdiction**. The 1917 Codex, in some particular canons, determined whom the Ordinary may dispense (Cf. cc. 990, 1043, 1045, 1245).

Condition for dispensing from ecclesiastical laws

It used to be an essential condition that there was a *just and reasonable cause* for the dispensation, in consideration of the importance or gravity of the law; in such manner that the dispensation without a just or reasonable cause granted by an authority lower than the legislator was not only illicit but also invalid. In case of doubt of the sufficiency of the cause, the dispensation could be granted licitly and validly (can. 84).

Faculties of Bishops, under the 1917 Codex, to dispense from merely ecclesiastical laws

In the first place, it should be noted that in the said Codex, regarding the faculty to dispense, use is not generally made of the word Bishop (except in can. 82), but rather of the word Ordinary of the place, or just Ordinary (Cf. cc. 15, 82, 990, 1043, 1945, 1245).

Regarding the faculty or authority to dispense from such laws, the following laws should be distinguished according to their authors, who can be:

- a) the same Bishop, in a diocesan synod or outside it;
 - b) the Provincial Council, or the Plenary Council;
 - c) the Supreme Legislator, whether the laws be of universal application or of particular character for the territory of the diocese, or for the territory of which the diocese is a segment.
- aa) *Laws enacted by the Bishop*: the diocesan Bishop could always dispense them, because he is their author; or the successor of their author with identical power.

bb) *Laws from the Provincial Council or Plenary Council*: Ordinaries of the place could dispense from them only in particular cases and on condition that there was a just cause, without which the dispensation was not only illicit but also invalid (can. 291, § 2).

cc) *Laws enacted by the Sovereign Pontiff*: the 1917 Codex granted Bishops the following faculties to dispense:

1) in case of doubt of fact, the Ordinary could dispense from ecclesiastical law, even though it were an irritant or inhabilitating law (can. 15), on condition that it was a case of laws which the Roman Pontiff was wont to dispense.

2) Ordinaries lower than the Roman Pontiff could dispense the *general* (now called *universal*) laws of the Church and the particular laws promulgated by the Roman Pontiff for a particular territory, *only*: a) when this power had been granted to them explicitly or implicitly, according to the tenor of the concession; and b) in particular cases *when the following three conditions obtained* jointly: first, that it should have been difficult to have recourse to the Holy See; second, that from the delay there might be danger of grave harm; and third, that it was a case of dispensation which the Holy See was wont to grant (cc. 81 and 82).

3) By express concession of law in the 1917 Codex, Bishops could dispense:

i) all irregularities proceeding from a *hidden delict*, except that of homicide, or of the effective procurement of abortion, and except also any other case that should have been *brought to the judicial forum* (can. 990 § 1);

ii) in an urgent *danger of death*, for the peace of conscience and for the purpose of legitimizing the offspring if the case so requires, the Bishop could dispense the *juridical form of celebrating matrimony* and *all matrimonial impediments of ecclesiastical right*, except that of *Holy Orders of priesthood*, and *except also that of affinity in direct line*, the matrimony in question having been consummated; in such dispensations scandal was to be avoided, and the cautions or guarantees were to be complied with in the case of marriage with disparity of cult or mixed religion (can. 1043);

iii) *all impediments indicated in the preceding paragraph*, with the same exceptions and under the same conditions, *when*

the impediment was discovered when everything was prepared for the matrimony, and the celebration cannot without danger of a grave evil be postponed until the dispensation be obtained from the Holy See (can. 1045).

iv) the observance of holidays, and the law of fast and abstinence, in particular cases, for the faithful or determined families of their subjects, although they be outside the territory, and also for pilgrims; and even for the whole diocese for a general cause of public order (can. 1245).

v) *vindictive* (now called expiatory) *penalties* established by law or precept of the same Bishop; and in occult cases, also the vindictive penalties established in general or common law (cc. 2236, § 1, 2237 § 2).*

[Bishops could also dispense:

- a) the religious vows (always public) of members of Institutes of diocesan right (can. 638);
- b) the private vows, a just cause existing; except the *vow of perfect and perpetual chastity, and the vow of entering a religious Institute of solemn vows*, such vow having been emitted in *absolute form by one who has reached 18 years of age* (cc. 1315, 1° & 1309).
- c) the promissory oath, unless its dispensation would prejudice a third person who is reluctant to condone the obligation (can. 1320).]

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Once promulgated the Codex of 1917 in which were granted to the diocesan Bishops many faculties which beforehand such Bishops were wont to ask and obtain by indult of the Holy See, Pope Benedict XV, by decree of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation in April 25, 1918, abrogated, effective on May 13, of that same year 1918, all the habitual faculties granted to the Ordinaries of the place, except those in territories under the Sacred

* In the 1917 Codex the remission of penalties was given by means of a *dispensation* in cases of *vindictive penalties*; by means of an *absolution* in cases of *medicinal penalties or censures*. — In the new Codex use is made always only of the word *remission* (or to *remit*), both in cases of censures or medicinal penalties, and of *expiatory* (called before vindictive) penalties.

Congregation of the *Propaganda Fide*, and except also some concessions to nations then locked in the world war and which were under the common or general law (AAS, X, 1918, p. 191).

Experience soon showed the need to grant the diocesan Prelates in a habitual manner wider faculties in order that they can comply adequately with their pastoral office. These faculties had to be asked from the different Congregations, until Pope Pius XI ordered that in future they *all* be granted by the Consistorial Congregation, which before the beginning of every quinquennium shall ask the other Congregations about what changes should be made, if convenient, in the affairs of their competence (Cf. AAS, XV, 1923, pag. 193).

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE NEW CODEX

Immediate antecedents

Despite the habitual quinquennial faculties, the need was yet felt not only that such be made ordinary faculties of the office of Pastors, but also that such pastors should enjoy a wider authority that would facilitate the pastoral care and the service to souls.

The Ecumenical Council Vatican II decreed in this regard a basic norm contained in the Conciliar Document *Christus Dominus* (n. 8, a, b), approved on October 28, 1965, as follows:

"To Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, in the dioceses entrusted to them, there belongs *per se* all the ordinary, proper, and immediate authority which is required for the exercise of their pastoral office. But this never in any way infringes upon the power which the Roman Pontiff has, by virtue of his office, of reserving cases to himself or to some other authority. — To each diocesan Bishop is granted the faculty to dispense from the general laws of the Church in a particular case, the faithful over whom they legally exercise authority as often as they judge that it contributes to their spiritual welfare; except in those cases which have been especially reserved by the Supreme Authority of the Church."

And in n. 44 of the same Decree the Council orders that in the future Codex, laws should be adjusted to such indicated principles.

Even before the Decree *Christus Dominus* was approved by the Council, Pope Paul VI had already promulgated on November 20, 1963, the *Motu Proprio Pastorale Munus* (AAS, LVI, 1964, pp. 5 & ff.), by which he disposed that residential Bishops, from the very moment of their taking possession of the diocese, were provided by common law with a list of determined faculties, among which were the faculties to dispense norms or laws of the 1917 Codex.

Later, on June 15, 1966, Paul VI promulgated the *Motu Proprio De Episcoporum muneribus* with the end of implementing the aforementioned mandate of the Ecumenical Council, by which in n. IX was specified the dispensations which the Pope expressly was reserving to his own authority.

The new Codex collects practically the contents of the *Motu Proprio De Episcoporum muneribus*, declaring in Title IV, Chapter V, *De Dispensationibus*, in Book I, the general principles about the faculty to dispense; and specifying the cases reserved to the Holy See (some cases mentioned in the above mentioned *Motu Proprio* being omitted) when dealing about the matters about which the Codex declares as reserved to the Holy See.

Definition of dispensation in the 1983 Codex

Dispensation "is the relaxation of a merely ecclesiastical law in a particular case" (Can. 85). This definition is similar to that of the former Codex, with the noticeable difference that it expressly declares that dispensation applies only to laws of the Church.

The meaning of "particular case" is not restricted to only one person, or one sole occasion. A particular case can pertain to a dispensation of a group of persons, or of families, including when such persons form juridical entities (moral persons), such as a religious community, a seminary, etc. And a particular case can also be a situation of certain duration of time that would justify the dispensation on several consecutive times or for a determined period of time, at least relatively short. A dispensation that would grant exemption from the law for a very long or even indefinite lapse of time, properly speaking, should be called rather an indult or a privilege against the law than a dispensation.

Who can dispense

The same canon 85 says that "dispensation may be granted by those who have executive power, within the ambit of their competence; and moreover, by those who have explicitly or implicitly the competence by disposition of law, or by legitimate delegation."

The power of "regimen which exists in the Church by divine institution, and is also called power of jurisdiction" (can. 129), is distinguished by can. 135, § 1, into "legislative, executive and judicial," but that canon does not define in what does executive power consist. We may say that executive power is that authority to govern which Bishops have ("who should promote the common discipline of the Church and consequently they are obliged to urge the observance of all ecclesiastical laws," and "to watch lest there be introduced abuses in the ecclesiastical discipline" — can. 392 —), and also that power, ordinary or delegated, which is the competence of other Ordinaries, account taken of that the legislative power of one lower than the Roman Pontiff cannot be delegated validly (can. 135, §2).

Who are Ordinaries, and who are Ordinaries of place?

Can. 134, § 1 & 2, affords the answer. § 3 of this same canon says: "What in the canons is attributed *nominatim* (by express name) to the Bishop in the ambit of executive power is understood to be the competence of solely the diocesan Bishop, and of those who according to canon 381, § 2, are ranked equal to him, excluding the Vicar General and the Episcopal Vicar, unless they have a special mandate." The power to dispense being an ordinary power of executive nature, this mandate could be in a general form (although in some matters at least this would not be advisable), inasmuch as "the Ordinary executive power can be delegated either in one particular case, or in all cases, unless it be expressly provided otherwise" (Can. 137, § 1).

Hence, the authority to dispense merely ecclesiastical laws is the competence in the first place of the diocesan Bishop, "to whom rightfully belongs in the diocese entrusted to him the ordinary power, proper and immediate, which requires the exercise of the pastoral office, excepting the cases which by law or by decree of the Sovereign Pontiff are reserved to the highest authority, or to another ecclesiastical authority" (can. 381, § 1).

The same power is the competence of territorial Prelates and territorial Abbots (formerly called Prelates and Abbots

nullius), of Apostolic Vicars and Prefects, and of Apostolic Administrators of an Apostolic Administration erected in permanent manner, all ranked equal to diocesan Bishops (can. 368).

[He who is in charge of the government of the diocese "*sede impedita*", and the diocesan Administrator "*sede vacante*" have the same duties and are endowed with the same power as the diocesan Bishop, excepting the things that are excluded by their very nature or by the Law itself." (can. 427, § 1 & can. 414). But in the Law they are not ranked equal to the diocesan Bishop.

Can it be said that they have the same power to dispense as what is attributed to the Bishop? It is an ordinary power; it can be necessary too, perchance in some case gravely necessary for the spiritual good; it is not a thing from which they are excluded "by its very nature." But they are not ranked equal to diocesan Bishops, and so it seems that canon 134, § 3, should be applied; moreover, canon 428, § 1 says: "While the see is vacant, let nothing be changed."]

What laws are excluded from the Bishops' power to dispense

a) "*Not capable of being dispensed are the laws in so far as they determine the essential constitutive elements of institutes, or of juridical acts*" (can. 86), inasmuch as to dispense an essential element would be to destroy the institute itself, or the juridical act in question.

Aside from the general principles of Canon Law (whether they are contained in Bk. I, or spread out in other places dealing with different institutes), *to be considered as constitutive laws* are those that regulate the juridical capacity, the different states in the Church, the ecclesiastical institutions and offices, irrespective of the persons who exercise them. (For example, the admission to the novitiate or to the profession requires the previous consents of the Chapter and the Council; a territorial parish requires definite limits; a mandate to contract marriage by procurator or representative should be in writing, signed by the principal and by the parish priest or by two witnesses).

b) Neither can Bishops dispense *penal or procedural laws*. They are expressly excluded by can. 87, § 1.

And the reason is obvious. The cause for dispensing is the spiritual good of the faithful. The procedural laws regulate the transaction or procedure of the defense of private rights which, though they can at times affect the spiritual order, are generally of the material realm. Moreover, the dispensation of such could disturb the due administration of justice. Regarding penal laws, inasmuch as their purpose is precisely to protect the spiritual good, either by preventing that it be violated, or by satisfying for, when it was impaired, it is obvious that there would not be a just cause for the dispensation.

c) Lastly, *neither can Bishop dispense ecclesiastical laws, when their dispensation is reserved to the Holy See or to another authority* (can. 87, § 1). — Which are the reservations established by the Codex will be stated hereafter.

What universal laws (or particular — for the territory — emanating from the Supreme Authority) may be dispensed by the diocesan Bishop

a) Diocesan Bishops, there being a just cause, can dispense *all disciplinary laws*, whether *preceptive or prohibitive*, except *penal and processal laws*, and other laws the dispensation of which is *reserved* to the Holy See or to another authority (can. 87, § 1).

A question hits one in the eye: "Can they also dispense disciplinary laws that are irritant or inhabilitating?" At first blush, it seems that they cannot, because the effect of such inhabilitating laws is to render the juridical act performed by such inhabilitated persons null and void; as also such acts are null and void when some requisites set by the irritant laws are not verified. Such considerations seem to hint that they are constitutive laws. But in reality they are not, that is, they do not define the essential elements of the juridical act. They are laws that command or prohibit the presence of a quality or circumstance, or the absence of either, so that the act be valid.

One comes to the same conclusion by considering that in the reservations of dispensations as established in the new Codex, some of them are precisely of the dispensation of inhabi-

litating laws, such as the matrimonial impediments of ecclesiastical right, regarding most of which the dispensation is not reserved.

b) *The diocesan Bishops can dispense also in those cases reserved to the Holy See, when it is difficult to have recourse to the Holy See, and there is danger of grave harm* if the grant of dispensation is delayed, provided the dispensation is one which the Holy See customarily grants in the same circumstances; however, the norm remains that only the Roman Pontiff can dispense in the case of celibacy (can. 87, § 2; cf. can. 291).

c) *Diocesan Bishops can in case of doubt of fact dispense* laws, even irritant or inhabilitating, even when such are reserved, so long that the authority to which they are reserved is wont or accustomed to grant the dispensation thereof (can. 14).

Other ecclesiastical laws that diocesan Bishops may dispense

Obviously they can always dispense from diocesan laws, whether enacted in the synod or out of it. And the dispensation would be valid, even when there were no just cause to dispense, because the Bishop is the exclusive author of such laws.

a) In particular cases they can dispense the laws promulgated by the Provincial Council or by the Plenary Council, whenever they may judge that the dispensation would redound to the spiritual good of the faithful (can. 88). This should be understood with the clause: excluding constitutive laws and penal and procedural laws also.

b) In like manner, and with the same limitations as in a), diocesan Bishops can dispense general decrees [general decrees and laws are synonymous, cf. can. 29] promulgated by the Episcopal Conference (cf. can. 455 § 1-3). It is expressly so stated in canon 88.

In fact the legislator of those decrees is almost identical to the Plenary Council, and the decrees have also to be recognized by the Holy See before they are promulgated.

c) "Diocesan Bishops can grant in particular cases dispensation of the constitutions of Institutes (of consecrated life) of diocesan right" (can. 595, § 2). These Institutes fall under the

authority and special care of the Bishop (can. 594) ; who on the other hand should preserve and defend their autonomy of life, especially regarding their internal regimen or administration (can. 586).

[The diocesan Bishop can also grant indult to leave the Institute when such Institute is of diocesan right; and this dispensation includes in itself the relaxation of the vows and of the duties assumed in the profession (can. 691, 692).]

Dispensations reserved to the Holy See in the New Codex

a) *Regarding the requisites for Orders, the irregularities and the impediments.*

1) The dispensation of a period of over a year regarding in the age required for the ordination of priests and deacons. (Can. 1031, § 4).

2) The irregularities and impediments:

i) The dispensation of any irregularity, for receiving and for exercising Orders, when the fact on which the irregularity is based has been brought to the judicial forum; (Canon 1047, § 1).

ii) To receive Orders:

— The irregularity due to public delict of apostasy, heresy or schism;

— The irregularity due to the public delict of having attempted marriage, though merely civil, when the one who attempted was already married, or was bound by Holy Orders, or by a perpetual public vow of chastity; or he attempted marriage with a woman already married or bound by the same vow of chastity;

— The irregularity due to public or occult delict of homicide or of effective abortion, or of positive cooperation in either;

— The impediment of contracted marriage, unless the candidate is destined for the permanent deaconship only (can. 1047, § 2).

iii) To exercise Orders already received:

— The irregularity of having attempted marriage, as already mentioned above (2, ii), when the case is public.

— The irregularity due to the delict of homicide or effective abortion (above, 2, ii), whether the case be public or occult (Can. 1047, § 3).

b) *Matrimonial impediments* (can. 1078) and the form of marriage:

1) *Matrimonial impediments*:

i) The impediments of holy Order, and of perpetual vow of chastity in a religious Institute of pontifical right;

ii) The impediment of crime.

(*The reservation* — to the Holy See — *does not hold*, and thus the Ordinary can dispense when the danger of death is urgent, in the cases of: — impediments of the Order of diaconate. — public vow of perpetual chastity, and — the impediment of crime (can. 1079, § 1). *Similarly*, the Ordinary of place can dispense from the impediment of crime, when this impediment is detected when all is already prepared for the celebration of marriage, which cannot be delayed without probable danger of grave harm until the dispensation could be obtained from the competent authority. (Can. 1080, § 1). — The expression "*everything is already prepared for the celebration*" implies in the first place that all the previous canonical requisites and steps have been complied with: it does not hold when all has been done regarding the social celebration, so to say, but there has been no compliance with the requisites for the sacramental celebration.)

2) The canonical form of the celebration of matrimony. By way of exception the Bishop can dispense the form as follows:

(1) in case of urgent danger of death (can. 1079, § 1);

- (2) when in mixed marriage, or marriage with disparity of cult dispensed, there exist grave difficulties to observe the canonical form; in such cases for the validity some public form of celebration should be observed (can 1127, § 2 & can. 1129) ;
 - (3) when the Bishop can convalidate the marriage by granting sanation in *radice* (can. 1165).
- c) The *dispensation of a promissory oath* when the dispensation from it redounds to the prejudice of another, who does not consent to condone the obligation (can. 1203).

Whom can the Bishop dispense

"He who has the power to dispense can use it, even when he happens to be outside his territory, in favor of his subjects, even when such are absent from the territory, and, unless the contrary be determined expressly, also in favor of the pilgrims who are in his territory, and also in favor of his own self" (can. 91). The norm in this canon is in accord with can. 136 about the use of the executive power.

The condition to be able to grant dispensation from ecclesiastical laws

As in canon 84 of the 1917 Codex, the new Codex says in canon 90: § 1. No dispensation be granted from ecclesiastical law without just and reasonable cause, considering the circumstances of the case and of the gravity of the law which is dispensed; without such a just or reasonable cause, the dispensation is illicit, and, except when the dispensation is granted by the legislator himself or by his Superior, also invalid. — § 2. In case of doubt as to the sufficiency of the cause, the dispensation is validly and licitly granted."

The cause or immediate motive for dispensing can be as varied as is the norm of the law which is dispensed, and as to the diversity of the cases which can occur.

But there is a *basic criterion*, set by the same Conciliar Decree *Christus Dominus* (n. 8, b), to justify the dispensation. This criterion is, that the granting of the dispensation, in the

judgment of the Bishop, will redound to the spiritual good of the faithful. The immediate cause will be or will not be just and reasonable according as whether it redounds or not to obtain that good.

This criterion is contained in the *Motu Proprio De Episcoporum muneribus* (n. VIII), and is recapitulated in canons 87 and 88 of the new Codex as an introduction about the faculty of Bishops: "Whenever they should deem that the dispensation will contribute to the spiritual good of the faithful," they can dispense the universal laws of the Church, and the particular laws of Particular Councils and of the Episcopal Conference, according to what has been explained in the preceding pages.

And it is the Bishop who should judge whether the dispensation will contribute to the spiritual good, irrespective of whatever might be the immediate cause alleged in soliciting the dispensation.

APPENDIX

The *Motu Proprio De Episcoporum muneribus* (n. IV) said: "In the notion of dispensation by no means is contained the concession of license, faculty, indult and absolution."

License means the authorization or required consent for a course of action which is in conformity with a law. Thus, for example, canon 765 in the new Codex requires the licence of the Religious Superior for a priest to preach to the former's subjects; canons 824 and 832 speak of the licence both of the Ordinary and the Superior as to the required permission (licence) for the publication of certain books; canon 1228 declares that the licence of the Ordinary is needed to celebrate the Mass in private oratories; canon 1215, § 3, requires the licence of the Ordinary of the place to build a church in a *determined site*, even though he had already given his consent for the erecting of a religious house if in the request for this consent the location or whereabouts of the house had not been specified.

Even though the *Motu Proprio De Episcoporum muneribus* will be without further effect when the new Codex should enter into force (can. 6, § 1, 4^o), the new Codex does not change the meanings of the words we are using, unless it should in fact define them later in another fashion.

In canon 59, § 2, it is provided that "the norms about the rescripts apply also for the granting of *licence*, and for the concessions of *graces* 'vivae vocis oraculo' (by live word of mouth), unless the opposite be obvious." And beforehand, in the §1, the notion of rescript is given as "an administrative act given in writing by the competent executive authority, through which by itself and on request of somebody a privilege or a dispensation or another grace is granted."

Often licence is not merely similar to dispensation, but even really seems to be synonymous or equivalent to it. This happens at some instances in the new Codex, in which cases the licence of the Ordinary seems to be a veritable dispensation of the law, and not merely of short duration but rather of certain permanence as if it were rather an indult of exemption or a privilege against the law.

An example is in canon 285, § 4, by which clerics are forbidden some acts of lay character "*sine licentia sui Ordinarii*;" another is in canon 286 which prohibits clerics the exercise of negotiation (business) and commerce (trading), (with sanctions or penalties for the breach in canon 1392), "*nisi de licentia legitimae auctoritatis ecclesiasticae*;" another instance is in canon 289 which prohibits clerics to enter into voluntary military service "*nisi de sui Ordinarii licentia*."

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CASES AND INQUIRIES

THE STATE OF SANCTIFYING GRACE FOR COMMUNION

Church's law requires that a person who is conscious of his being in mortal sin, before partaking in the Eucharistic banquet, should confess first or at least make an act of perfect contrition, if there is an urgent need to receive Communion and there is no confessor at hand. Of, course, this applies also to the priest who celebrates the Mass. May I inquire:

- 1) When may one merely make the act of contrition for not having at hand a confessor in order to take Holy Communion?*
- 2) How many times may Holy Communion be received without going to Confession?*

A Religious Parish Priest

First of all, may we say that it is not *the Church's law* which forbids a person aware of mortal sin to approach Holy Communion. It is the *Divine Law* which requires the state of sanctifying grace in the soul of one who wishes to participate in the Eucharistic sacrament. Saint Paul says: "Whoever eats the bread, or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, is a violator of the Lord's Body and Blood. But let a person look carefully at himself and in that spirit eat of the bread and drink from the cup; for whoever eats and drinks, without due appreciation of the Body of Christ, eats and drinks to his own condemnation" (I Cor. XI, 28). It is clear, therefore, that divine law forbids to take Holy Communion a person who is guilty of mortal sin, without first confessing his sin and recovering sanctifying grace. The Church simply reminds us of this most important divine precept.

Having clarified the foregoing doctrinal point let us answer briefly the questions posed by the consultant.

- 1) The principle on this matter is clear: A person who is conscious of mortal sin may not receive Holy Communion without previously going to confession. An act of perfect contrition, no matter how perfect it may be, is insufficient for the sinner to approach the communion rail in order to receive the Eucharist. This is a principle that both priests and faithful should

bear in mind firmly. Our Holy Father has called our attention several times in this regard. Only in cases of real need may a person resort to an act of perfect contrition in order to take Holy Communion, without previously making a confession to a priest.

A person who, being conscious of mortal sin, wants to take Holy Communion, may resort to merely make an act of perfect contrition in the following circumstances:

a) when there is no confessor in the neighborhood and the nearest confessor cannot be approached without a grave difficulty or inconvenience;

b) when the priest at hand refuses to hear the confession or has no faculties to hear confessions;

c) when, by confessing to the priest at hand, there is a danger of revealing his accomplice;

d) when there exists a serious inconvenience, extrinsic to the confession itself, to make the confession to the priest available. For instance, if a parish priest would have to confess a sin against the sixth commandment to his coadjutor who has been entrusted to his care precisely because of the latter's weakness in this matter. In this case, it is not the natural shame or good reputation of the sinner which excuses him to go to confession, but the scandal with its consequences in the life of the confessor himself that justifies the sinner resorting to the act of perfect contrition instead of confessing to the particular priest available.

2) In regards to the number of times that Holy Communion may be received without going to confession, an answer can be deduced from the interpretation of the expression "*quam primum confiteantur*" used by the 1917 Codex in can. 807 and by the new Codex in can. 916. Theologians and canonists give the sinner a period of three or four days in order to make the confession. This obligation binds the priest even if he has no obligation to celebrate on the following days. Thus, once he has celebrated the mass in the state of sanctifying grace by virtue of the act of perfect contrition, without making a confession, the priest cannot say more masses without previously going to confession, unless he is bound to celebrate in those three or four days and has still no opportunity to confess. This rule applies also to the faithful in receiving Holy Communion.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

HISTORY

By Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.

DOMINICAN TOWNS IN PANGASINAN:

DAGUPAN

Its Name

The original name of present day Dagupan was Bagnotan, by which it was called until the year 1720 when it appears for the first time with its present name in the Capitular Acts.¹ In the local dialect, *dagupan* means "a place of gathering", from the root-word *dagop* (gathering), and the suffix *an* which designates location or place. There is another Bagnotan (Bacnotan) in La Union province, which has kept its original name through the centuries until the present.² Dagupan is a very appropriate name according to an old Pangasinan dictionary because it is a place where people from different settlements gathered together.³

Its Acceptance by the Dominicans

Dagupan was accepted by the Dominican order in the Philippines in 1613, together with Lingayen, its mother-town, under the advocacy of St. John the Evangelist. But it remained a *visita* of Calasiao until 1643 when it was given a Vicar of its own in the person of Father Juan Luis Huete, a religious better known in the History of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary for his missionary activities in the southern towns of Nueva Vizcaya province.⁴

Dagupan's Surrounding Towns

Dagupan is surrounded by the towns of Calasiao which is 5 kms. to the southeast; by Binmaley which is 10 kms. to the northwest; by Mangaldan, 9 kms. to the northeast; and by the gulf of Lingayen on the north.

¹ *Acta Capitulum Provincialium* . . . , II, 123.

² Suárez, *op. cit.*, fol. 205.

³ *Libertas*, Año I, No. 118, Sábado, 25 de noviembre de 1899.

⁴ *Acta Capitulum Provincialium* . . . , VI, pp. 82, 201; OCIO, *Compendio*, p. 61.

Ecclesiastical Buildings

The first church of Dagupan, like most of the earliest Filipino churches, because of the scarcity of means of the times, must have been a humble structure of light materials. However, this soon gave way to an imposing church, as can be concluded from the following event.

During the uprising of 1660 Andres Malong, its leader decided to capture by force the town of Bagnotan (now Dagupan), whose inhabitants had not taken part in the revolt. But their loyalty to the Spanish cause proved to be very costly for them, for the rebels, after having massacred many of them burned the whole town. Even its convent and church, "a magnificent structure which was one of the finest that the Fathers of St. Dominic possessed in that province, was not spared by the flames."⁵

The 19th century church — that has been recently converted into a museum after the inauguration of the present spacious and comfortable Cathedral in 1979 — was built by Father Pedro H. Rama in 1816, if one is to believe Father Valentín Marín's *Ensayo*.⁶ On the other hand, Father Manuel Mora, who visited and described it in 1804, found it very old.⁷ Indeed, the walls that still stand there today are probably the very walls that saw and suffered the consequences of the Malong uprising in 1660.

Its present facade was finished in 1895 by Father Vicente Iztegui, the last Dominican Vicar of Dagupan, in lieu of the old one which had been ruined by the disastrous earthquake of March 16, 1892. Fr. Iztegui also provided the church with sets of interior columns and two side doors.⁸

The stately convent that was burned by American artillery on January 9, 1945, was the work of Father Gregorio Paz. This worthy priest was assigned to Dagupan in 1875, and left Pangasinan for Hong-Kong after the cholera-morbus epidemic of 1882-1883, during which occasion he devoted himself so completely to the service of his flock that his health eventually broke down, forcing him to leave the province permanently.

⁵ Blair and Robertson, XXXVIII, 163, 180.

⁶ Marín y Morales, *Ensayo*, pp. 647-648.

⁷ Mora, *op. cit.*, fol. 96v.

⁸ Ocio, *Compendio*, pp. 906, 982.

The cemetery, located to the west of the town and fenced with a brick wall, was the work of Father Salvador Hidalgo; and its chapel, which was started by Father Francisco Catalá in 1874, was finished two years later by Father Paz.⁹

In barrio Bunuan, Father Paz also built a good chapel of mortar and stone, placing it under the advocacy of St. Michael the Archangel.¹⁰

Roads and Bridges

Dagupan was connected with its neighboring town of Calasiao in mid-19th century by two roads. One was built by Father José Misa while he was curate of Calasiao, and the other by Father Vicente Rodríguez when he was Vicar of Dagupan. Father Rodríguez had to overcome with strong determination a series of obstacles including litigations to build his road. But the advantages of this second road over the other were soon felt and, as a result, the road built by Father Misa was abandoned soon after.¹¹

Father Misa, during his tenure as Parish Priest of Dagupan, opened another road leading to the barrio of Bunuan, about 5 kms. long. He also built several culverts to allow the passage of the water in the many streams.¹²

"The road," noted Father Suárez, "connecting Dagupan with Mangaldan used to become so impassable during the rainy months before 1840 that the mail had to be carried on backs of carabaos, and even some of these amphibious animals died, without any one being able to extract them from the mire."¹³ Aware of this, Father Vicente Rodríguez used the ballast of the *pontines* to pave it so that at that time it was considered one of the best-paved roads in the province of Pangasinan.¹⁴

Father Suárez found him busy doing this task in 1845 when he was assigned to Dagupan as "President," i.e., first assistant of the Parish Priest.¹⁵

⁹ González, *Labor Evangélica*, p. 70.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Suárez, *op. cit.*, fol. 205.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Dagupan as Father Suárez saw it in mid-19th century

Father Suárez wrote:

Dagupan has always been looked upon as one of the best behaved towns in the province, and its inhabitants as the most obedient, submissive and helpful. I have heard it said that they began to lose these qualities and weaken in their morality ever since the *mes-tizos* and, above all, the Chinese began to settle there a few years ago.

Dagupan consisted of a number of barrios which, like those of Calasiao, its neighbouring town, did not form a compact unit but were scattered over a wide area in a rather disorderly fashion.

Its population in 1869 went up to 3,300 tributes, and of these less than 500 lived within reach of the sound of the bell, or within what, in the Philippines, is called by the Spanish word "población".

The church, convent and schools were brick buildings roofed with nipa shingles. The church consisted of three naves and was sufficiently spacious, but it lacked artistic merit. Its walls, moreover, were rather low. The tower was small and without genuine architectural value.

The facade of the church faces east, fronting the original plaza, which today has been converted into rice fields. It is a big plaza, although much longer than wide, and is surrounded by medium size houses some of which are made of "strong materials" and roofed with tiles. The other plaza is situated on the north of the church where the *tribunal* stands by the Toboy river. The market is also there. It is graced by a number of houses some of which are of adobe stone up to the second floor.¹⁶

Dagupan the last Bastion of the Spanish Presence in Pangasinan

By the end of June of 1898 only three towns remained in Spanish hands in Pangasinan: Lingayen, the capital of the province; Binmaley, its bordering town to the East, and the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

busy commercial center of Dagupan. The Spanish garrison that defended Lingayen was integrated by the Filipino volunteers from Aguilar and Salasa, a company of Ilocanos and all the Spaniards from the capital who were capable of bearing arms. They were three hundred men in all. A small army, indeed, in comparison to the veritable swarm — about 5,000 insurgents — who swooped down on Lingayen from the South.

On the 29 of June they attacked Lingayen across the river from the direction of Salasa but were repulsed by the Ilocano volunteers.

On the same day, a small garrison of sixty men that defended Binmaley was also attacked by an army of three to four thousand revolutionaries, armed with bolos and a dozen rifles. Just as they were about to set on fire the convent and the church, defended by the small Spanish garrison, a contingent of one hundred men sent from Dagupan most opportunely arrived, attacking them from the rear and dispersing them in all directions.

It was clear, however, that the Spaniards could not successfully defend the three towns with only eight hundred men against such great odds and, as a result, Commandant Ceballos decided to have all his men withdrawn to Dagupan, thus surrendering Lingayen and Binmaley to the Filipino forces on July 3.

In the afternoon of July 2 the three Dominican Fathers who were still in Lingayen saw a foreign steamship leaving the waters of Dagupan. Later, they were to learn in Dagupan that the ship they had seen was the *Yuensang* which had taken on board for Hong-Kong twenty eight Dominican Fathers from Pangasinan and the sisters of the Santísimo Rosario College of Lingayen. Great, indeed, must have been the chagrin of the three when they realized that they had missed a golden opportunity to escape the advancing revolutionaries who were closing in on them from every side.

In Dagupan, the parish priest, Father Vicente Iztegui remained, and the Vicar Forane and Provincial Father Jorge Arjol also remained. They refused to abandon their flock. Frs. Paulino Aguilar, commander of the volunteers of Villasis, José Bartolo, Rufino Irazabal and Francisco Solaún also stayed. The first on order of Commandant Ceballos and the others to be by the side of the aged priests during those dark hours.

Finally, besieged on every side by thousands of revolutionaries, several of whom were already well armed with the rifles surrendered to them by the Spaniards in Tarlac, Dagupan surrendered with its eight hundred defenders on July 22, 1898.¹⁷

San Alberto College

The foundation of this institution of learning was decreed by the Provincial Chapter of 1890. It was approved by the civil authorities as a College of Primary and Secondary Instruction (Elementary and High School) on October 3 of the same year.¹⁸ The province of the Most Holy Rosary accepted it as a "house" of the Dominican order four years later, in the Provincial Chapter of 1894.¹⁹ Inaugurated on July 6 with an enrolment of one hundred students, classes were temporarily held in a rented house until 1893 when they were transferred to a new building put up for this specific purpose. This building was constructed entirely under the direction and supervision of Father Vicente Iztegui, in barrio Calmay. The whole structure cost 59,125 pesos, excluding the cost of equipment and the furniture.²⁰

Dagupan was chosen as the site of the College because of its central position and because it was the terminus of the railway linking Manila with Pangasinan. Its site along one of the branches of the Agno whose waters nearly washed its walls was well selected. The building itself was ample and well ventilated. It had a capacity of almost one thousand students.

On July, 1893 the *Principalia* of Dagupan — sixty of them — expressed their thanks to the Dominican Provincial through a public document for having taken the initiative in establishing this center of learning which was expected to be in the future so beneficial to the town of Dagupan.²¹

¹⁷ Herrero, *Nuestra Prisión*, pp. 572-588.

¹⁸ Cf. APSR, MSS, Section "Comunicaciones Oficiales" (Copiadores), Vol. V, fols. 12-13.

¹⁹ *Acta Capituli Provinciae Sanctissimi Rosarii Philippinarum... anni 1894*, Manilae, Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1894, pp. 10, 17.

²⁰ González, *Labor Evangélica*, p. 72.

²¹ Cf. APSR, MSS, Section "Pangasinán," Vol. IV, Doc. 25; also "Datos sobre el colegio de Dagupan" in *Ibid.*, Doc. 24; "Datos sobre los colegios de Lingayén y Dagupan (1904-1913) in *Ibid.*, Doc. 29, fols. 7-22. *Statistics for the course of 1896-1889*:

Rector and teachers	6.	Resident pupils	96
Brother master of		Enrolled	842
primary instruction	1	Total	945

(Cfr. Blair & Robertson, XLVI, 263).

The College functioned smoothly until 1898 when it had to be closed temporarily on account of the troubled times brought about by the Philippine Revolution.

During the siege of Dagupan by the Philippine revolutionary forces its building was garrisoned by a platoon of Ilocano volunteers and soon came under the direct fire of a company of insurgents who, attacking from the Binmaley side, had managed to dig a line of trenches in its vicinity. Seeing the situation hopeless, the Spanish officer in charge of the defense of Dagupan, Commandant Ceballos, decided to transfer to the town proper the garrison and the wounded who were in the military hospital previously installed there. He intended to burn the building after evacuating it.

Luckily, the decision, which was a most painful one for the Dominican Fathers then concentrated in Dagupan, was not carried out on the designated night, because the Ilocano volunteers still had enough ammunition and the will to continue fighting. Thus, the order was revoked and the building spared.

After the surrender of Dagupan, the building of San Alberto College served as a place of concentration for the Spaniards both military and civilians, and from August 4 for the Religious as well.²²

On November 20, 1899 Dagupan was wrested from Filipino hands by the advancing American army which commandeered the building of San Alberto from the said date until October 1903.²³

On September 20, 1903 the Dominican Fathers arrived again in Dagupan, with the purpose of opening anew the College of St. Albert the Great. However, when the people noticed the presence of the Dominicans, they marched in protest to the municipal building where the mayor, the secretary and the rest of the councillors met at once to write and dispatch, through the provincial governor, a complaint to the Honourable Civil Commission against the return of the friars. A copy was at once transmitted by the Secretary to the parish priest who replied that the friars had not returned to Dagupan to take over the parish, as the rumors had it, but to reopen the College of St. Albert in barrio Calmay.

Notwithstanding the complaint lodged by the local authorities, the fathers occupied the building, with the proper per-

²² Herrera, *Nuestra Prisión*, pp. 578, 582, 596, 606.

²³ *Libertas*, loc. cit.

mission from the higher authorities, and immediately resumed the task of teaching, after spending large sums of money to repair the damages caused by the revolutionists. However, this school never fulfilled the hopes that the Province had placed in it. In 1915 it had an enrollment of only one hundred and forty. Its teaching staff numbered nine Dominican priests and twelve lay teachers. In keeping with the American approved curriculum, the teaching was done in English. Optional classes were offered in piano, violin, shorthand, typing and drawing. The school met with serious economic difficulties which finally led to its definitive closure.

In 1934, the Province ceded the building of the defunct college to the Congregation of Dominican Sisters who established in it a school for girls. Not long afterwards, that which the famous Fr. Ruaño had foreseen and tried to avoid by the construction of a dike to protect the edifice against the fearful floods of the Agno, happened. During the first days of August, 1935, an overflowing of the river undermined its foundations to such an extent that it became necessary to tear apart the second storey to save the timber. Only a few blocks of brick which were part of the northeastern corner and which had withstood the waters, were left.

It must be acknowledged that, in spite of its deficiencies and difficulties, the College of St. Albert moulded a generation of good Christians and men of integrity who occupied during their time prominent places in the province of Pangasinan, and who ever remembered with affection their bygone Alma Mater.²⁴

Blessed Imelda's Academy

After closing the College of St. Albert in 1934, the Dominican Fathers, as already stated, ceded its building to the Missionary Sisters of St. Dominic who at once converted it into a college for girls. In 1935, when the big flood of the month of August swept the building away, they moved first into private houses and later into the old convent on the invitation of Msgr. Cesar Guerrero, then bishop of Lingayen. There they stayed until its destruction by the American bombardment. However, with unflinching determination they soon managed to rehabilitate it well enough to be able to resume their educational work.

²⁴ Arnaiz, Gregorio, O.P., *Crónica de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario, 1934-1939*, a MS in APSR, Section "Crónicas"; Vol. 11, p. 19.

In 1949 the convent was claimed by the diocese in order to turn it into the Bishop's Palace and, as a consequence, the sisters had to relinquish it and they moved to the residence of Dr. Braulio de Venecia where the community lived for five years while continuing their work for the education of the youth in a provisional two-storey wooden building that they were able to construct on a rented lot with the help of contractor Hermógenes Maramba, and there they stayed until the present building, located on the outskirts of the city, on the right side of the way to Binmaley, was inaugurated, in 1954.²⁵

Statistics of Population

As we have previously done regarding the towns already described, we shall also trace the growth of Dagupan's population, with its ups and downs, from 1751 to 1898, in the following figures:

1751	.....	3,019 souls ²⁶
1800	.....	4,771 souls ²⁷
1820	.....	5,444 souls ²⁸
1848	.....	11,662 souls ²⁹
1875	.....	20,232 souls ³⁰
1898	.....	15,691 souls ³¹

Our readers may have already observed from the statistics given on the towns of San Carlos, Calasiao, Mangaldan and Lingayen that there was in Central Pangasinan an appreciable decrease of population in the last quarter of the 19th century; and while we are not yet in a position to pinpoint the real causes, we may well ascribe such unusual phenomenon to earthquakes, epidemics and most especially to the great famine through the years 1877-1879, which carried some to the grave and forced many to migrate to less hard-hit places.³²

²⁵ Information furnished by sisters Amada Sabater and Dominica Lacson, O.P., on December 13, 1983.

²⁶ "Informe al Rey nuestro Señor," Año 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelánea," Vol. 3, Fol. 8.

²⁷ "Número de almas del obispado de Nueva Segovia, año 1800," MS in APSR, Section "Cagayán," Vol. 18, Doc. 26.

²⁸ "Número de almas de la provincia de Pangasinan, obispado de Nueva Segovia, año de 1820," MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán" (Estadísticas), Vol. 12, Doc. 39.

²⁹ *Revista Católica*, enero de 1849, p. 467.

³⁰ *Estado de almas* . . . , Manila, 1876.

³¹ Ocio, *Monumento*, p. 88.

³² Vilanova, Ramón, O.P., *El Atomo Catalán*, MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán," Vol. 10, pp. 302-305.

SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.

Two Models of Christian Life:

Maria Delong and Catalina Lumai of Samar

The town of Bangahun, where the two sisters who are the subject of our narrative lived, was situated between two rivers on a tongue-shaped delta. One of the rivers was called Bangahun, after which the town itself was named, and the other was called Bantaian. As a result of its being between two rivers, the town of Bangahun was humid, unhealthy, and crocodile-infested so much so that rare was the missionary who did not contract there a chronic disease, and rarer the year when the crocodiles did not carry off one or more persons.

For this reason, some of its inhabitants transferred to another place Cabongahan, i.e. "a place where bongas abound." In spite of this, or, perhaps, because of this, its people, particularly the women, seemed to be more pious in Bangahun than elsewhere in Samar, as will be seen in the brief biographies of the two holy sisters we are presenting below. The biographical sketches are from the pen of Father Francisco Ignacio Alcina, a 17th century historian and zealous apostle of Bangahun for several years.

Father Alcina, the biographer and spiritual director of the two sisters, was born in Gandía, Valencia, Spain in 1610. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1624 and after a long trip across two oceans, he arrived in Manila on May 25, 1632. Two years later, having completed his studies and having been ordained priest, he left for the Visayas where he laboured indefatigably in the islands of Samar and Leyte until about the year 1672. He died in San Miguel Parish, Manila, in 1674.

And now, after this brief introduction, here in Father Alcina's own words, are the biographical sketches of the two holy women of Bangahun, Samar.

The Two Sisters

"There lived in the town of Bangahun, although they had been born in Tinagob, two sisters. The elder one was named Doña María Dolong and the younger was Doña Catalina Lumai. Both were already widowed when I was ministering to this town, and both were a source of good example to the townspeople. Undoubtedly, they were far ahead of everybody in piety, and we may further remark, that they were like the yeast which fermented the dough of that Christian community.

"When the first Fathers arrived, the elder sister was already of marriageable age, and Lumai was about eight years old, more or less; and both were among the first to be baptized, together with their parents who were the highest ranking chiefs in Tinagob. And although they were already grown ups when they were baptized, yet it seems as if they had sucked the Faith together with the milk of their mothers, for, as we shall see, they excelled by far in their mode of life above other Christians more deeply rooted in their Christianity.

"In order that many may profit by their example, I shall jot down here what I observed and experienced there during the years of my stay in this place. I was a witness to everything until the death of both sisters. Although the younger (being the one who suffered more) died ahead of the elder, the judicious reader may see and judge for himself who of the two reached the harbour of eternal bliss, fuller of merits, as we may piously believe.

Doña María Dolong

"A few months after having been baptized, Doña María Dolong got married to a Spanish mestizo surnamed Oñate and, because of this, she had to make her home permanently in the town proper and under the shadow of the Fathers who at once recognized in her modesty and external composure sure signs of an unalterable and chaste life.

"Together with her younger sister she was the first in learning all the prayers and mysteries of the Faith, and both

the first in frequenting the sacraments of Confession and Communion; the first, too, in attending Mass every day as long as they had the strength to attend it, and they never missed it except when, due to the absence of the Father minister, Mass was not said in the town.

"The two became so proficient in learning that the elder sister—who got married to a chief, her equal in social rank, by whom she had many children—was the school mistress in the town of Bangahun for as long she lived. And she could very well be so, because she taught not only with words but also with deeds. And never was it heard or, even more remarkably, suspected that anything she said or did was unbecoming.

"I can bear witness—since I heard their general Confession a number of times—that, excepting their husbands, and this within the bounds of temperance, they never knew any other man, nor was there any—which is indeed a rare thing—who would be bold enough as to make any advances before them regarding this matter. So well aware were the men of their orderly lives and virtue in this regard!

"This was even more noticeable in the younger sister because she was a physically well accomplished native lady and Spanish looking on account of her markedly regular features and white complexion. Moreover, she was well versed in many things. But, because she was of a quicker and more sanguine temperament, she had to strive harder along the road of virtue. In this she succeeded, with God's help, through much fasting—since she fasted every week on Fridays and Saturdays—and by wearing often a hairshirt which was made of little wiry chains. As a matter of fact, sometimes she ordered one from me to replace the old one.

"Rare was the Friday in which she, being in good health, did not take the discipline, and throughout the Lenten season she used to fast, never missing a day except Sunday (a practice common to the two sisters). She scourged herself to the point of shedding blood at least three times a week during midnight so as not to be noticed, and as she was already a widow when I become her confessor, she could do so without running the risk of being detected.

"And going down now to what was special in each one of them—since they acted in unison regarding what we have just said—Doña María Dolong proved very helpful to the Fathers

ministers, as long as the *cabecera* (head-town) remained in Tinagob, in matters pertaining to instruction, orderly living, and special direction of women.

"It was she who, lending a helping hand to the priests, admonished, corrected and at times even punished those who were less decent and more loose in their moral behavior — for in a newly founded mission and among people accustomed to behave as they pleased, the occasions for administering correction were not lacking—; and she did her job so well that not a few amended their lives, bringing them back to the right path more by her example than by her words.

"Among others, there was a woman of high social standing who, by her bad example, was a source of scandal to the town, even though she was married. Yet, through Dolong who gradually attracted, coaxed and even won her over to make a good Confession, things came out so well that, having made a general Confession with deep sorrow and feeling of regret, she turned over a new leaf and afterwards became the example of the womenfolk and even the lure that led many to a more orderly life.

"There was no convent (here we do not have any) more recollected than the house of Dolong for loose women because she guarded them and watched over them as if they were her own daughters, and guided them to a better way of life.

"Several times I heard the pioneering Fathers remark that Dolong could stand out as a perfect woman, even if compared with the most advanced women in virtue in Europe; and all those who knew her extolled her virtuous life in glowing terms.

"What I can add is that no one outdid her in frequenting the church and in her reverence therein, always being on her knees until she reached an advanced age when she could no longer kneel for a long time.

"She was very devoted to the Blessed Sacrament and for many years she did not fail to receive Communion on Sundays and, outside of them, also on Holy Days when these fell on weekdays. This devotion prompted her to keep a finely wrought and very clean cloth which she did not use for any other purpose than that of putting it under her chin when she received Communion, nor did she ever use it for any other purpose, or permitted any one to touch it.

"On Communion days she kept herself recollected, without speaking to anyone except when it was very necessary. She left her room only to take her meals, returning to it at once.

"Because she had a daughter married to a wealthy Spaniard from Toledo, who lived in these towns for many years, she had a large household. But never did anyone in the house, or any stranger, whether a man or a woman, dare to utter in her presence or within her earshot any ill-sounding word because if anyone did, at once, although closetted in her room, she would go out and reprimand him sternly.

"Her conversation was only with God and about holy things. The Rosary never left her hands in her last years. She died when she was already over eighty years of age, only a few years before this writing. She prayed it continuously before an altar that she had in her private room. She recited this, among other prayers, before several images.

"Finally she died after having received the last sacraments and in the midst of much peace as if she had just fallen asleep, leaving behind a well-earned reputation of virtue and sanctity. And, as far as I can delve into this matter, I can say that in all that I saw in, and heard about her, I did not detect anything unbecoming of a great Christian. Rather she earnestly and without failing served and loved God. Such is the opinion of all those who were acquainted with her, and they widely proclaimed it after her passing.

Doña Catalina Lumai

"Although I always hold a high estimate of the virtue of the said Delong, and rightly so, yet, frankly, I have a still higher opinion of the virtue of her sister Lumai, not only because I was able to obtain a deeper knowledge about her life and habits—for I heard her general Confession several times and she gradually disclosed to me her feelings and manner of life—but also because she had more opportunities to manifest it.

"For, although she had been married for almost twenty years and had five sons and two daughters (the raising of children is not a little hindrance to give one's self to God) her life was so methodical and well-regulated all throughout that she may well be considered as a paradigm of a perfect woman. For God's hand has not been shortened. There being

many chosen souls in these parts, He could and would want to plant, cultivate and make bear fruit in this barren land of heathenism many plants fit for the garden of the Church militant and worthy of being transplanted afterwards to the church triumphant in heaven.

"After what we already have stated, if we go down to details, such as the deaths of her husband, of a son and of a daughter, and the captivity of another son (all of which took place while I was in Bangahun), I wonder whether among more highly educated people there could be found one more imbued with a greater conformity with the will of God.

"The captivity of her son, who was the second to the oldest, cost her many tears. For many days and months she was continually shedding tears in church where she used to stay till noon time, attending as many masses as were celebrated, for at times two or three ministers may chance to be in town. But when I thought such tears were the expression of her sorrow for her captured son, she replied with so many reflexions indicating resignation to and conformity with the will of God so that I did not know what to say. Then, she added: 'Father, I do not weep for the loss of my son but for his having been carried off by infidels who do know God; he is young and inexperienced, and I do not like that he should forsake God for anything in the world. I would feel it less if I were to see him dead, for then I would be sure of his salvation. But what I shall always regret and be sorry for is to see him alive and captive of infidels and away from the Fathers, from the Church and, if I may say so, from God.'

"The delicacy of these sentiments proves that they sprang from a person of burning faith and who could compete with St. Mónica with her tears, although with less comfort and no hope of seeing him again, as in fact she never saw nor heard of him for the rest of her life.

"Aside from the home chores and trials of a widowed woman, she was not wanting in trials and tribulations coming from those outside of her household. For, as she was and continued to be the teacher in town as long as she lived and a very zealous guardian of the purity of the Faith and good morals, she had to bear, as a matter of course, so many afflictions and sufferings from her fellow natives. In addition, there were the interior trials springing from her truly divine zeal which compelled her to restrain others from committing

sin. And so, it happened that if someone was punished or a woman was placed in a house for correctional purposes, the blame was laid on her—for it is quite common here to complain against those who best fulfill their duties and against the *maestras* (teachers) who are most exact in complying with their duties. Hence, these need a good deal of patience and endurance in order not to be overcome and not to slide down into the rut.

“Not only did she suffer from men but also from the devil himself who vexed her sometimes and threatened her very often. And although she could not tell whether the assaults were internal or external, since she did not actually see the devil, yet the suggestions, the fears and at times the pains that she described were not merely imaginary. Therefore, she always armed herself with blessed beads and medals and with many prayers to the Blessed Virgin and to our Father St. Ignatius, to whom she was extremely devoted. In honor of the Virgin she never failed to fast on Saturdays and on the vigils of her feasts.

“She never slackened or wavered in this way of life, for as long as she remained strong enough, that is, until she died, and this was three or four years ahead of her sister. That she died earlier is not surprising if we consider that she suffered much more than her.

“She breathed her last, comforted with the last sacraments, and with all the signs that could be expected, and even admired, in a devout Christian, and with clear assurances of her eternal salvation. In my opinion, I wonder whether any other Visayan has ever outdone her in virtue and fidelity to her Christian duties.”

Taken from: Francisco Ignacio Alcina, *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisayas* . . . 1668, Part Two, Book Three, Chapter 19 (Cf. *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XVII, No. 50, May-August, 1982, pp. 162-172).

DOCUMENTATION

BISHOP'S HOUSE
DIOCESE OF CABANATUAN
Cabanatuan City

PASTORAL LETTER **on the** **JUBILEE YEAR OF THE REDEMPTION**

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Cabanatuan:

1. With humility but with great faith in the Lord's goodness I write you this first Pastoral Letter as your new residential Bishop. I come to you as your father, shepherd and friend. I come, too, as one "sent in the service of communion and the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ" (cf. I Cor. 12:4-11).
2. Nothing could be more appropriate than that my first official concern with you be that of the Holy Year or Jubilee Year which was proclaimed by our Holy Father, John Paul II, to commemorate the one thousand and nine hundred fifty years of the Redemption event. This Jubilee Year was officially opened on March 25, 1983, the feast of the Annunciation and will end on Easter, April 24, 1984. I join the Holy Father in conveying to you this invitation to grace with these words that express the theme of this Holy Year: "OPEN THE DOORS TO THE REDEEMER!" For this purpose I enjoin all the Clergy, Religious and the Laity — all "CHRISTIFIDELES" (Christ's Faithful) — of this Diocese to join and enter into the celebration of this Holy Year in order to derive from it the fruits of METANOIA or conversion of heart.
3. This METANOIA or CONVERSION OF HEART is the main objective of this Holy Year. It implies *rediscovery* of God's priority in our lives, *renewal* of faith, *revival* of zeal for the care of souls, *re-strengthening* in our relationship with God, with one another, with our community and with the whole society both civil and ecclesiastical. Let this year be therefore a YEAR OF GRACE AND CONVERSION.

In the words of the Holy Father: "Let this year be a time of grace and salvation, by being more *intensely sanctified* by the acceptance of the **graces of the Redemption** on the part of the people of our time, through a spiritual renewal of the whole People of God, which has for its head CHRIST who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Bull of Indiction, Rome, 6 January 1983).

4. Specifically, for the Clergy, Seminarians and Religious, this Jubilee or Holy Year is an invitation for a more interiorized living of the Evangelical Counsels, a call to discover, appreciate and value the uniqueness of their call to be the "intimate friends of the Lord in the mystery of the Redemption" and to be the "specialists of the Gospel of love of Jesus" (El Salvador and Guatemala, 6 March 1983). To the Laity, this Holy Year is a call to both individuals and families, leaders in the parish and co-workers in the apostolate, teachers, catechists, formators of youth for Christian education, professionals of every field and social workers. The call is that of renewed faith and conversion of heart. In particular, that conversion of heart which must flow into the active apostolate is the pre-requisite for effecting unity and reconciliation in society, peace and justice in the world. (Bull of Indiction, N. 4).
5. During this Holy Year, therefore, we shall make as our main thrust in this Diocese this **CALL TO METANOIA**, in short, a complete conversion to God. The complete conversion to God, however, demands from man liberation from sin and the decision to live the Gospel. Necessarily, man has to turn to Mary, Christ's Mother, whose Immaculate Conception was given by God as a unique privilege so that she might give herself totally to Christ and in the service of the Kingdom of God and of the Church. The Church "admires in her the most excellent fruit of the Redemption discovering through this faultless model what the Church herself desires and aspires to be" (Liturgy, 103). Indeed, through Mary's intercession, man can overcome the Evil One and reject all his wiles and deceptions.
6. To make this year a true and effective time of grace, I decree the following special dispositions for the Diocese of Cabanatuan:

First, the Jubilee indulgence may be obtained by devoutly taking part in a Mass or any Liturgical Celebra-

tion organized either on the diocesan level or on the parish level. Other than the Mass or the Eucharistic Celebration the Faithful may gain the indulgence by actively participating in the following: Penitential Services, Way of the Cross, Penitential Processions, Prayer meetings presided by a Priest, Deacon, Religious, Major Seminarian, Lay Apostle or by a Catechist duly designated for this purpose by the Parish Priest. Care must be taken, however, that the **USUAL PRESCRIBED CONDITIONS** for gaining the indulgence be assiduously observed, namely: true contrition for sins duly confessed and the recitation of the Creed and the Our Father for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Secondly, the Jubilee Indulgence may be gained by *VISITING* either individually or collectively **ANY** of the following specially designated Churches of this Diocese.

1. Cathedral of St. Nicolas of Tolentine Cabanatuan
2. Divina Pastora Shrine Gapan
3. Holy Rosary Church Calaba, San Isidro
4. Our Lady of Salera Church Aliaga
5. Sta. Cecilia Church Palayan City
6. St. John the Apostle Church Guimba
7. San Jose Church San Jose City

We enjoin the respective pastors of the Churches of pilgrimage to undertake the following:

1. To designate a place where pilgrims will start walking on their way to the Church.
2. To take charge of receiving the pilgrims and of doing some liturgical services such as giving homily, conducting Bible Service on Penance or performing benedictions.

Furthermore, we encourage all pastors to undertake any or all of the following activities according to the conditions of their parishes.

1. Holy Mission
2. Recollection
3. Catechetical instructions of different age or group levels
4. Bible Study
7. I wish also to make special provisions for those who may not be able to participate in the above-mentioned activities.

We take as our own the following special concessions granted by the Bull of Indiction:

First, those who for reasons of health cannot visit one of the churches indicated earlier, they can gain the Jubilee indulgence by a visit to their own parish church (Bull, n. 11).

Secondly, for the sick prevented from making such a visit altogether, it is enough that they join spiritually in the act for gaining the Jubilee indulgence made by members of their own family or by their parish, offering their prayers and sufferings to God, or by sharing with the less fortunate brethren their time, talent, or treasures.

Third, the same concession is granted to the elderly who cannot leave the house any longer and to prisoners.

Fourth, Cloistered Religious can obtain the Jubilee indulgence in their own monastery by devoutly celebrating a community liturgical act.

I pray that this Holy Year be for all of us a real celebration of the event of our Redemption and that it may "bring about a spiritual renewal of individuals, families, parishes and dioceses, of religious communities and other centres of Christian life and Apostolate" (Bull, n. 10). I impart to you all my pastoral blessing.

† CICERON SM. TUMBOCON, D.D.
Bishop of Cabanatuan

Given at the Bishop's House, Cabanatuan City, this 16th day of May 1983.

N.B. To be read in all churches and public oratories and to be copied in the Book of Providences and Episcopal Orders.

POPE'S PRAYER FOR HOLY YEAR

Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who took your body from the Virgin Mary and became Man through the power of the Holy Spirit! Jesus Christ, Redeemer of man! You who are the same yesterday and today and for ever! Accept this Year of the Extraordinary Jubilee, which your Church offers to you in order to celebrate the 1950th anniversary of your death and Resurrection for the Redemption of the world. You who made the work of Redemption the source of a gift that is ever new for your earthly Spouse, cause its saving power to penetrate all the days, weeks and months of this Year, so that this Year may truly become for us the "acceptable year of the Lord".

Grant that all of us in this chosen time may love you ever more by re-living in ourselves the mysteries of your life, from your conception and birth until the Cross and Resurrection. Be with us through these mysteries, be with us in the Holy Spirit, do not leave us orphans! Come back to us always (cf. Jn. 14:18).

Grant that all may be converted to Love, and see in you, the Son of eternal Love, the Father who is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4). In the course of this year, may the whole Church feel the abundance of your Redemption, which is manifested in the forgiveness of sins and in purification from their after-effects which weigh upon the souls called to life immortal. Help us to conquer our indifference and our sloth! Give back to us the sensitivity of the Saints. Create in us, O Lord, a pure heart, and renew a willing spirit in our minds (cf. Ps. 51 (50):12).

Grant, O Lord, that this Holy Year of your Redemption may also become an appeal to the modern world, which sees justice and peace on the horizon of its desires, — and yet yields ever more room to sin and lives, day after day, in the midst of mounting tensions and threats, and seems to be travelling in a direction perilous for all! Help us to change the direction of the mounting threats and disasters in the modern world! Raise man up once more! Protect the nations and peoples! Do not permit the work of destruction that threatens humanity today!

O Lord Jesus Christ, may the work of your Redemption show itself more powerful! This the Church implores from you, in this Year, through your Mother, whom you yourself gave to be Mother of all humanity. This the Church implores from you in the mystery of the Communion of Saints. This your Church implores from you insistently, O Christ! May the work of your Redemption show itself more powerful both in humanity and in the world! Amen.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines: A Report

by His Excellency

Most Rev. Antonio LI. Mabutas, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao

President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

My greetings to all of you! *"Ecce quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum."*

This Report covers the first semester of the year 1983. We may call it a troubled period, or, if we wish to be positive, a period of dialogue; but it is also characterized by a more visible solidarity among the Philippine bishops which gave our people greater trust and confidence in their pastoral leaders.

Allow me first to introduce the new additions to the Philippine Hierarchy. We welcome the Most Rev. Vicente Manuel, of the new Vicariate of San Jose, Mindoro, into this collegiate Assembly. We also welcome the most recent addition — the Most Rev. Francisco San Diego, designated Coadjutor-Bishop, C.I.S., to the Vicar Apostolic of Palawan. Likewise, we congratulate the Most Rev. Protacio Gungon, the first Residential Bishop of the Diocese of Antipolo.

We thank the Holy Father and his representative to the Philippines, our Apostolic Nuncio, for promoting this visible growth of the Church in the Philippines.

The CBCP is bereaved with the demise of our beloved Julio Cardinal Rosales. He was one of the main stalwarts of the CBCP, of which he had been the President for several years. In his many years in the CBCP, which formerly and originally was the Catholic Welfare Organization, he barely missed its annual and semi-annual meetings and participated actively in its deliberations. We will certainly miss him — his sound judgments, his gentle admonitions, his edifying piety as well as

his jokes and his songs. We will never forget the last song he sang for us during our last Assembly during Holy Mass at the Chapel — the Ave Maria. One of these days, we will offer, as a College, a Requiem Mass for his eternal repose.

We also miss the presence of our revered Bishop Vicente Reyes, of happy memory, also a senior member of the CBCP, whose work in the Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate will never be forgotten. We will also offer a Requiem Mass for his eternal repose.

Now, to update our count of the Philippine Hierarchy, I give you the following figures:

Members of the CBCP with Active Participation

Ordinaries of Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions	67
Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops	31
Retired Bishops with National Office	1
Retired Bishops who are Vicars General	4
Total	103

Retired Bishops with Passive Participation 7

I would like to congratulate Your Excellencies for the very substantial and fruitful work done during the past General Assembly of January 1983. The Holy See had acknowledged receipt of the Minutes of this Assembly and had noted the solidarity of the bishops and the far-reaching decisions arrived at during the Assembly.

Indeed, we had been too busy during the past Assembly that we had been working in our Workshops past the dates scheduled for them. Some of us had to leave, including myself, during the overtime work because of another scheduled international Meeting of the CIDSE, a federation of funding agencies. I announced, however, that there would still be a post-Assembly Meeting at the Villa San Miguel not only for the Administrative Board members but for all bishops then present in Manila to get a clearer recording of what was deliberated upon during the previous days. This was effectively done.

During the past General Assembly, we voted to dissociate ourselves from the Church-Military Liaison Committee with which we had been having dialogue because of an apparent pattern of government pressure on Church people and Church activities. The reason was that the CMLC was of Martial Law

vintage and we would want to expand the dialogues to other sectors of our society. Effectively, during the CMLC Meeting that followed, the Church panel presented our dissociation from the CMLC according to the decision of our CBCP General Assembly and for the reasons that I have just cited. Instead, the CMLC voted to dissolve the CMLC itself, a unanimous decision reached upon by all the CMLC members.

With the dissolution of the CMLC, the Public Affairs' Committee of the CBCP took over in an expanded dialogue with government officials and other sectors of society on matters of public concern.

The first of such dialogues is with the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference. Surveys on the socio-economic situation being conducted by the BBC have revealed cases crying out for justice. They noted the widening chasm between the rich and the poor, the reality of unemployment, the problems of malnutrition, of hunger, of violations of human rights. What strike our attention in the conclusions of the BBC Assembly are the grave social problems related to land, work, ideologies and violence, which are considered major problems. On the positive side, however, the businessmen have some suggestions for the development of our people — which I presume, have been sent to all the bishops.

During the past Assembly, we voted to issue a Pastoral Letter to our people which we later entitled "*Dialogue for Peace*" and, as a complement to this Letter, to issue another document entitled "*Guidelines for Priests, Religious and Church Workers*". These two documents express the consensus of the bishops on their prophetic role in the mission of the Church. This was discussed in our Workshops, drafted by a Committee we elected for this purpose, revised and re-worded at the Workshops and at the post-Assembly Meeting held at Villa San Miguel, re-studied by the Drafting Committee and put into its final form by the Administrative Board.

The Pastoral Letter "*Dialogue for Peace*" finally came out on February 20, 1983, the first Sunday of Lent. It created not only ripples but waves throughout the country and throughout the world. Some segments of the national and international media have seen it as an exposé of the social ills of the Philippines, as a direct challenge to the political government for reforms. The bishops conceived it, however, as a dialogue for peace, asking the restructuring and consolidation of our society

according to God's plan for man, the world and society; an appeal to all to respond to God's continuing call to life and freedom and fulness of life.

Until now the CBCP continues to receive encouraging letters from many Episcopal Conferences throughout the world and feedback from here and abroad. The Pastoral Letter was even translated into several languages and reprinted everywhere. The latest was the printing of the entire Pastoral Letter by the development agencies in Australia, Canada, London, Ireland and Scotland.

The President of the Philippines reacted in a rather positive way to the Pastoral Letter. Though he said in my subsequent meeting with him that he did not totally agree with the conclusions we stated in the Letter on the Church's mission, he called on the Church to participate in the various human development programs of the government. He submitted to the bishops a thick list of the various programs of the government in the different regions of the Philippines where the bishops could participate in.

This was not exactly what the bishops asked for in the Pastoral Letter. We were asking for reforms in the government to enable it to stave off poverty from amongst our people and to give justice and dignity and human rights to individuals.

As to the President's offer for participation in human development, I quote here what I wrote and read to him during the meeting, hoping that I will not be misquoted:

"The bishops feel that they are more effective and even more helpful to good government — if they continue exercising their spiritual and moral leadership and the teachings of the Social Encyclicals of the Church to our people.

They fear that some of the socio-economic programs are politicized or even run counter to the teachings of the Church.

The bishops have their own social action programs and social action centers geared towards total human development. The government could perhaps facilitate these social action programs in one way or the other; our social action centers are actually now coordinating with agencies of the government which have the same thrusts and objectives."

Finally, I proposed that the government programs as are now given be studied by the Public Affairs' Committee, especially the recommendations/proposals for specific regions, and later be discussed in the General Assembly.

The Administrative Council and most of our Episcopal Commissions and Committees have been working very hard on our pastoral programs. The Administrative Council has decided to endorse to the Body the integration of Commissions into ten (10), instead of clustering the existing Commissions. We received further suggestions and all of these will be thrown to the General Assembly and the Workshops to arrive at a consensus or, at least, a majority approval.

Similarly, the ECERI had worked heroically on the NCDP this past semester — after working on it for several years now, on the mandate of this Assembly. It subjected the NCDP, which was re-drafted to include the suggestions and observations of the bishops during the last General Assembly, to further study criticisms, corrections, so that now it could be presented to this Assembly in its final form.

Our Social Action Commission has worked courageously to put our social action programs in the proper direction and orientation which the Church and the bishops have delineated for them, referring strongly to the Social Encyclicals. It is succeeding to some degree. However, the Commission itself admits that it has to introduce more modifications and corrections gradually and prudently.

We also observed a strengthening of our spirituality programs. Priests' Renewal Courses, Spirituality Programs in Seminaries, Bible Classes for Lay People, Adult Evangelization Classes, Charismatic Renewals have picked up momentum. In my personal opinion, it might require a closer coordination of the Commission on the Clergy, the ECERI, the Bible Commission and the National Committee on Charismatics to supervise and deepen this momentum.

My dear colleagues, I wish to congratulate you on this — that the CBCP has now a building of its own in Intramuros, the former MIC building used by SAIDI. The transactions were already finalized and right now we are beginning to transfer our equipments to this new building. The NASSA, the CRS, the SCAPS, the FLA are already there. By the time we return to Manila, the CBCP Secretariate will have to transfer. The

third floor is reserved for the Commissions and for a big conference hall which could accommodate us all in a General Assembly. However, for lack of funds, we have to go very slowly with the improvements at the third floor. Thus, the transfer of the Commissions will have to be gradual.

In this connection, I wish to thank Your Excellencies for your generosity in giving the one-year earnings of your "*mana*" and the Pension Plan Committee for expediting the acquisition of the property. We thank also the MISEREOR, the MISSIO, the PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH — for their big financial help, thus enabling us to acquire the property without debts.

May I also take this occasion to thank the Archdiocese of Manila, through His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin, for ceding to the CBCP its right to re-acquire the MIC property and for its generous offer to use the Guest House of the Archdiocese of Manila as our headquarters for the past years.

We have received letters from the Secretariat of State and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops on the urgency of acting on the more important provisions of the New Code of Canon Law, which are left to the decision of the Episcopal Conference. Since the new Code of Canon Law begins to be obligatory by November 1983, we have to make some collegial decisions on the above matters a priority in this Assembly.

Since this may be my last Report — as this meeting is also an election meeting — I wish to thank Your Excellencies for your fraternal understanding and ever-ready collaboration that led to a stronger and closer solidarity in our episcopal College.

I could sincerely say we all tried our best — the Administrative Board, the Secretariate, the Commission Chairmen and Members, all the Bishops. Your participation in our Assemblies and Meetings have been very edifying and fruitful. May this spirit continue to characterize our dear CBCP.

Thank you.

Reconciliation Today

1. *Introduction*

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."

(Lk. 3:4)

At no time in our country's recent history has this Advent cry been more poignant and imperative. The publication of our 1983 Pastoral Letter, *Dialogue for Peace*, calling for discernment on the root causes of social unrest, the conclusion of the 1983 Synod of the world's Bishops in Rome on Reconciliation and Penance, the Feast of Christ the King, whose Kingdom is one of Love and Justice — these ecclesial events gain greater significance in the light of our massive social and political unrest.

Many events have pushed our country closer to the brink of chaos and anarchy. Among these events are numerous unexplained killings, the heinous crime of assassination at the Manila International Airport, the worsening economic insecurities brought about by inflation and devaluation, the widespread clamor for justice dramatized by all sectors of our society through rallies, demonstrations and strikes.

2. *The Task of the Church — Reconciliation*

Yet we believe that in the mysterious ways of God the movement towards national reconciliation that tragedy has given birth to is a providential grace from God, the Lord of our history.

The whole believing community must never cease being a prophet of reconciliation. We rejoice that the laity has taken the initiative in the socio-economic and political sphere.

As Church leaders, we address ourselves to the issues facing the process of reconciliation. We are firmly convinced that the moral and religious dimensions are the sphere proper to our teaching.

Sharing "in the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties" (GS 1) of the flock, as the Lord did, we continue to announce the Gospel in the light of our existential situation.

We reiterate the need for reconciliation as an alternative to the continuance of present injustice and violence which would pit brother against brother in a bloodbath of revolution where the Gospel ethic of love would undeniably be sacrificed.

3. *The Evangelical Bases of Reconciliation and the Issues*

For us, the plan of God "is that we should live as one family in justice, truth, freedom and love (Message of the Synod of Bishops, 1983). These are the underlying values of reconciliation — values of God's reign that we are called to realize ever more fully in our midst.

True reconciliation can take place only in truth, sincerity, freedom and justice. To the extent that these values are not realized in our society, reconciliation would only be a shallow veneer.

Hence, in the dialogue towards genuine reconciliation, first of all, there can be no room for deceptive propaganda and lies. The situation calls for the full exercise of freedom for media and communication.

Secondly, our people's basic human and political rights as guaranteed by our constitution must be respected. Any political compromise to the contrary would be self-destructive of the common good.

Thirdly, with the freedom to dissent, there must be openness to listen and understand our people's problems and honest sincerity in effecting needed reforms.

Following these general principles based on the Gospel values of freedom, truth and justice, we specifically urge the restoration of the writ of *habeas corpus*, a repeal of repressive decrees violative of due process and our basic rights. We echo the call for open and honest elections. We ask for a constitutional solution to the issue of presidential succession and an end to graft and corruption which have eroded the credibility of government.

In all these, we ask only that the common good of 50 million Filipinos be placed above the petty and narrow interests of any political family or party.

It is for all of us and for our integral liberation that the Lord Himself gave up His life.

4. *Love and Genuine Reconciliation*

If genuine reconciliation requires truth, freedom, and justice, it demands above all the Gospel force of love. Love is at once the motivating force and the objective of authentic reconciliation. It is love that prepares the way of the Lord, makes straight His path into the human heart and into the heart of society. It is love that impels true conversion of heart, the transformation of selfish self into the self-for-others, of a sinful society with its unjust structures into one that is truly a servant of the people.

For at the root of division, deception, and deprivation is sin, both personal and social. And love is God's healing, transforming and redeeming grace.

5. *Challenge and Call*

Because we believe in the Gospel values of truth, freedom, justice, and love, we call for a return to these values; without them we are neither true believers nor disciples of the Lord.

We ask those in mass media to be conscious of their dignity as disseminators of truth and so fulfill their duty in accordance with the dictates of a properly formed conscience.

We ask those in charge of elections, especially the teachers who tend the polls to respect and uphold the integrity of the ballots.

We call upon the military and para-military forces to demonstrate that their loyalty is not to any individual, nor to itself as an institution, but to the Filipino people and to accept fully the principle of civilian supremacy at all levels of political and economic life.

We call for the austerity and simplicity of life that is demanded by the Gospel, for a true poverty of spirit, for repentance and effective conversion.

We call for the social transformation required by authentic reconciliation with God and with one another. We call for a genuine listening and responding to the needs of our people.

We echo the Message of the recent Synod of Bishops: "we may have the will to achieve change of heart but not the power. We call on those who have the power to summon up the necessary will to give a more just and peaceful society."

Finally, appropriate at the beginning of Advent, let us redouble our prayers and practices of penance and mortification, for reconciliation is principally an action of grace and a response of man.

It is our hope that as we re-consecrate our people to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the coming Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Lord may answer our prayers through her intercession for a reconciliation based on truth, freedom, justice and love.

(SGD.) ANTONIO MABUTAS, D.D.
Archbishop of Davao
President, CBCP
November 27, 1983

A Statement of the
Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
Administrative Council on

The 1984 Plebiscite and Election

TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD:

1. Very soon we will be faced once again with political exercises in the form of a Plebiscite on January 27, 1984 and the Batasan elections in May, 1984. Knowing that these political exercises will take place at a time of national crisis, we deem it our duty as your Pastors to write these few words by way of guiding you in the moral choices you will have to make.

2. We are not unaware of the fact that there are those who advocate boycott of both the Plebiscite and the Batasan elections. They argue that participating is another implicit ratification of the 1973 Constitution whose validity they question. They object that the idea of a Vice Presidency is a mere amendment of that same Constitution. They would refuse to participate as long as the present President is in office. They perceive a foreign government intervention in both the succession issue and the Batasan elections. In a word, they consider these political exercises as useless, ineffective, diversionary, and even immoral.

3. However, there are also those who see a more favorable climate through an aroused citizenry in the aftermath of the Aquino assassination. They believe that radical changes must indeed take place in our society, but that these changes must be achieved through non-violent means. They point to the *de facto* effectivity of the 1973 Constitution and desire to change what needs to be changed through the use of this *de facto* situation. Thus with the greatest seriousness and urgency, they believe that participation in the electoral processes in these most critical of times may be the last viable hope for the peaceful alternative to any violent approach for change. They think that non-participation may be playing into the hands of those who advocate change through violent revolution. Some have volun-

teered their services in a nationwide campaign to ensure free and honest elections. Among their hopes are a more independent COMELEC, a new voters' list, and a massive citizens' action policing the polls.

4. As Bishops we have in the past emphasized the moral duty to vote in an election. This is a general norm operative under normal conditions. Still, it is not for us to tell you concretely whom to vote for or indeed whether or not to vote in these undoubtedly far from normal times. That decision is reserved to the individual conscience.

5. But we do want to express certain concerns from the viewpoint of personal and social responsibility. Therefore, in part reiterating some ideas we have issued in the past (e.g. Statement of the CBCP on the Referendum of February 27, 1975), we now offer the following guidelines.

5.1. In the light of the unusual circumstances in our country today, the right of citizens not to participate in political exercises they consider contrary to the dictates of conscience has to be respected. Any penalty on those who fail to vote or who abstain from voting and openly express their stand should be suspended.

5.2. All those involved in the electoral process (COMELEC, poll officers and watchers, and others) are accountable both to God and to our people in preserving the sanctity of the ballot.

5.3. There must be free public discussion of the vital issues involved for a sufficient period of time.

5.4. Every citizen should be afforded the opportunity freely to express his views, know the views of others and discuss them with an assurance from the government that no man shall be imprisoned or subjected to threats of imprisonment or other forms of reprisal for exercising his right to free speech or peaceful assembly.

5.5. Civil government and the military establishment, especially in rural areas, must heed the clamor of our people by ensuring the proper climate of freedom and fair play. They must desist from any action that would frighten the citizenry and deprive them effectively of their basic freedom.

5.6. The power to supervise voting, canvassing, publishing of results should be entrusted to a reputable

and acceptable body, manned by persons of competence, integrity and impartiality.

5.7. A new, clean and honest list of voters must be prepared with the help of concerned citizens, and genuine citizen participation in the conduct of the plebiscite and election must be organized.

5.8. In these hard times the temptation is great to let money determine the outcome of the polls. It is always immoral to sell one's vote or to buy votes.

5.9. Our country is a sovereign nation. Its history of freedom is marked by struggles against foreign domination. No foreign power is to meddle with our political sovereignty by attempting to determine in any way the conduct of our electoral processes.

6. We appeal to the citizenry as a whole to act responsibly and vigilantly, having foremost in mind the common good rather than their individual selfish interest. Let this be the norm in all decisions whether they are participating in the elections or not.

7. Finally, we suggest that both before the plebiscite and the elections a day be set aside as a day of prayer. We end by invoking the Holy Spirit for guidance that everyone concerned will rise to the challenge that is before us in a spirit of genuine patriotism and social responsibility.

God bless you all.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference
of the Philippines Administrative Council:

† ANTONIO MABUTAS, D.D.
President

Manila, January 8, 1984

CREATION OF THE DIOCESE OF ANTIPOLLO

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

ad perpetuam rei memoriam

Quoniam in recte regendis dioecesis maxime cavendum est ut « bonum dominici gregis sit suprema ratio » (CD, 25), proinde, ad earum circumscriptionem quod attinet, « decernit Sacrosancta Synodus ut, quatenus animarum bonum id exigat, quamprimum ad congruam recognitionem prudenter deveniatur, eas dividendo vel dismembrando... » (*Ibid.*, 22). Quo expeditius igitur omnibus provideretur fidelibus intra fines Ecclesiae Manilensis in praesentia degentibus, eorum pastor Venerabilis frater Noster Jacobus S.R.E. Cardinalis Sin, consulta et audita Conferentia Episcopali Insularum Philippinarum, nuper ab Apostolica hac Sede postulare non dubitavit, ut quadam suae archidioecesis portione illic nova conderetur dioecesis. Quapropter, eiusmodi rei assentiente venerabili fratre Brunone Torpigliani Archiepiscopo titulo Mallianensi et Nuntio Apostolico in Insulis Philippinis, suppleto autem consensu quorum interest vel interesse censetur, de consilio Venerabilium fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praepositorum deque plenitudine potestatis Nostrae Apostolicae hisce Litteris ea decernimus quae sequuntur atque iubemus. Ab archidioecesi Manilensi regionem distrahimus vulgo « East Rizal » appellatam, ex eaque novam condimus dioecsim « Antipolensem » appellandam iisdemque circumscriptam finibus, quibus memorata continetur civilis regio, necnon Sedem episcopalem in urbe cui nomen Antipollo statuimus, simul atque templum paroeciale ibi Deo in honorem B.M.V. vulgo « Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage » exstans ad cathedralis templi dignitatem evehimus propriisque insignibus et privilegiis et honoribus instruimus. Pariter Antipolensi pro tempore Episcopo tum iura et honores tribuimus tum officia et onera imponimus cuiusque Episcopi tali munere fungentis. Antipolensem autem dioecsim ut suffraganeam Ecclesiae Manilensi subicimus, quare et metropolitico Archiepiscopi Manilensis iuri suffraganeus pro tempore Episcopus obnoxius erit. Praeterea, quo maiori decori et utilitati novae Ecclesiae consulamus, decernimus ut posthac in ea ad normas alio decreto edendas capitulum cathedrale instituatur; concedimus tamen ut, quamdiu deerit, dioecesani ibidem Consultores ad statutas normas eligantur interim

pro canonicorum senatu. Ad episcopalem novae dioecesis mensam quod spectat, iubemus ut constet tum Curiae emolumentis fideliumque stipibus tum iusta portione, secundum can. 1500 C.I.C. aestimanda, sibi perventura e divisione bonorum hucusque ad Manilensem mensam pertinentium. Ipsi mandamus ut in iis, quae ad Seminarii dioecesani aedificationem et ad sacrorum candidatorum formationem respiciunt, iuris communis praescripta atque concilii Vaticani II Decreti « Optatam totius » normae serventur, ratione tamen habita legum a Sacra Congregatione pro Institutione Catholica editarum. Selecti vero alumni philosophicis et theologicis disciplinis instruendi aut sacerdotes sua studia completuri ad Pontificium Collegium Philippinum mittantur in Urbe situm. Simul de regimine novae dioecesis, de administratione, de eligendo Vicario Capitulari sede vacante, de fidelium iuribus aut oneribus aliisque id genus, sacri canones plane serventur. Hoc demum lege sancimus, ut, constitutione dioecesis Antipolensis ad effectum deducta, presbyteri ei censeantur Ecclesiae adscripti, in qua ecclesiasticum officium ud beneficium habent; ceteri clerici necnon Seminarii alumni ei ad dicantur dioecesi intra cuius fines legitimum habent domicilium. De cetero praecipimus ut actorum documenta, quae aut de nova dioecesi eiusve clero et fidelibus aut de bonis temporalibus indicant, a Curia Manilensi ad Curiam Antipolensem nunc transmittantur, ut in condendo ibidem tabulario rite asserventur. Quae omnia per has Litteras statuimus exsequatur memoratus venerabilis frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem designamus debitisque instruimus facultatibus, cui et facultatem facimus idem officium delegandi alii viro in ecclesiastica dignitate constituto, addito tamen onere curandi ut certa et vera peractae executionis documentorum exempla ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis transmittantur. Has denique Apostolicas Litteras et nunc et in posterum ratas esse volumus, contrariis quibuslibet haud obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quarto et vicesimo mensis Februarii anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo tertio, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

† CAROLUS CARD. CONFALONIERI
Sacri Collegi Decanus

† SEBASTIAN CARD. BAGGIO
*S. Congr. pro Episcopis
Praefectus*

MARCELLUS ROSSETTI,
Proton. Apost.

HYGINUS QUADRAROLI,
Proton. Apost. s.n.

APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. PROTACIO GUNGRON

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Venerabili fratri PROTACIO GUNGRON, hactenus Episcopo titulo Obbensi atque Auxiliari Archiepiscopi Manilensis, electo sacrorum Antistiti Antipolensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui haud secus ac Gentium Apostolus sollicitudine premimur omnium Ecclesiarum, in eas tamen, quas Ipsimet Nos constituimus, maiore quandam cura et diligentia operamur, cum Nobis sacri deligendi sunt Pastores. Cumque cathedrali Ecclesiae Antipolensi primus praeficiendus esset sacer Pastor, visum est Nobis te, Venerabilis frater, ad eandem regendam et gubernandam destinari posse, cuius et animi et ingenii ornamenta comperta habemus rerumque pastoralium usum. De sententia igitur Venerabilis fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis praefecti, apostolica Nostra potestate te, Venerabilis frater, vinculo Ecclesiae titulo Obbensis absolvimus, teque Episcopum ANTIPOLENSEM nominamus atque sollemniter renuntiamus, factis iuribus obligationibusque impositis, quae ad dignitatem tuam hanc atque officium pertinent. Ab iteranda fidei professione exemptus, de more ius iurandum fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros dabis ad liturgicas normas, formulamque ad quam iuraveris mittes ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis rite signatam sigilloque impressam. Mandamus praeterea ut hae Litterae Nostrae clero ac populo in cathedralis dioecesis tuae templo perlegantur die festo de praeepto; quos dilectos filios et filias, occasione capta, enixe hortamur ut te, qui dehinc eris eorum pastor et pater et doctor, summa excipiant veneratione, tuaque mandata, quae eorum utilitati dederis, diligentissime ad effectum deducant. In te denique, Venerabilis frater, inque procuratori tuae commissos fideles omnipotentis Dei gratiam et opem impetramus, quo uberiores in dies tribuat de pastoralibus operibus tuis colligi fructus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesima quarta mensis Januarii anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo tertio, Pontificatus Nostri quinto.

† CAROLUS CARD. CONFALONIERI
Sacri Collegi Decanus

MARCELLUS ROSSETTI,
Protonot. Apost.

ARZOBISPADO DE MANILA

P.O. Box 132, Manila

C. No. 25
S. 1983

1. CATHOLIC TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

Dear Reverend Monsignor/Father:

A growing number of our Filipino women seem to be getting interested in marrying foreigners who often turn to be divorcees and do not share our Catholic view on the indissolubility of marriage. And these women seem to have a confused or even a totally wrong concept of the Church's teaching about divorce.

May we enjoin you, therefore, to remind your faithful of the teaching of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage and on divorce.

Any marriage, even that of non-Catholics or non-Christians contracted outside the Catholic Church, is an indissoluble, lifelong union of husband and wife.

Civil divorce, therefore, is regarded by the Catholic Church as of no value whatsoever. A divorcee can never get married in the Catholic Church on the strength of the decree of civil divorce alone.

Indeed there are some divorcees who were remarried in the Church. But they were remarried not in the strength of their civil divorce but by virtue of the declaration of some competent Catholic Matrimonial Tribunal or by their bishops because their previous marriages were null and void from the very beginning. Yes, there were some marriages which appear to be valid, but upon careful scrutiny were proven invalid from the very beginning. Such marriages can be declared null and void only by a competent Matrimonial Tribunal or in some exceptional cases by the Ordinary of the place.

So a Catholic before even entertaining to marry a previously married person must see to it that the other party have a declaration from a Competent Catholic Matrimonial Tribunal or his bishop that he is free to marry.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

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

Manila, September 8, 1983

2. RE: GUEST PRIESTS

Aware of the great number of priests residing in the Archdiocese of Manila, either diocesan priests not incardinated in the Archdiocese or priests not belonging to any religious house within the boundaries of the Archdiocese, and happy about the tremendous amount of help in the apostolate that these priests could and are in fact, giving, I quote Statute n. 35 of the Synod of Manila of 1979:

"Priests not belonging to the Archdiocese are heartily welcomed as brother priests. However, for the sake of unity and the edification of the People of God, they must follow conscientiously all policies of the Archdiocese."

It is to the second part of the Statute that I would like to call the attention of all the parish priests and rectors of Churches as well as the guest priests themselves.

While, on the one hand, we are concerned about possible abuses and the confusion that they would cause to our Catholic faithful, on the other hand, some prescriptions of Church law explicitly require the local Ordinary to ask from priests staying in a diocese other than their own, the necessary papers from their proper Ordinary, particularly with regard to hearing confessions of the faithful (c. 971) and celebrating Mass (c. 903).

Therefore, we request all priests, not incardinated in the Archdiocese of Manila or not belonging to any religious house within the boundaries of the Archdiocese to obtain from their own local Ordinary or Religious Superior a letter of recommendation, dated not more than one year ago from date of this letter, allowing them to be absent from their diocese or religious house, and during their stay in the Archdiocese to perform the priestly functions. We ask the cooperation of our parish priests and rectors of churches especially those who have guest priests staying with them to facilitate the gathering of these letters of recommendation, copies of which should be submitted to our Chancery.

(Continued on page 265)

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF BACOLOD

Dear Bishop Fortich,
Dear Priests, Religious, Laity of Bacolod,
My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The golden jubilee of a diocese as important as Bacolod is an occasion to comprehend not only the history of a city but also of the nation to which she belongs.

Bacolod City today is caught up in the concerted challenge of citizen movements who desire to knit together the broken spirit of our nation. The peaceful marches taking place in city after city of our archipelago symbolize the collective yearnings of our people to live with dignity in a society where freedom, truth and justice flourish. The people's demonstrations bring to mind the ancient longing of God's chosen people as recorded in the Book of Exodus (chapter eight) —

Then the Lord said to Moses:
Obtain audience with the Pharaoh and say to him,
Thus says the Lord:
'How long are you going to refuse to submit to me?
Let my people go that they may serve me.
For if you refuse to let them go
and continue to detain them,
The hand of the Lord will fall on you and
your courtiers...'

The critical times we now confront likewise recalls the observation made at the time of the French Revolution by Charles

* Speech of his Eminence Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Bacolod City (6 December 1983).

Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . . It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness." Indeed, we are now experiencing what seems to be the worst of times — thousands of workers losing their jobs with thousands more confronting a similar fate come Christmas and the New Year; financial analysts are warning foreign businesses not to make new investments in the country in the next four years. We are seeing more beggars along our highways, many of them malnourished children forced to sell pornography to earn their next meal. Our farmers are complaining of the high cost of fertilizers while parents worry over the safety of their families in the face of a mounting crime rate. And I am informed that the worst is still to come.

What happened then to that dream of a new and better society? What prosperity can we now claim in compensation for eleven years of diminished rights and freedom? What international prestige can we boast of, now that our country lies prostrate before the stringent demands of foreign creditors?

To answer these questions, the political leadership assigns the root causes of our problems to external economic factors. On the other hand, the business sector's view is that internal political instability is to blame. But our Bishops diagnosed our problem as a moral failure of our political and economic systems. Listen to their statement on "Reconciliation Today" given on the First Sunday of Advent. This is being echoed by our people: for every placard being waved to demand material benefits, there are ten to be seen asking for moral reforms in government and for the return of those moral values that undergird our way of life.

With the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and with the sentiments of a large segment of our people, I also submit that the problem confronting us today is basically a moral one. The indignation being expressed by our people is moral in essence. The survival of the nation rests not on economic craftsmanship but on moral statesmanship.

For this nation was founded on the Christian propositions of justice, truth and freedom. It was the molding power of Christian values that unified our various communities into one sovereign nation. Our Christian faith humanized our material achievements within the bounds of justice and charity. Our frontiers became the frontiers of Christianity in Asia and the Pacific.

To preserve our heritage, it is of paramount importance to shift our national discourse from the economic to the moral, from the external to the internal. The continued reduction of our national dialogue into the narrow perceptions of economics devoid of moral criteria will doom all efforts towards a proper solution. Such an approach can only lead to a negative utopia where genuine politics gives way to technical control at the expense of the creative genius of our people. True progress lies in the hearts, minds and spirit of the citizenry, not in a State practicing an amoral politics where coercive power is used to dehumanize its citizens.

It is the mark of immaturity to attribute one's problems mainly to external causes, thereby avoiding the honesty and courage required for internal reforms. In asserting the primacy of the moral over the economic and in demanding the priority of internal moral reforms over financial solutions that help only the rich — our people are showing the maturity of their political perception and the nobility of their ethical perspectives. Does the government still possess the moral resources to match this high level attained by the collective aspirations of our people?

Our people aspire for a government that abides by the moral code that distinguishes a civilized society from a barbaric one. This cannot be attained so long as presidential decree number 1834 and the like continue to threaten our humanity as a civilized people.

Our people have embarked on a glorious enterprise to give their children an educational heritage founded on moral principles. This cannot be attained so long as the State's educational leadership remains impervious to the nation's sense of moral propriety and accountability.

Our people are ready to make more sacrifices in order to attain economic progress and political stability. This cannot be attained so long as the State's economic policies endanger the sovereignty and freedom of our nation.

It should be clear by now that the moral priorities of a free people are not to be subordinated to political and economic concerns; morality is the essential human activity that civilizes politics and humanizes economics. An understanding of this by both government and people constitutes the first step towards genuine national reconciliation.

Many have been asking recently whatever happened to our proposal for national reconciliation. Therefore, with your kind indulgence, I wish to review on the occasion of your golden jubilee as a diocese, the status of our efforts along these lines.

The concept of national reconciliation emerged not from a political matrix but from moral and pastoral imperatives. It is the God-given task of Holy Mother the Church to unite her children in bonds of charity and brotherhood. The mechanics for its implementation would depend, not on divisive confrontations that often characterize negotiating sessions but on the solidarity that results from a shared meal and which is pre-eminently symbolized by the sacrament of God's covenant of love. Thus, the hallmarks of true national reconciliation are forgiveness not hatred; humility not pride; brotherhood not class conflicts; truth not falsehood. In the concrete implementation of national reconciliation, political processes would not be superseded but enriched by that moral leaven which works within society to safeguard its democratic traditions.

The dynamism inherent in this concept has given birth to many initiatives from many sectors of our society. For example, the business sector has come up with a National Recovery Commission; the political minority in the Batasan has proposed a parliamentary mechanism for reconciliation. Our Protestant brethren are calling for a Citizens' Council for National Renewal.

Moreover, this dream of a reconciled nation has won the enthusiastic support of many concerned groups such as the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, the National Council of Churches of the Philippines, the Makati Business Club, the National Bar Association of the Philippines, the Catholic Women's League, the Knights of Columbus — as well as other groups and individuals whose ideas and suggestions have found their way almost daily in our newspapers.

I wish to especially mention two significant initiatives that demonstrate the dynamic power of this concept to unify us. I refer to two recent meetings held in Villa San Miguel. The first meeting involved a Muslim group composed of former senators, officers and members of the World Muslim Congress and the Philippine Muslim Solidarity Conference. They pointed

out that in spite of the great sufferings inflicted on their people of whom more than 60,000 have died under authoritarian rule while 200,000 remain exiled refugees—still, Muslims remain steadfast in their commitment to national unity and reconciliation. But time and patience are running out.

The second meeting took place on the 33rd Anniversary of the Military Vicariate. On this occasion, General Fabian Ver underlined the fidelity of the Armed Forces in safeguarding the rights of our people and in transforming itself into a truly People's Army, compassionate and faithful to the highest moral standards of the military profession.

Behold then the wondrous solidarity transforming our nation: Muslims and Christians, soldiers and citizens, employers and laborers, men and women, young and old — marching in unison as brothers in a historic display of moral unity and courage.

Only the government continues to remain a bystander to the mainstream of citizens marching resolutely toward national reconciliation. The time might come, if it is not already here, when men and women who are mindful of the esteem of their children and of history — will have to morally distance themselves from positions that clash with their sense of honor.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! I have quoted earlier the statement that we are living through the worst as well as the best of times. Our trust in the goodness of the Divine Providence finds confirmation on every page of our history as a nation ever blest by the Almighty Father who gives us our daily sustenance in spite of any crisis

Let us then neither despair nor turn cynical if our persistent invitations to establish a Council for National Reconciliation remain unanswered. Let us recall the Book of Exodus where we read how Moses had to approach a stubborn Pharaoh ten times before he finally released God's people from bondage.

And so we wait with patience and with love for the day when our leaders will join our people in a spirit of national reconciliation.

And so we pray with faith and hope for the fulfillment of Christ's promise of victory as prophesied by Isaiah:

Behold my servant whom I have chosen,
 my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
 I will put my Spirit upon him,
 and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
 He will not wrangle nor cry aloud,
 nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
 he will not break a bruised reed
 nor quench a smoldering wick,
 TILL HE BRINGS JUSTICE TO VICTORY!

(Matthew 12:15-20)

To the People of God in Bacolod, I impart my blessings on you, your Bishop, your priests and religious, with the prayer that you might attain to the fullness of Christ through the help of Mary His Mother in whose loving care we and our nation have been entrusted.

ARZOBISPADO DE MANILA

(Continued from page 259)

Furthermore, in line with the Second Vatican Council and Canon 280 of the New Code, I wish to encourage the guest priests to have their residence in the rectories or in religious houses to enable them "to find mutual help in cultivating the intellectual and spiritual life, to promote better cooperation amongst them in the ministry, to safeguard them from possible dangers arising from loneliness..." (PO, 8).

I fervently hope that such unity and brotherhood among our priests brought about by conscientious compliance with Archdiocesan policies would bring about the edification of the People of God of this Archdiocese as envisioned by the Synod of Manila.

With every best wish, I am

Devotedly yours,

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

September 23, 1983

HOMILETICAL NOTES

(April, 1984)

By

Bernard Lefrois, S.V.D.

APRIL 1 — 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Readings:

1 Sam 16: 1b. 6-7. 10-13a

Eph 5: 8-14

John 9: 1-41

First Reading: God calls whom he freely chooses, in this instance David, the youngest of all Jesse's sons, to be king of Israel. God's choice is always his own doing, also in each individual instance, and external qualities do not influence him. The disposition of the heart is what counts.

Oil was used in the rite of consecration. High priests were anointed (Ex. 29:7) as were the kings of Israel. Through it, in a certain way, the king became a sharer in God's holiness, and his person considered inviolable. Anointing with oil symbolized God's spirit taking possession of him. Christ, the new David, was anointed not with the mere symbol but with the Spirit himself (Acts 10:28), and likewise are all who are incorporated into him in baptism. Hence the anointing with chrism. While doing so, the priest says: "as Christ was anointed priest, prophet and king, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life."

Second Reading: The Christian's life is one of light in Christ. He is to put aside all former evil habits (the darkness of unregenerated man.) The fruits of light are beneficial to all. Evil deeds will stand condemned in the face of this life. A section of an ancient Christian hymn refers to the Risen Christ who brings man from spiritual death to the light of life in himself.

Gospel Reading: A splendid victory of Light over darkness. As sheer drama, this trial scene is brilliant, rich in tragic irony. Not merely is it the beggar who is rejected, but Christ the Light. In the setting, a current view is repudiated: personal ailments are not always the consequences of personal sins. Jesus gives the purpose, not the cause of the blindness; that is in order that God can manifest his wonderful works. Jesus himself is the Light of the world; he has come to give light to man, taking away his blindness, not only physical but also spiritual.

1. *The sign:* It is worked very modestly. Jesus lets the waters of Siloam (which represent him as the One Sent) cure the man, after he had anointed him (the Greek verb means that) with spittle and earth, to arouse interior sentiments of faith.

2. *The interrogations:* There are four:

a. Neighbors and acquaintances: he tells the facts without any fear, and openly confesses that Jesus cured him.

b. Pharisees who doubt: again the facts are related exactly. A division of opinion ensues, but the beggar insists: he is a prophet.

c. Parents, called in by unbelieving Pharisees. But they throw back the responsibility to the beggar, out of fear.

d. Pharisees a second time: the climax. All intention of finding out the facts is disregarded. They seek to trap the beggar by cross questioning, then by ridicule, by vilifying Jesus, and finally by intimation. The beggar stands his ground and publicly professes Jesus to be from God. Conclusion of the trial: Ejection, no matter what the witness said. In reality they are refusing to accept Christ's divine mission.

3. *The light of faith* is given by Christ to the beggar. His faith greatly contrast with the stubborn unbelief of the Pharisees, the great ones in Israel. "Son of Man" is a term often used by Jesus of himself, since it was free of all political overtones, yet designated the mysterious personage of Dan. 7:13.

4. *Judgment on spiritual blindness:* Those who refuse to accept the Light remain in spiritual blindness. It is now Christ who pronounces judgment. For many, the result of Christ's divine mission is tragedy, through their own pride and willful blindness.

In the above passage, the Early Church saw the sign of Christian baptism: the Light of Christ (faith) given through anointing and water for one who had been totally blind. The beggar on trial suggests to the Christian his own situation in the world, enlightened in baptism and called upon to confess Jesus before men.



It is preferable to read the entire gospel and then comment briefly by means of the biblical notes given for this Sunday.

APRIL 8 — 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Readings:

Ez 37:12-14

Ro 8:8-11

Jn 11:1-45 (or 11:3-7. 17. 20-27. 33-45)

First Reading: Under the figure of a resurrection from the dead, the prophet predicts Israel's return from exile to her own country. Graves symbolize their sojourn in a foreign land. Their restoration will be a proof of God's love for them. He will pour out his Spirit anew upon them, and they will flourish once more. The passage is well applied to a spiritual resurrection from the spiritual death of a life estranged from God.

Second Reading: A powerful Pauline passage for renewal in the Spirit. Paul contrasts the man of sin, led by his own selfish impulses (flesh), with the man regenerated in baptism and led by the Spirit of Christ (life in the spirit). In baptism he received the very Spirit of Christ and hence belongs to Christ, with the obligation to live like Christ lives. Yet this process is a gradual one, for there is a constant battle of spirit and flesh. Though endeavoring to live the Christ-life (his spirit lives), he is still prone to sinfulness and death in his mortal body. But the indwelling Spirit will one day conquer completely, for he is the pledge even of bodily resurrection. The Father who raised Christ from the dead will also raise all those who possess Christ's indwelling Spirit.

Gospel Reading: Jesus raises to life one who believes in him: the seventh and last sign of the Book of Signs (Jn. 1-12). "It is a sign both of the final resurrection and of the rising from

sin to grace that takes place in a believer" (JBC). Today's liturgy emphasizes the latter aspect. Bethany is a little town not far from Jerusalem, the home of friends beloved by Jesus. (Verse 2 anticipates the narrative of the following chapter, already known to the Christian community). The sister of Martha is nowhere called Magdalene.

In a dramatic unfolding narrative, Jesus addresses six groups: the disciples, Martha, Mary, the Jews, Martha again, the Father in heaven, and finally the seventh word in *dynamic climax* the word of power to Lazarus, imparting new life. But the narrative revolves around the *revelation of Jesus' person* in his words: I am the Resurrection and the Life (25). His person is the cause and final end of our resurrection, and he is the source of life eternal. Thomas' bold resolve (16) contrasts with the fear of the other disciples (7.12), and Martha's magnificent profession of faith (21-27) eclipses that of her sister's.

How well the human side of Jesus stands out! Three times his love is mentioned (3.5.36), twice that he is moved by deep emotion (33.38) and once that he does not disdain to weep (35). But his divine power climaxes the entire narrative, showing him master of life and death.



Again, it is preferable not to shorten this superb narrative, and give a brief comment with the help of the biblical notes given before.

APRIL 15 — PALM SUNDAY

Readings:

Is 50:4-7

Phil 2:6-11

Mt 26:14-27:66 (or: 27:11-54)

First Reading: This is the third of the "Servant of Yahweh" songs. The Servant knows how to counsel and to be compassionate to weary wayfarers, for he faithfully listens to God speaking to him. He has been called to suffer much for his people, and he meekly accepts it all both insult (plucking out one's

bear) and maltreatment. But his whole trust is in God who will eventually vindicate him. The Early Church saw this prophecy fully realized in Christ.

Second Reading: See biblical notes in *Bol. Ecl.*, Jan.-Feb., 1977, 1061.

Gospel Reading: The longest of the passion accounts is that of Matthew, and seemingly the most used in antiquity. Some details are peculiar to this gospel: the end of Judas, the message of Pilate's wife, the splitting down of the curtain of the sanctuary, the appearance of the dead.



Read the Lord's passion and death.

APRIL 19 — HOLY THURSDAY (Evening Mass)

Readings:

Ex 12:1-8. 11-14

I Cor 11:23-26

Jn 13:1-15

For the explanation of the readings see *Bol. Ecl.*, Feb., 1976, 165f.



With this Eucharistic celebration we have begun the Sacred Triduum which commemorates the great events at the climax of the ecclesiastical year: the institution of the Eucharist as well as of the priesthood, the passion and death of Jesus, Savior of the world, and his triumphant resurrection from the dead. Tonight in the Gospel we saw him kneeling before his disciples in the humble attitude of a slave washing their feet. Tonight in the second reading we heard him institute the Eucharist which would be a sacrificial meal till the end of time. Tonight in the first reading we saw him prefigured in the Lamb given over to immolation for the deliverance of God's People.

The Son of God, equal in all things to the Father, stands before us as the Son of Man, having put on our human nature

with its limitations. The Master, whom all obey, has become the slave in the service of his own servants. The Lord, whom all creation worships, has himself become the Lamb of sacrifice in place of all his fellowmen. The Creator of the universe, who fills the earth with all good things, himself becomes our food and drink. Who can fathom the depth of his immense love? What human mind or angelic intelligence would ever have dreamed of what the Lord Jesus from all eternity planned to do for little man on his planet earth!

Who would put himself at the service of his fellowmen in mental labor freely and willingly if the Son of God himself had not given such an example of service and self-abasement? Who would sacrifice himself for the good of his neighbor so wholeheartedly, if Jesus had not given himself over completely to even unto death? Who would spend day and night caring for the poor and the needy in our institutions, or in our hospitals with the sick and the aged and the retarded, if Jesus himself had not only spent his public life in utter service of all and everyone, but even given himself to be our medicine and healing in this Most Blessed Sacrament? Who of God's ministers would have the courage to mediate before God for sinful mankind, if Jesus himself had not become our High Priest, pure and undefiled, who entered into the very presence of the Most High, with his Blood poured out on Golgotha in sacrifice, to open the way of confidence to the Father for all his brothers and sisters?

But this calls for a response on our part! These are the days when we ought to encounter him in the sacrament of reconciliation and healing, by sincerely acknowledging our sins and resolving to do better in the future. These are the days when we ought to receive him worthily in Holy Communion to show our appreciation and gratitude for this marvellous intervention of his love. This very night we can give him some return by visiting him in the various Churches along our way, and pouring out our thanks for his many favors to ourselves and our dear ones, and asking his mighty help in the days that lie ahead, so that our renewal in our Christian commitment be sincere and lasting. These are the days when we ought to spend some longer time in prayer to mediate before God together with our High Priest for all mankind, that war and suffering be eliminated, that peace come to mankind, that those who do not as yet know the Paschal Mystery of the Savior come to its knowledge through the ministry of his priests. This Sacred Triduum is a challenge to our Christian calling, to witness to all around us that we

glory in being members of the Crucified, and joyfully determine to live anew the Christ-life which has been renewed in us at this climax of the ecclesiastical year.

May the love of Christ penetrate us, and set us on fire in carrying out the good we have determined to do, in face of the eminent example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who says to each of us: "All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you."

APRIL 20 — GOOD FRIDAY

(Pointers for the seven words can be found in *Bol. Ecl.*, Jan.-Feb., 1977, 119).

The Human Situation: The agent rang the door-bell. But when the door opened, he almost shrank back with fear, for the sight that met his eyes shocked him. A mother stood there, with three toddlers clinging to her lovingly, but the mother's features were disfigured and deformed in a very ugly manner. Her hands were crippled and gruelling to gaze at. What had happened? Mother and father some months previous had put the three little tots to bed, and as it was a quiet evening, they took a stroll down the neighboring streets. Suddenly they heard engines went in the direction of their street. With apprehension they hastened their steps and arrived at their home only to find it ablazed. Without caring for the firemen's warning, the mother rushed into the bedroom, grabbed all three tots, covered them with blankets and made her way out of the blazing fire, only to be severely burned and disfigured for life. But the children did not mind her looks. They loved their mother who had saved their lives at such a price. She was beautiful to them.

The Good News: On the cross hangs Christ, covered with dirt and blood, disfigured and dishonored. How well the prophet depicted him: "We thought of him as one stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins. By his stripes we were healed" (Is. 53.4). Despised and rejected by men, Jesus died amid the peers and mockery of the bystanders. Those eyes that had looked so mercifully on men were now filled with blood. Those hands that had cured so many were now nailed to the cross. His sacred tongue and lips that had spoken so

often of love and goodness are parched and cracked. That Sacred Heart that beat only out of love is pierced with a lance.

Yet, who caused these wounds in his hands and feet? Who pierced his sacred side? Who lashed his body with the scourge and plaited a crown of thorns for his head? It was the sin of the world, the sins of all mankind, our sins, that laid low the Lamb of God. It was our thoughtlessness and negligence that gave him such agonies. It was our lethargy and apathy that drove him to the heights of Golgotha.

But he accepted it all without a word. He was pierced for our offenses. Enlightened by faith, we see Christ our Savior, and in us he is not an object of disgust, but as our loving Redeemer who pays the price for us that we escape eternal death; as one who obtained healing for our own wounds of spirit by his willing and voluntary offering of himself; as the sole salvation of all mankind by his victim sacrifice on the cross. He is the Good Shepherd who preferred to lay down his life rather than let the devastating Wolf snatch away the prey. He is the Stronger One who divests the Strong One who is Satan of all his spoils, by fighting to the end though it means these wounds and these stripes. He is the silent Lamb of God who is led to slaughter silent and not opening his mouth, so that we might obtain life that never ends.

Who is not moved today by this re-enactment of the passion and death of God's Son who became our Brother to be our Sacrifice and burnt holocaust before the Most High? What hardened heart does not feel sorrow and compunction when it considers who is this that suffers such humiliation, such disfigurement, such excruciating pains? What inveterate sinner is not reconciled to God by gazing on the Crucified, who became his Brother out of sheer love for him? What sincere heart will not offer him love and compassion in face of this tragic drama enacted again today?

As we kneel to venerate the sacred Cross of Jesus, we will kiss his wounds which healed our wounds. We will beg him to forgive our failings and sins, and to cleanse us anew in his precious Blood. We will offer the deepest sentiments of our hearts, to the One whose Heart bore the weight of guilt of the whole world, and also our own. Today we resolve to die with Christ to all that is sinful and displeasing to that Sacred Heart, in order to rise with him in the newness of the Christ-life on Easter morning.

EASTER VIGIL MIDNIGHT MASS

Readings:

Ro 6:3-11
Mt 28:170

First Reading: See *Bol. Ecl.*, Jan.-Feb., 1977, 107f.

Gospel Reading: Although the traditions concerning the apparitions of Jesus on Easter morning differ in several details, it is of no avail to endeavor to harmonize them, for the main message stands out clear and uncompromising: Jesus of Nazareth is risen from the dead. Both the heavenly messengers and human witnesses testify to it. All the stress of the various apparitions is on the reality of the Resurrection, which comes from the positive evidence of both men and women rather than on the fact of the empty tomb. The women in this passage come on an errand of love and as a reward they receive the revelation of the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead.

APRIL 22 — EASTER SUNDAY MORNING SOLEMNITY

Readings:

Acts 10:34. 37-43
Col 3:14
Jn 20:1-9 or Lk 24:1-12

For the explanation of these readings see *Bol. Ecl.*, Feb. 1976, 166f.

For Luke 24:1-12: *Boletin Ecl.*, Jan.-Feb., 1977, 108.



Almost everyone considered Jesus of Nazareth a complete failure as he hung on the cross that first Good Friday. The leaders in Israel were glad he was finally out of the way. The soldiers had laughed at him and mocked his claims. The people shook their heads in disappointment, for they had put much hope in him to deliver them from the yoke of the foreigners. Even the close disciples were disheartened and disillusioned, as is evident from the words of two of them on the way to Emmaus "We were hoping that he was the one who would set Israel free" (Lk. 24:21).

But Christ's death on the cross was Christ's magnificent triumph. If it was a failure in the eyes of men, it was the victory that vanquished Satan and death, for Christ rose again glorious and immortal, never to die anymore. His death is the glory of the Incarnate Word of God, the one and only sacrifice acceptable to the Father, the price willingly paid so that the Spirit of God would be given to the heart of man. Far from being a failure, it is the greatest achievement of mankind for all times.

Today we celebrate that triumph. Today we rejoice with our Savior for accomplishing his Paschal Mystery with such a masterly stroke. Today the Lamb of God shares the very throne of his Father amid the entire court of heaven, as they sing his victory with an eternal alleluia.

But we too celebrate a triumph: it is our victory over selfishness and sin that we have put off by dying with Christ in order to let his Spirit animate us still more in a spiritual resurrection. The failure and sins of the past are swallowed up by the victory of the Lamb. His Blood has washed us clean. His resurrection means new life and energy. Even out of past failures God can draw good. Past mistakes are often humble stepping stones to a life of true holiness in Christ.

A striking illustration how God turns all things to good is the following true happening: Twenty-three year old Ronnie, heavy-muscled and vigorous, had no goal or ambition in life. He had little interest in the many jobs he had had, and still less in people. On the last day at a saw-mill chipper, he inadvertently turned on the wrong switch. At once he found himself being thrown toward the chipper-blades and he succeeded in extricating himself only with an extreme struggle, but not before both legs were amputated by the blades, below the groin. Rushed to the hospital, it took intense care and nine months before he was fitted out with artificial legs, but he lived. Ronnie is a completely changed man. Now he wants to be with people and work with them, and he looks at his fellowmen with the greatest interest. He has become a vocational counselor, especially for the handicapped. What seemed to be the greatest trial and failure in his life turned out to be his greatest asset.

Easter brings new life and new ambition to the heart that has cast off the old self and let Christ be renewed in it. The possibilities to do good to others are manifold. The members

of Christ's body who are in dire need are legion. Our Easter mood is one of joy and vigor, with Alleluia, praise the Lord, in our hearts. The Lamb has unfurled the banner of victory. We follow him to fight the good fight.

APRIL 29 — 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings:

Acts 2:42-47

I Pet 1:3-9

Jn 20:19-31

First Reading: A glimpse into the first Christian community. In summary form, St. Luke presents their activity as follows: 1. Faithful adherence a) to what the Apostles taught concerning Jesus' words and deeds, b) to the fellowship (koinonia) of the brotherhood, c) to the "breaking of bread", St. Luke's technical term for the Eucharistic meal, d) to common prayers, the nucleus of later liturgical prayer. 2. A holy awareness of God's special presence, working wonders in their midst. 3. Common sharing of all goods with vigor and joy. 4. Daily prayer in the Temple, the ideal place for common prayer, while the Eucharist they celebrated in their homes. This latter is carefully distinguished by Luke from their ordinary meals, which they also had in common, praising the Lord.

Second Reading: An outburst of praise of God for the grand gift of rebirth made possible by Christ's resurrection, and obtained by means of a Christian commitment (begun in baptism). In firm hope it looks forward to a glorious inheritance. The inheritance of the new People of God is not earthly (land) but heavenly (everlasting possession of God). Only living faith will attain it, but it is tested so as to be resplendent at the Lord's Coming. It brings joy for the present and full salvation as its end-result. (In Semitic thoughts, "souls" stand for the entire being).

Gospel Reading: See *Bol. Ecl.*, Feb., 1976, 168f; or Jan.-Feb., 1977, 109.



The Human Situation: Gibbon, the famous historian who wrote "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in several volumes, never finished the volume which told of the origin

and spread of Christianity. When asked why he never wrote that part of his monumental work, he said: I cannot explain how twelve uneducated men could change the face of the pagan Roman Empire with their religion. Gibbon was an unbeliever. He did not realize that the Christian Church is the work of God.

The Good News: There is no doubt about it. Christ has conferred on his ambassadors tremendous powers. The self-same mission that he received from his heavenly Father, God of heaven and earth, he has given to them. The Father sent his Son to lift up mankind, to heal his wounds, to sacrifice himself for his fellowmen, to feed him with his Body and Blood. He had the power to forgive sins, as he so clearly showed the Scribes and Pharisees when he said to them: "Which is less trouble to say: your sins are forgiven, or stand up and walk. To help you realize that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he then said to the paralyzed man: Stand up! Roll up your mat and go home" (Mt. 8:5f).

These same powers Christ conferred on those who represent him after his ascension into heaven. At the last supper he told them: "This is my Body to be given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). In today's gospel it is crystal clear that he conferred the power to forgive sins on those he sent out as his ambassadors. There is no other explanation of the rapid spread of Christianity in early centuries than the fact that it is the work of God himself, and that Christ his Son lives on in the Church, establishing by his Spirit the reign of God everywhere. Before he ascended into heaven he told them to go out into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation (Mk. 16:15). And he also told them: "Know that I am with you always unto the consummation of the world" (Mt. 28:20).

Look how often men have endeavored to destroy the Church in this land or that: Pagan Rome with its persecutions by the emperors, North Africa and Europe with heresy, merry England under Henry and Elizabeth, Germany under Bismarck, and today Russia and China in their communistic ideology. But let us not forget that they are knocking against the cornerstone, and Jesus warned all men that "the man who falls on that stone will be smashed to pieces; it will make dust of anyone on whom it falls" (Lk. 20:18). Meantime the chosen ones in Christ continue their sacred mission. By the words of consecration they actualize the sacrificial presence of Christ on the altar, thus proclaiming his

death until he comes. They raise their hands to forgive men's sins, many and manifold, from one end of the earth to the other, from one end of the human stratum to the other. They lift up the sick by the holy anointing and strengthen them by the power of the Spirit for the final battle with the Evil One. They preach the word of God in season and out of season, thus continuing to implant the reign of God where it is not as yet implanted, and strengthen it where it needs bolstering.

Tremendous powers for little men! Why? Because Jesus willed it so. He willed to share his divine mission with his fellowmen. They were to be his co-workers, his co-apostles, that is, those who were sent to carry out his mission. No one can gainsay the words we heard today in the gospel: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them." In all reality, the Lord has left the salvation and sanctification of the world in the hands of men. It is only right that the true Christian spirit reveres the priesthood, and at the same time expects much from those who share the very mission of Christ.

Our Response: Today, many would rather see the priest involve himself in many social enterprises to uplift his fellowmen in their material conditions. There is no doubt that this too belongs to the evangelizing work of the Church. Yet his first duty is to make his fellowmen conscious of the deeper reason for their being on earth, to make them realize the final goal to be reached, no matter what their conditions in life are. If he falls short of making them aware of their spiritual destiny and assisting them toward that goal, he falls short of his purpose as an ambassador of Christ, and fails in the most important aspect of his calling. People are pleased and grateful when their priests come to their material aid and help them in their many temporal problems, but what they expect of a priest above all is for them to be brought to God, to be reminded of their purpose on earth, to have their sins forgiven, to be given the sacraments and the means of living their Christian calling. Everyone needs to be encouraged in season and out of season to live his Christian commitment and follow Christ on the way to his eternal home,