

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

THE GOSPEL IS THE SOUL
OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

John Paul II

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RELIGION

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FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH
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THE APOSTOLATE OF RELIGIOUS
IN THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW

Leonardo Legaspi, D.D.

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EDITOR	VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.
ASSOCIATE EDITORS	JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P. ROLANDO DE LA ROSA, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P. BONIFACIO SOLIS, O.P.
BUSINESS MANAGER	FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

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Fathers' Residence
University of Santo Tomas
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EDITORIAL

New Wineskins For New Wine

Catholic schools — once venues for posing and answering questions — are now fast becoming a question in themselves. Are they still relevant? Or have they outgrown their utility and, hence, to be abandoned for more effective means of apostolate?

Catholic schools are today's beleaguered institutions. Plagued with the rising cost of operations, branded with various epithets — "defender of the establishment", at one time, "coddler of the subversives", at another — Catholic schools seem to play a no-win-all-loss-card. No wonder some are contemplating to call in the towel and quit. Majority, however, prefer to put up a heroic fight despite the prophet of doom's prediction that eventually they will die. Apologists of Catholic schools are quick to deny this, of course. Armed to the teeth with graphs, charts, statistics and all, they paint a glorious picture of the apostolate in formal education. Accordingly, deeds of noble task never become extinct, and Catholic schools are such. Therefore... Has this optimism converted the skeptics? Perhaps. One thing is sure though: apologies nowadays no longer provide impregnable defenses. For defenses may be in themselves signs of weakness. If Catholic schools were indeed doing their task, then, they need no defense at all. They are on the side of truth, and truth, let alone, can defend itself.

Is there really a need to question the relevance of Catholic schools, after all? Granted that *some* Catholic schools — to say *all* is a sweeping generalization — have become irrelevant, would not this be due to the fact that they have abandoned precisely their Catholic identity? They have retained the name but not the reality. To correct this aberration, apologies may not be necessary; just let the truth have its way even if the heavens fall. When the heavens fall — who knows — we may even reap manna from above: a new idea of Catholic schools, ever

open, ever responsive to the challenges of the times! This, in turn, may serve as a critique for a much-needed self-appraisal of Catholic schools.

Let us admit it. Schools, just like any human institution, grow old, and they grow old not necessarily for the better. Aging may fossilize what has been in the past vibrant and dynamic and leave the institutions nothing but the skeletons of their glorious beginnings. True, they may still exist today — but, perhaps, only because of sheer routine and force of habit? A renewal is in order, and to start with, why not a return to a question so perennial as to be ever relevant: "What is a Catholic school?" True, the past has given it an answer. But would the answer of the past meet the demands of the present? Should the minds of the past do all the thinking for the present? Has the contemporary generation nothing else to do but parrot the ideas of their predecessors?

An old question begging for a new answer — "What is a Catholic school?" — may stir up a crisis which hopefully may bring a maturing effect in its wake: our realization of what the present Catholic schools really are. Are they fresh wineskins holding the ever new wine of the Gospel-message or old wineskins that hardly offer relief to thirsty truth-seekers?

ENRICO D. GONZALEZ, O.P.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Continued from page 158

on rational grounds. Professor Thouless stated that most people will abandon religious beliefs which seem to have inadequate intellectual support. St. Anselm is credited with saying that theology is faith seeking understanding, but if you do not believe, you will not understand.

The proper time to seek reasons for our faith and intellectual justification for religious practices is from late adolescence through adulthood. Hence the need for adult religious education. The contemporary Christian, however, tends to be very subjective and personalistic; he wants to arrive at an understanding of his faith through experience rather than *a priori* principles. The widespread interest in spiritual theology and the attraction of the prayer movement are good indications of the desire of modern Christians to move toward union with God through experience rather than through logical deductions.

Conclusion on page 166.

FEATURES

The Gospel is The Soul of The Catholic School *

Simon, son of John, do you love me? ... Feed my lambs, tend my sheep! ... Follow me! (Jn. 21:15, ff., 19).

Venerable Cardinals,

Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,

Brothers and Sisters of the Roman Curia!

1. The words of the Gospel, heard at this time of prayer in preparation for the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, that sees gathered around me you, beloved collaborators in my daily ministry, touch us in the depths of our hearts. Here, they resound like an incomparable echo that causes our whole being to shudder: we are at the *tomb of Peter, not far from the very place where* that death occurred by which *he glorified God* (cf. Jn. 21:19). Here the extreme witness of Peter's love for Jesus Christ speaks most eloquently. Here the continuity of the early Church with that which is now at the threshold of the third millennium finds its connecting link, its guarantee of fidelity and authenticity, the security of ever resting upon the same Rock, willed by Christ and the foundation of his Church.

For this reason I have wanted our significant meeting — a meeting of mutual affection, of reflection, of encouragement — to take place again this year in the Vatican Basilica: last year on the occasion of the solemn communal celebration of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption; today in a setting of recollection in preparation for the liturgical solemnity which we want to live in unison with the universal Church, but which we feel is especially *ours*.

2. The meeting — now traditional on the vigil of the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul — between the Pope and his closest

* Pope John Paul's address to the Cardinals and Collaborators of the Roman Curia and the various administrations of the Holy See for a solemn "Celebration of the Word". Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Vol. XVII, n. 29 (843).

collaborators in the ambit of the Roman Curia, of the Vicariate of Rome, of the various Administrations of the Holy See and of the Government for Vatican City, has for me a particular significance, to which I attach great importance; it is indeed an opportunity for me both to express my gratitude to you and to encourage you in the fulfillment of a duty, unique by its form, considering its closeness to the See of Peter and the contribution which it makes to the *Petrine ministry* entrusted to me by supreme mandate.

Actually, the Church's central organization, through all the diversified organs, *is an indispensable instrument for the Pope in carrying out the enormous burdens of this ministry*. And because this includes the whole life of the Church in the indefeasible obligation to "strengthen the brothers" (Lk. 22:32) entrusted to Peter and to his successors, *your work in the Roman Curia and in the various central administrations of the Apostolic See is extended to a wider dimension which is the Church itself*. You in fact help me in my pastoral responsibility directed toward the good of souls and the communion of the local Churches in charity.

This is why I wanted you here at my side, near the tomb of Peter. I greet you one by one; and I am happy to mention by name the individual organisms in which you work, because then I have before my eyes the entire panorama of ecclesial life to which the See of Peter directs its concern. *You are my arms*: all of you together and each one individually.

THE PETRINE MINISTRY IS A SERVICE TO THE FAITH

3. The Gospel that we all heard and by which we were deeply moved reminds us of the main lines of this ministry. These are marked by the words of Jesus of Nazareth, the Word of the Father: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?": this question is repeated three times, upsetting the heart of Peter with increasing intensity. "Feed my sheep, my lambs": and three times there resounds this universal command of pastoral concern for the whole Church, entrusted to Peter after his triple confession of love. "Follow me!" is the conclusion: an invitation not to pause on any other consideration except that of the divine will, which calls even to the point of martyrdom. If I invite you to reflect on the above, it is because in these words your activity also finds *its true place in its profoundly and substantially ontological and theological significance*, and in its eschatological perspective.

a) "*Do you love me?*" "You know that I love you". This Petrine ministry is essentially a *ministry of love*, a service of love, as a response to the eternal and merciful love of God which, like on a vertical line, is manifested to men in the Incarnate Son, is poured out in their hearts by the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm. 5:5), has gathered his Church from all the peoples of the earth, making it rest upon the Rock which is Peter. To serve this plan of love is an act, a duty of love: "... *Sit amoris officium, pascere dominicum gregem!*" ("Let it be a duty of love to feed the flock of the Lord", St. Augustine, *In Io. Ev.* 123.5; PL 35, 1967).

b) "*Feed my lambs*". The Petrine ministry is a pastoral concern toward the entire Church: Christ's command, *feed*, makes everything one with the "Strengthen your brothers" of the Last Supper (Lk. 22:32), and earlier, with the words at Caesarea Philippi: "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church... and to you I will give the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 16:18ff). It is a service.

—Service to *man*, because the vertical that comes down from the heart of God the Father and comes down through Christ right to the investiture given to Peter for the Church, is directed uniquely to man: to the salvation of man, wrought by Redemption, to man as a whole who lives and acts as an individual person, but immersed in the social framework of family, work, profession, civil society: to the free expansion of man, who must tend to his eternal destiny in living in society together among peoples, assured by peace which is "the ordered harmony among men" (St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, 19,13,1; PL 41,640: cf. St. Thomas, *Summa c. Gentes*, III, 128, 3003).

—Service to *Church unity*, because the ministry of Peter is a guarantee of stability and cohesion for the whole Church, and of the intimate bond which exists with individual pastors for the good of the People of God. As the Second Vatican Council has stressed, "in order that the Episcopate itself might be one and undivided, (Christ) placed blessed Peter over the other Apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and fellowship" (*Lumen Gentium*, 18). "*Unus pro omnibus, quia unitas est in omnibus*" ("only one, Peter, is in place of all, because unity exists in all"), St. Augustine had insistently commented (*In Io. Ev.*, 118, 4: PL 35, 1949).

—Service to the *faith*, as emphasized by St. Peter Chrysologus: "*Beatus Petrus, qui in propria sede et vivit et praesidet*,

praestat quaerentibus fidei veritatem" ("Blessed Peter, who continues to live and govern in his see, gives the truth of the faith to those who seek it") (*Ad Eutichem, inter ep. S. Leonis Magni*, 25,2; PL 54,743 f). Greatly aware of the need of this service, my predecessor John XXIII predicted a "reawakening of strong and ardent faith; the full awareness of the entire Christian teaching from the first to the last articles of the Creed, an ever more active fidelity to Christ, Son of God made man" (General Audience, 6 August 1960; Discourses, Messages, Talks, II p. 733); and Paul VI proclaimed before the whole Church the "Creed of the People of God", at the end of the year of faith (30 June 1968; *Insegnamenti*, pp. 292-310).

c) *Follow me*. If the life of all Christians is a *following of Jesus Christ*, this is a prerogative, a duty and main program of the Petrine ministry. Peter truly followed Christ. His personal history was extraordinary, marked by a two-fold vocation, and this is another peculiar trait that distinguishes him from the other Apostles: in fact, Jesus called him at the beginning of his own messianic mission, as recounts Luke's Gospel: "From now on you will be a fisher of men" (Lk. 5:10), and at the end of it, with a unique call, with the words of the fourth Gospel, that today we have listened to together. And Peter, in both cases, followed Jesus, fully relying on him right up to venturing into the unknown, always led by that two-fold call, arriving in Rome, of which he was the first Bishop and where he gave the ultimate witness of blood on this Vatican hill.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IS A DUTY OF THE CHURCH

4. In speaking to you of the Petrine ministry, I have stressed, among other things, that it is a *service to the faith*.

In this perspective, which characterizes our common labour, I would like to open my soul to you about a subject that is especially close to my heart: *it is the question of the Catholic education of youth*. It is true that this is an expressed interest of the Congregation for Catholic Education, but it affects all of us closely, bishops and priests, religious men and women, who want to live intensely the present moment, with all the challenges that it offers; it closely touches you laity, fathers and mothers of families, whose main problem is precisely that of the integral Christian formation that you want to give to your children. The question, therefore, is not foreign, in this light of faith,

to any one of us who is working for the life of the Church in the world and in harmony with and at the service of the individual local Churches. And precisely, the Episcopates of the various countries are directly involved by the difficulties inherent in the Christian education of youth, which in these recent years has been undergoing a delicate moment. The bishops are working, they are spending energy and resources on the question, which involves various aspects, and they await a word on principles which regulate it for the good of the ecclesial and civil community.

The Catholic education of youth places in front of the Church a multiple responsibility that extends above all to evangelizing catechesis, which also includes religious instruction in the schools, even the public schools, finally to the Catholic school as a place of Christian education and the integral formation of the child and young person under the sign of faith and of a vision of man and of the world that is inspired by this sign and does not oppose the faith. All this with due respect to the fundamental rights of parents, who are the first ones responsible for the education of their children, and in keeping with the specific mission of the Church.

It will not be inopportune to dwell upon the principles which must keep alive the awareness of this problem in today's world in the face of the multiple difficulties which appear here and there, about which it is impossible to keep our eyes closed and remain silent!

5. Catechesis is a full and all-inclusive reality, in relation to the mission entrusted by Christ to the Church: "Go and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19). The Son of God sent the Apostles to teach, and the Church has always been faithful to this charge that is carried out by the Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops, with a commitment which not infrequently has required even the witness of blood. The Church teaches in order to communicate to the world the Word of salvation: and in this mission, in its strict sense, there is found the essential sphere for the proclamation of the Good News, that is evangelization, of which my predecessor Paul VI outlined the contents, methods, the protagonists in the great document *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of 1975, and also catechesis in all its forms, as the Synod and my Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* spoke of in particular in the preparation for the sacraments.

INNATE RIGHT TO TEACH ALL MEN

So the Church has *the duty and innate right to teach men*, all men, the revealed truth, as has been already stressed also by the new Code of Canon Law (can. 747, 1), which dedicated its whole Book III to the problems inherent in the "*munus docendi*", entrusted to it by Christ. The Second Vatican Council has amply illustrated this mission, principally in the dogmatic Constitution on the Church, in the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops and in the Declaration on Religious Freedom. "Among the principal duties of bishops — *Lumen Gentium* says — the preaching of the Gospel occupies an eminent place. Bishops, in fact, are the preachers of the faith who lead new disciples to Christ. They are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach to the people committed to them the faith they must believe and put into practice. By the light of the Holy Spirit they make that faith clear" (25; cf. CD, 12; PO, 4).

The Church, then, must not find obstacles in the exercise of this primary duty, required, in addition to everything else, by the original aspirations of man in the search for truth: the duty is therefore part of the general picture of respect for religious freedom.

6. The question of Catholic education includes then, as I have said, *religious instruction* in the more general sphere of the school, whether it be a Catholic or state school. The families of believers have a right to this instruction, those families who must have the guarantee that the public school, precisely because it is open to everybody, not only does not endanger the faith of their children, but rather completes their integral formation with adequate religious instruction.

This principle fits into the concept of religious liberty and the concept of a truly democratic State, which as such, that is, with respect to its deepest and true nature, is placed at the service of the citizens, of all the citizens, with respect for their rights and their religious convictions.

Seen in this convergence of religious, philosophical, political principles, this instruction *is considered a right*: the right of believing families, the right of young men and women who want to live and profess their faith; and this, in every kind of school, even in the school that does not accept requests for Catholic

education that is proper to the Church. In fact, a school that wants to be truly worthy of this name must give space and offer its availability to the requests of the citizens, with the understanding and the cooperation of the interested confessions.

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH'S SALVIFIC MISSION

7. In the broad theme of evangelization and of the mission entrusted to the Church for the Catholic education of youth, there enters then the *question of the Catholic school*, which precisely from that mission draws its own motivation in so far as it is precisely evangelization that gives value to every effort to defend and strengthen the institution and the function of this kind of school.

This problem is especially close to my heart, because it closely touches the Church, which has not failed to give, in various syntheses, its clear directives in the matter. I recall the programmatic Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* of my predecessor Pius XI of venerated memory, and the various interventions of the Roman Pontiffs Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI; the Second Vatican Council dedicated its attention to this especially in the Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* in the general picture of Christian education; the Congregation for Catholic Education published in 1977 a specific document on "The Catholic School", and neither are references lacking, according to various occasions, both in documents published by me, especially in the Apostolic Exhortations *Catechesi Tradendae* (n. 69) and *Familiaris Consortio* (nn. 36-40), and pastoral visits; and, as is known, the 1980 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was concerned about this problem.

In fact, the Catholic school *has its place by full right in the salvific mission of the Church*, as the above-mentioned document of the Congregation for Catholic Education has stressed (nn. 5-9). In this perspective, the "*munus docendi*" of the Church includes by its nature also the various forms and levels of instruction to youth. The Catholic school does not intend to present a doctrine of its own in the field of science or technology; neither does it exert pressures of any kind: but it *proposes* to students the truths that touch man, his nature, his history, in the light of the faith. *The Gospel is the soul of the Catholic school*, the norm of its life and its doctrine.

The Catholic school intends in fact to offer every guarantee — and this is a principle to be strongly emphasized in the face of certain present directions — in order to be the training ground for Christian formation and for the finest education in the various disciplines. It presents the concept of life and the world, the great problems which have concerned the human spirit during the course of centuries, according to the Christian view, in a great synthesis in which all the data of history and Christian anthropology are contained.

The Catholic school provides then a major cultural aspect, indispensable for the complete formation of young believers. Rather, this very aspect of universal cultural synthesis renders it plausible also to those who do not share the Catholic faith.

How can we not recall here the prestige which the Catholic school has even in countries that are predominantly non-Christian, where often the majority of young people are of another confession or religion? All this must make us reflect seriously on the function of such institutions, which must not be hindered or diminished, because those schools contribute to the serious and conscientious formation of the future classes of the individual countries. The concept was well underlined by the recent document of the Italian Episcopal Conference, "The Catholic School Today, in Italy", where it proclaimed right from the beginning: "The Church is sent to announce and to incarnate the Good News that brings to completion the full dignity and freedom of man. For this reason it has always been attentive and concerned about those experiences and institutions in which — as happens in the school — mankind of tomorrow takes shape and what the future world will be is outlined" (25 August 1983: 1).

The Church, therefore, has the right to have its schools. *But it also has the duty.* This arises first of all from its fundamental "*munus docendi*", and from the conviction of the great usefulness that the Catholic school maintains for human promotion and the progress of peoples. In this context, the Second Vatican Council said clearly: "Since it can contribute so substantially to fulfilling the mission of God's people, and can further the dialogue between the Church and the family of man, to their mutual benefit, the Catholic school retains its immense importance in the circumstances of our times too. Consequently, this sacred Synod proclaims anew *a right already made clear in numerous documents of the Church's teaching authority, namely, the Church's right freely to establish and to run schools of every kind and at every level*". At the same time, the Council

recalls that "the exercise of this right makes a supreme contribution to freedom of conscience, the protection of parental rights, and the progress of culture itself" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 8).

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

8. The Church is deeply involved in this question of the Catholic education of youth and, in a special way, asks freedom and equality for Catholic schools, because it is moved by the conviction that they are a *right of Christian families*, as has been repeatedly stressed by many statements by the Magisterium of this See of Peter. If the Church so insists on this right, it is because it looks precisely to the family, to whom the task of the Christian education of children fundamentally and ontologically belongs. Parents are the first educators of their children. Moreover, *in the service of the transmission of the faith*, they are "the first catechists of their children", as I said in the Cathedral of Vienna (12 September 1983; *Insegnamenti* VI, 2, 1983, p. 486). The family, by its nature willed by God, is the first and natural educating community of the person coming into the world. It must therefore be able to enjoy, without any discrimination on the part of public powers, the freedom to choose for their children the kind of school suited to their own convictions, nor must it be hindered by economic impositions that are too burdensome, because all citizens are basically equal, above all in this field. The Second Vatican Council, in the Declaration on Religious Freedom, has explicitly stated: "Since the family is a society in its own original right, it has the right freely to live its own domestic religious life under the guidance of parents. Parents, moreover, have the right to determine, in accordance with their own religious beliefs, the kind of religious education that their children are to receive.

Government, in consequence, must acknowledge the right of parents to make a genuinely free choice of schools and of other means of education. The use of this freedom of choice is not to be made a reason for imposing unjust burdens on parents, whether directly or indirectly" (Dignitatis Humanae, 5).

In exercising the right of choosing for their own children the kind of school suited to their own religious convictions, the family must not in any way be hindered, but helped, by the State, which not only has the duty not to infringe upon the rights of Christian parents, its citizens in every respect, but also has the duty to cooperate for the good of the family (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 52).

The Church will never tire of supporting these principles, which are crystal clear and logical, but which when contradicted or unheeded can impoverish the civil and social life based upon the respect for the fundamental freedoms of the members that make it up, of which the family is the primary nucleus.

KEEP THE STRUCTURES EFFICIENT

9. On this vigil of the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul, teachers and pillars of the faith, I therefore feel the duty to extend from here to the whole Church *the call to make every effort to keep efficient the Catholic school structures*: in particular this responsibility must be felt by bishops, priests, and above all those well-deserving religious congregations of men and women endowed with the charism of education by the saints who founded them. They must guard with the greatest commitment, like the apple of their eye, this great, incomparable service to the Church.

And I address myself also to the teachers, to the laity involved in the Catholic schools, to the parents and beloved students, that they might consider it a very great title of honour to belong to these schools. All the components of the Church feel responsible to maintain their high prestige even at the cost of sacrifice, in the conviction of the great role which they play for the future of the various ecclesial and civil communities.

With these wishes I address particularly all my brothers in the Episcopate who, in the various nations of Europe and the world, are found in particularly difficult situations, which must be met with serenity and firmness: I say to them that I personally share in their worries, in their efforts and in their activities in this field as well as in those of the priests and religious who assist them. Above all I share the concerns of those *primarily responsible* for this delicate and serious problem: that is the Catholic families and the beloved youth — today profoundly open to the questions and to the responsibilities of the faith — who attend these schools, and know how to draw from them an incomparable benefit for the future. I am close to everyone and wish you well in the Lord.

10. If I have dwelled upon the problem of the Catholic education of youth, with special attention to the Catholic school, I was led to it also by the knowledge that you, my collaborators, want to respond fully to my pastoral concerns for the whole Church. You love the Church and this is the reason that

inspires you in the exercise of your daily work. My anxieties are certainly also yours. In this spirit I ask you to continue to help me by your active sharing in the problems of today's Church, and to support me with your prayer, and above all with love. I am certain that, in your commitment, you want to repeat together with me: *Caritas Christi urget nos!* It is love that directs you in your daily actions. Love that is all the more precious and fruitful, in the greatest majority of you, the more the work is done in silence, hidden and in fidelity that subjects physical strength and life itself to wear and tear, aware as you are of that "proper specific nature" of the collaboration for which you are "called to participate in the same mission that the Pope carries out on behalf of the Church", as I said to you at Christmas two years ago (*Insegnamenti*, V. 2, 1982, p. 2428).

And I thank you so much! I awaited this day precisely to repeat to you this gratitude for the participation which, by a fully special right, you offer me in the exercise of the Petrine ministry; and so you want to respond to the gift of God, who has called you to it, with the purity of professed faith and the integrity of your priestly, religious or lay life, lived out in the triple priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ; and with the irrepressible knowledge that your work builds up the People of God, is included in the invisible and fruitful exchanges of the Communion of Saints, and is in its turn sustained by the spiritual, and also the material, help which the local Churches offer to the ancient custom.

In order to express my deep gratitude to you, I make my own the words of the Apostle Paul, which have echoed here this morning: "I give thanks to my God every time I think of you — rejoicing as I plead on your behalf, at the way you have all continually helped promote the gospel... It is only right that I should entertain such expectations in your regard since I hold all of you dear, you who are sharers of my gracious lot... God himself can testify how much I long for each of you with the affection of Christ Jesus! My prayer is that your love may more and more abound" (Phil. 1:3 ff. 7 ff).

Yes, venerable cardinals, brothers in the episcopate and in priesthood, consecrated persons, sisters and brothers all: *I thank my God for you and carry all of you in my heart.*

JOHN PAUL II

To Catholic Professors of Theology*

My dear Professors,

1. After my meeting with representatives of the Swiss universities, I am happy to be able to devote a short time to you, professors of the three faculties of Catholic theology of Fribourg, Chur and Lucerne. I pleasantly recall being your guest some years ago in this university where we once more gather.

Since I was for many years involved in teaching as you are now, it was with interest and sympathy that I listened to the President of the Theological Commission of the Swiss Episcopal Conference and to your deans as they presented the situation, the functioning and the concerns of your institutions.

Because our time is limited, allow me to enter *medias in res* and to offer some brief reflections on the specific activity of the theologian and, even more briefly, on the formation of future priests.

Objectives of theology

2. The task of the theologian places him on the threshold of the mystery of God. So the action of grace enlivens him and contemplation inspires him while the effort of his intellect strives to disclose to man the meaning of hope. For God reveals himself, he enables himself to be known; God loves mankind and the world, he offers himself in order to be loved. The Word, true Light, enlightens every man; he has given the power to become children of God (cf. Jn. 1:9-12). We discover the presence of God through the faith and love that the Spirit places in our hearts along with the dynamism of hope (cf. Rm. 5:5). The meeting with, and the knowledge of, the God of love who reveals himself: this is what the theologian is concerned with. It is his duty to promote among the faithful an understanding

* Pope John Paul II's address to the professors of the three theological faculties of Switzerland. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Vol. XVII, n. 27 (841).

of it, to make its beauty manifest to every man who seeks the source and meaning of life. The Word of God is given to us as the expression of the fundamental events in the history of salvation whose meaning it unveils. It expresses the plan of God revealed to men: the Church never ceases to hand on his message. Among those who receive Scripture as an immeasurable gift, united to the Church who carries it and presents it in her Tradition, you have the mission of scrutinizing its inexhaustible richness in order to help your brothers and sisters find in it "the way, the truth and the life", that is to say, to advance towards Christ himself (cf. Jn. 14:6). Servant of the truth of God, the theologian shares, in the Church, in the great act of tradition which continues through history. Responding today to the call of Peter, among his brothers and before the world, "he gives a reason for the hope that is in him" (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

The theologian hears too the many appeals of the world, this uneasy, changing world in which we live. Uncertain of his future, contemporary man is groping; often he can no longer clearly discern the meaning of his history nor the criteria for his conduct. Faced with the fact of religion, he questions himself with an increasing critical need. The faith of believers is put to the test. More than ever at the service of his brethren, the theologian shares in the *paedagogia fidei*: he clarifies problems, new or old, by opening eyes to the light of God. His work consists less in indefinitely prolonging the scope of his field of investigation than in situating partial problems in their true perspective around the centre of the faith. Today, the spiritual life, the action and the witness of Christians, need to be supported by a renewed understanding of the mystery of God, of Christ and of the Church, before they can face in a relevant way the manifold questions of praxis.

And there is one domain, as you know, where the collaboration of theologians is of particular importance, that is the work carried out on behalf of the unity of Christians. It is good that each one contribute to it in the truth, clearly conscious of his own ecclesial identity and bearer of his doctrinal moral and liturgical heritage, and yet open to, and respectful of, the identity of others.

Theology and human sciences

3. Theology is situated on a scientific level; it can find lasting credit only through the rigour of its research. This requirement leads to an encounter with all those forms of research

which we place under the generic name of the "human sciences": a whole complex of methods and discoveries concerning history, language, society, psychology. In expressing the Christian message today, the theologian has recourse to what the sciences of man can offer him, and that is useful in order to respond to contemporary questions and to make the Word heard in new fields.

Nevertheless, the critical function of theology must here be called into play: there is need to use careful discernment. Currents of thought, investigative techniques, must not have priority over the Message. No language can become normative by its very self, for God cannot be encompassed by a closed system of thought, and discourse about God cannot be assimilated to any other discourse. The Word of God precedes our word and no generation will ever exhaust its importance. The object of theological discourse is the living and personal God: revelation gives us some knowledge of his reality and his work, but it is in no way within our power to dominate them when we grasp them. Theology knows its limitations because it is conscious of the grandeur of what it is treating.

The balance of theological discourse and the very rigour of its research would be compromised if the instruments of thought available today were not lucidly compared with those which contributed to earlier elaborations. It is therefore necessary to know and practise what the philosophical heritage brings to the exercise of reason. To be faithful to itself, theology requires that the complex of disciplines which can be useful to it be well controlled, with clear attention to the specific character of their contribution.

While it forms an integral part of the intellectual life of our age, the activity of the theologian is equally situated in the continuity of living Tradition and on the trajectory marked out by the Word of God throughout history.

The theologian and the Magisterium

4. The exercise of his mission strictly binds the theologian to all that takes place in the Church. For the People of God, he explains Sacred Scripture and interprets tradition in union with the teaching authority of the Church. His work refers to the teaching authority without, however, fusing with it. Regarding this, let us listen especially to the Second Vatican Council, which says in the Constitution on Divine Revelation:

"It is clear . . . that sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each one in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, contribute effectively to the salvation of souls" (*Dei Verbum*, 10). The Council expresses here a methodological ground rule of theology: Theology is founded upon everything that has been entrusted to the Church — on the treasury of faith which has been handed down (*depositum fidei*) — and on the decisions that the teaching authority of the Church has made in the course of history.

In the light of the grace of the Holy Spirit, these various functions are completed. The Pope and the bishops in union with him have in the first place the duty to proclaim the faith and to affirm the authenticity of its forms of expression. In virtue of their episcopal ministry, they support the mission of theologians and have a regulatory function with regard to them. In fraternal dialogue and through open, trusting meetings, it should be possible to come to understand better the questions and possible needs of one side and the other. In this spirit of trusting union I have come to you today.

Such a reciprocal solidarity is all the more necessary in that the work of theologians is all the more difficult and full of risks. Among other things, they must also study controversial questions. This is their duty. But because they neither act at their own discretion nor are they at the service of a single group, they are not called to judge, but to be loyal collaborators of those who, through their office, have the duty of unity for all. Theologians must also be able to accept the fact that on their level of knowledge they cannot solve all the problems that are presented to them.

So exacting a work carried out according to the strict rules of science must be accompanied by the humble attitude of a disciple of God. It must proceed from inner acceptance of the fact that freedom of research does not mean full autonomy, but is directed to its objective and must serve the People of God. Responsibility for the *paedagogia fidei*, for instruction in the faith, has been passed down to us through one who is greater than we, through Christ. For that reason, we must be concerned especially for the "weak" and the "poor". The greatest results of research will be therefore achieved when in the framework of a school of theology or a country, they are examined

by other scholars before being presented to the general public. It is therefore necessary to act in such a way as not to confuse those faithful who are less instructed in questions of faith, by presenting them with theses which are not officially recognized and at times are still incompletely developed and lacking the necessary differentiation.

Spiritual attitude

5. I know that yours is not an easy task. It demands of you so much more unselfishness, the more energetically you carry out your commitment. Therefore always bear in mind that the object of your research and your teaching is the revelation of God for the salvation of man. A foundation of your commitment that, in conformity with your activities, you be disciples of Christ, our Lord and Saviour: you will receive the crucial light for your way in prayer, in meditation on the mystery of Christ. There you will find true wisdom. When in faith one allows himself to be seized by Christ he discovers that to serve him, the only Master, can be a source of deepest joy. When one allows himself to be led by the Spirit of love, he discovers the happiness of true freedom (cf. 2 Cor. 3:17).

You are blessed with many spiritual gifts. According to the measure of these gifts, you are called to be witnesses to Christ in this world where many people are searching for light in the faith and where so many brothers and sisters have been called even to the decisive witness of martyrdom.

Major seminaries

6. As witnesses of the faith of the Church, you have a special responsibility in that you have been engaged by the Swiss bishops to care for the theological formation of candidates for the priesthood in their dioceses. In this way you perform a service of the highest order for the Church. You know that this is very close to my heart also. I am thinking of all those communities to which these seminarians will be sent one day and which are awaiting their service.

You instruct these young men to read Sacred Scripture with profit, to discover the riches of Tradition, and to develop a critical understanding of the problems of mankind. It is an advantage that the higher level of these studies allows the young

men to strengthen their capacity of judgment and to acquire sure scientific methods while they are being trained in theological research.

In your faculties, the seminarians share their theological formation with other students who do not intend to become priests. This gives both groups the opportunity to distinguish the special role of the priesthood instituted by Christ from the various services which lay people are able to take up in the Church. It is therefore important to examine in a particular way with the students the ecclesiology of the Council as well as the theology of the sacraments and of the priestly ministry.

You also know of course that these two formative methods are not to be completely mixed together. By reason of their special commitment for which the seminarians are preparing and because of their impending admission into the presbyterate of their dioceses, they must live in a priestly atmosphere during the years of their preparation for priestly ordination. They need an independent spiritual accompaniment in a seminary where prayer, liturgical life, and reflection on the priesthood play a great part. Such an institution in which they live from the beginning of their studies promotes their union with the bishop and with the priests of the diocese. It is indeed to be hoped that they will have the sort of pastoral experiences through which they become acquainted with their future ministry and can strengthen their response to the special vocation of the priesthood. Their teachers should testify that no one chooses on his own to become a priest, but that he is called, and indeed that the priesthood is one of the most beautiful services, entrusted by God, and that this life consecrated to the Lord can lead to joy! May the witness of the theology teachers enable them to be formed as true servants of the Gospel in the Church's priestly ministry.

Conclusion

7. In conclusion, I would like to take up the words of St. Paul: "Men should regard us as servants of Christ and administrators of the mysteries of God. The first requirement of an administrator is that he prove trustworthy!" (1 Cor. 4:1-2). May God grant that you prove trustworthy in fulfilling the fundamental duties which the Church entrusts to you, and that united in joy, you serve man in the Spirit of Christ. I am happy about this meeting with you today and with all my heart I ask the Lord to bless you.

JOHN PAUL II

Characteristics which must distinguish the Catholic University * T

Distinguished Rector, esteemed Professors and dear Students,

I am grateful for the invitation from the Rector Magnificus to spend a day with you, just as I am grateful for the request to address you in this centre on the subject "Pope John Paul II's Teaching Concerning the Aims and Function of a Catholic University".

It is a subject which I accepted gladly, because it touches closely the work of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and it is a subject which has constantly interested the Supreme Pontiff even before he became the Universal Pastor of the Church.

It is not surprising if the Holy Father, during his pastoral journeys, has always wanted to meet with men of culture and, in a special way, with the members of the Catholic universities. As Archbishop of Krakow he was the Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of that city; for many years he was the President of the Polish Episcopal Commission for Studies; in addition, he was a professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin and, finally, as a delegate of the Polish Episcopate, he participated in the important congress held in Rome by the Congregation for Catholic Education in November 1976, to prepare the Apostolic Constitution concerning the ecclesiastical universities and faculties. Certainly, he did not think then that it would be precisely up to him, by becoming Pope, to promulgate the solemn document on Easter Sunday in 1975, with the title *Sapientia Christiana*.

* Address by Cardinal William Wakefield Baum at the University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.

The university environment is therefore second nature to the Holy Father and this explains his attention to, I should like to say his predilection for, university problems, to which the Pope has returned over and over again, both during audiences granted in Rome and in various meetings held in different parts of the world.

I shall dwell now on the more significant interventions which the Holy Father has made, addressing the representatives of Catholic universities, and then draw some general conclusions which will bring to light the leading lines of pontifical thought concerning the function and aims of a Catholic university.

One of the Supreme Pontiff's earliest meetings with the university world took place precisely with this Catholic University of the Sacred Heart on 8 December 1978, a few weeks after his election to the supreme pontificate. The university was celebrating the centenary of the birth of Father Gemelli and the discourse delivered then was an exaltation of the immortal founder's work. The Pope took the opportunity to emphasize some characteristics which must distinguish a Catholic university. Above all, it must be "catholic". "Be proud," he stated, "of the description of 'Catholic' which denotes your university". This explicit, clear reference, determinant to the Christian message, is the surest guarantee of the defence of the whole man, of that "plenary humanism" of which the Pope speaks and which becomes a connotation proper to the Catholic university. "Catholicism does not debase your commitment to the promotion of every authentic human value. If it is true that 'man infinitely surpasses man', as Pascal sensed (*Pensées*, no. 434), then it is necessary to say that the human person does not achieve the full realization of himself except in reference to the one who constitutes the basic reason for all our judgments on being, goodness, truth and beauty."

This "true and effective centre of culture" becomes "the privileged place in which it is possible to cast a bridge between the past and the future, between the ancient classic culture and the new scientific culture, between the values of modern culture and the eternal message of the Gospel". By doing this, the university demonstrates its will "to serve man", helping him above all "to think well", to express it in the words of Pascal (*Pensées*, no. 347), because "to think is man's greatness".

Cultural dialogue, Christian inspiration of the world of culture, plenary humanism, interest for the whole man, are some

characteristic notes which the Holy Father pointed out to the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in the exercise of its mission.

The Pope had received the rectors of the Catholic universities which the Society of Jesus sustains throughout the world (there are more than 100!), and with this group he had emphasized the need to give to the Catholic universities a clear and unmistakable Catholic characterization so that, strong in their own identity, the Catholic universities might become capable of "fostering dialogue with all cultures, with atheists, with non-Christians, with Christians of various confessions". The Catholic university must "introduce Jesus Christ to them as a complete answer to their problems and to the problems of the world. To make them understand that Jesus Christ does not disappoint the sentiments of brotherhood, justice, universal love that they feel, but instead that these ideals remain always these, rather, that they grow beyond measure if they are able to find their source in Christ himself. Here is the exciting mission for the directors of Catholic universities".

Programmatic intervention

An intervention which I would call programmatic was the one outlined by the Holy Father when he met with Catholic university students in Mexico City on 31 January 1979. He summed up his thinking in three observations: "1) The first observation is that the Catholic university must offer a specific contribution to the Church and to society, placing itself on a high level of scientific investigation, of profound study of problems, of an adequate historical sense. However, this is not enough for a Catholic university. It must find its ultimate and profound significance in Christ, in his message of salvation, which embraces man in his totality, and in the teaching of the Church. All this presupposes the fostering of an integral culture, of one which tends towards the concrete development of the human person, in which predominate values of intelligence, of will, of conscience, of brotherhood, since these values were established by the Creator and wondrously restored and elevated by Christ (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 61): a culture which in a disinterested and genuine way is addressed to the good of the community and of society.

"2) The second observation is that the Catholic university must be the shaper of men truly outstanding in learning, ready

to undertake the more responsible duties of society, and to be witnesses in the world to the true faith (*Gravissimum Educationis*, no. 10), an aim which also today is doubtlessly decisive. Then, to the scientific formation of students it is fitting to add a profound moral and Christian formation, not considered as an aspect in which the academic institution may emerge, so to speak, specified and lived out. It is a question of promoting and realizing in the professors and students an ever more harmonious synthesis between faith and reason, between faith and culture, between faith and life. This synthesis must take place not only on the level of research and teaching, but also on the pedagogical-educational level.

"3) The third consideration is that the Catholic university must be an environment in which Christianity is alive and active. It is an irrepressible vocation of the Catholic university to give witness of being a serious community and sincerely committed to scientific research, but also characterized by an authentic Christian life. This presumes, among other things, a review of the figure of the professor, who cannot be considered a mere transmitter of knowledge but, and above all, a witness and educator of authentic Christian life. In this privileged environment of formation you, dear students, are called to a conscious and responsible collaboration, free and generous, to achieve your own formation."

The concepts listed in the discourse to university students in Mexico City have been repeated many times by the Holy Father on various occasions. About twenty days later (24 February 1979), when receiving the Executive Council of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, the Pope cited the three points given in the discourse in Mexico City, and he dwelled especially on the specific function of the Catholic universities as being witnesses and apostles to "evangelize the vast world of culture", and therefore as being the most suitable instruments for an effective "apostolate of the intellect".

The basic document

The basic document which must guide the ecclesiastical universities and faculties, that is, the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, promulgated by the Pope, 15 April 1979, deserves a speech in itself. The aims of a university are clearly pointed out in paragraph three of this "Magna Charta" that is, scien-

tific research, teaching, service to the ecclesial community. This is also true for Catholic universities.

On 7 October 1979 in Washington, D.C., the Pope met with the educators and professors of the Catholic cultural institutions on the campus of the Catholic University of America. To these persons also the Pope repeated the points discussed in the discourse given in Mexico City. Then he added: "Every university is qualified by a specific way of being. Your qualification is that of being Catholic, of affirming God, his revelation, the Catholic Church as interpreter and genuine guardian of Revelation. The term 'Catholic' will never be a simple label to put on or take off according to the various circumstances". In addition, the Holy Father insisted on the need for truly scientific research which satisfies the most noble of human aspirations, the search for truth, and he rightly exalted the Church's boast of having been the creator of the first universities, such as Padua, Bologna, Paris, Prague. He then drew some conclusions, dwelling on the relations between the Catholic university and the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In Kinshasa

On 4 May 1980 in Kinshasa, the Pope met with the intellectuals and university students of Zaire. The Holy Father had before him the students from the national university and outlined to them the function of a university as a centre for the deepening and spread of the nation's culture, and as a scientific instrument at the service of the people's needs: all in an integral view of man and his values. He pointed out that these were the ideals which had inspired the founders of the University of Kinshasa, which had been initiated, thanks to the work of the Catholic University of Louvain. In this light the Pope outlined the two essential tasks of university formation: "knowledge and conscience, that is, access to knowledge and the formation of consciences".

In Paris, France

On 1 June 1980, the Holy Father met in Paris with the students and professors of the *Institut Catholique*, to whom he pointed out the function of a Catholic university in the opening towards "another order of truth, a total truth about man, inseparable from the truth about God, just as he revealed it".

In Cologne Cathedral

When the Pope visited Germany, he wanted to meet with the university professors and students in the Cologne Cathedral on the day of the seven-hundredth anniversary of the death of St. Albert the Great (15 November 1980). Taking as a starting point the scientific work accomplished by this great doctor of the Church, the Supreme Pontiff spoke at length about the relationship between the Church and the modern natural sciences, pausing then to examine the problem of legitimizing science, as a "way to the truth" and as a service to man and mankind.

University of Lisbon

While greeting the professors and students of the Catholic University of Lisbon on 14 May 1982, the Holy Father recalled that "if it is true that a university has as its scope the forming of man for man and towards man, a Catholic university must also have as its scope the forming of man which, maintaining a position in favour of man, leads him to encounter Christ, through whom and by whom everything was created". In addition, the Holy Father summarized the three essential elements which he had set out in his discourse in Mexico City, then paused to discuss the relationship between theologians and the ecclesiastical Magisterium.

During his meeting with the professors and students of the Pontifical University of Salamanca (1 November 1982), the Holy Father treated at length the relationships between faith and reason, and between theology, faith and the Magisterium.

A summation

I ask your pardon if I have allowed myself to speak at length on these citations. There would be many others to make, but those to which I have referred are enough to indicate the principal ideas which the Supreme Pontiff has always pointed out to the Catholic universities. I think that these ideas can be summed up in a few points, which I should like to list in the following way:

- 1) Above all a Catholic university must be a true university, and therefore an authentic centre for study and scientific

research, where the individual sciences are developed according to their own method, enjoying due freedom of research. This serious, profound research, carried out by the most rigorous scientific structure, must be objective, free from any ideologies, conducted with extreme intellectual honesty and with a marked integrity of life.

The Pope often insists on seriousness of scientific research because — he states — “whoever speaks science, speaks truth”. Now the primary scope of all true study is the objective search for truth. Nothing must be spared in seriousness, commitment, dedication, toil, in the search for truth.

2) The Catholic university must “have a primary role of witness and apostolate in order to evangelize the vast world of culture”. It must be a “centre for the meeting and dialogue between science and faith, culture and life, culture and faith.” The Catholic university must “contribute to eliminating a great imbalance between general culture and the deepening of faith which, in not a few cases, seems to be stiffening with inevitable reflections in Christian behaviour and presence in the world.” Here is opened the entire discourse of the dialogue between faith and culture, whose most appropriate seat is precisely the Catholic university which, excellent as it must be in the most rigorous scientific research and rooted in Christian principles, will constitute the privileged place of this meeting and this dialogue. What's more, it will constitute one of the reference points for the elaboration and spread of Christian culture. This is the subject which John Paul II treated at length in the letter which instituted the Pontifical Council for Culture (20 May 1982).

3) In order to achieve this lofty ideal, the Catholic university must be truly “Catholic”. “Catholicity is not a label which is attached or removed at will”; it must permeate the entire life, forming “a community which attests visibly to living Christianity.”

Open therefore to supernatural values, the Catholic university becomes able to meet the most intimate and most hidden needs of the whole man, who is thirsty for the transcendent. In this way the Catholic university becomes the instrument suited for meeting man in his striving for the universality to which he aspires from his deepest roots.

The aspect of Catholic community life, which must permeate a Catholic university in its totality, is an aspect to which

the Holy Father often returns with persistence. He has often stated that a Catholic university is a "community in which the serious application to study and scientific research, aiming at truth, takes place in a space and environment of shared Christian life".

4) An essential element in the view which the Holy Father has of a Catholic university is its service to the whole man. The Catholic university does not have a purely pragmatic scope of forming scientists and scholars for future society in view of employment, of a salary, or of mere human progress. In the first place, its aim is that of serving the whole man that he may acquire that "planetary humanism" which is proper to him. The Pope affirms that the "Catholic university must have an anthropology enlightened by faith, consistent with the faith, in particular with creation and the redemption of Christ". "It must demonstrate the full significance of the human person regenerated by Christ and therefore foster the whole development of the person". It therefore must not limit itself to the narrow horizon of human sciences, but transcend them with a profound vision of faith. The Catholic university must not stop at *homo faber* (craftsman), at *homo socialis* (member of society), at *homo literarius* (man of culture); it must make a leap of quality in all its expressions and in all its activities in order to draw the most profound meaning of human life regenerated by Christ. It is in this sense that the Catholic university is, more than the other universities, a service of man and society. It does not feel satisfied with mere scientific research or with a teaching staff which limits its horizons to contingent aims. It raises its gaze to higher goals, pointing out values and perspective which render the vision of man complete because it offers a breath of universality and spirituality which other higher cultural centres do not have. It will also be the guarantor of that pluralistic culture which is talked about so much today, but which often is so easily disregarded.

5) In this constant reference to the Christian view of life, the Catholic university must have a link with those who have been placed in the Church by Christ as teachers of the faith: the sacred hierarchy, which becomes guardian of the most authentic values of a Catholic university. The Pope often emphasizes this aspect. A Catholic university, precisely because it is Catholic, becomes an ecclesial fact and therefore cannot remove itself from the reality of being part of a living and believing body, in which specific tasks and services exist, which are willed by Christ and to which everyone must refer.

6) In addition, the Pope looks on Catholic universities as centres of hope for the future, since from them must come those who will be "the leaven in the mass". Catholic universities do not exhaust their mission when the students leave them with the academic title bestowed; they continue to spread their work through the activities of their alumni, who in the Catholic universities have learned "to think", to evaluate, to orient their lives according to the principles of the Gospel. Therefore, the Catholic universities must be especially attentive to the permanent formation of their students, who should always be able to find in their university a reference point which is valid for their whole life.

7) Then there is a reference which returns often in the Pope's discourses: the importance of the university apostolate. But discussing this subject would take us too far off the subject.

Three principal sources

There are three principal sources which the Holy Father keeps in mind when he speaks of Catholic universities. They are the conciliar Decree *Gravissimum Educationis*, which in number 10 treats of Catholic universities and their function; the Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which confronts the problem of culture in a Christian view; and the document prepared by the Catholic universities at a congress desired by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1972, and which bears the title "The Catholic University in the Modern World".

The Decree *Gravissimum Educationis* states: "The Catholic university should acquire, as it were, a public, stable and universal influence in the whole process of the promotion of higher culture. The graduates of these institutes should be outstanding in learning, ready to undertake the more responsible duties of society, and to be witnesses in the world to the true faith" (no. 10).

The university document

The document "The Catholic University in the Modern World" states: "Since the scope of a Catholic university, in so far as it is Catholic, is to ensure in an institutional way a Christian presence in the university world in the context of the great

problems of modern society, its essential characteristics will be the following:

- 1) a Christian inspiration, not only individual, but community;
- 2) fidelity to Christ's message, just as it is transmitted by the Church;
- 3) a constant effort of reflection in the light of the Catholic faith on the ceaseless acquisitions of human knowledge, to which it strives to contribute with its research;
- 4) an institutional commitment to the service of the People of God and of the human family moving towards the transcendent end which gives meaning to life.

As you can see, in his discourses the Holy Father has commented on one or the other of these programmatic documents, explaining them at great length with his supreme Magisterium.

I cannot end this meeting without a last observation. You have singular good fortune! That of being able to boast of a founder, Father Agostino Gemelli, who anticipated by many decades a view of the Catholic university that I have outlined in the wake of pontifical teaching. While reading the numerous discourses given at the beginning of each academic year, I found the same elements which the Council and the pontifical Magisterium have spelled out and clarified.

A "true" university

How much Father Gemelli emphasized the fact that the Catholic university must be a "true" university, a "centre of scientific activities". And at the same time "Catholic", that is, rooted in the Christian message in all its expressions, and a faithful custodian of the most solid Catholic principles. A university "of the Church and for the Church" maintained on "a high supernatural level". These are things on which I shall not dwell since I would have much to learn from you.

I am certain, dear professors and dear students, that with such a great teacher you will be better able to understand the lofty teaching of Pope John Paul II on the scope and aims of a Catholic university, and you will be more ready to put them into effect with all your strength. This is my heartfelt wish.

CARD. WILLIAM WAKEFIELD BAUM

Psychological Aspects Of Religion

By Jordan Aumann, O.P.

Since William James published his classical work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and Professor R. H. Thouless published his Gifford Lectures under the title, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, early in the 1900's, there has been a steady and ever deeper investigation into the psychology of religious belief and practice. In modern times we can mention the work of outstanding psychologists and psychiatrists such as Gordon Allport, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget, Antoine Vergote and Barry McLaughlin.¹ All of these authors see religion as a positive value or even a necessary aspect of human life, and they have many insights that are of special importance to the theologian, the spiritual director and the pastor of souls.

Of course there have also been those who disdain and reject religious belief and practice as something detrimental to human development. Thus, Feuerback considered religion to be an invention of mankind because of fear, as one can verify in primitive societies. For Karl Marx, religion is a tool of the capitalists, who promise happiness and prosperity in the next life to the victims of economic repression in this life. The French philosopher Comte saw religion as the result of ignorance, while Freud branded religion as a regression to infantile behavior patterns which, in an adult, constitutes an obsessional neurosis.

We, in turn, reject all these opinions because we believe in a personal God who has intervened in human history and has sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer. We further believe that man has a natural desire for God and hence

¹ The following works are especially recommended: R. H. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 1971; G. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion*, Macmillan, New York, 1952; A. Vergote, *The Religious Man*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1969; E. F. O'Doherty, *Religion and Psychology*, Alba House, New York, 1977; B. McLaughlin, *Nature, Grace and Religious Development*, Newman, Westminster, Maryland, 1964.

a need for religion, which necessarily involves a supernatural factor that we call "grace". Finally, we hold that grace does not destroy the personality of the individual, but works through it and perfects it.² Consequently, to develop one's religious belief and practice is at the same time to strive for the maturity that is the goal of every human person.

We do concede, however, that the empirical psychologist may — and, indeed, must — legitimately exclude all supernatural elements of religion from his investigation, referring to them simply as "factor x" or "the unknown factor." Obviously, this does not mean that the psychologist is an agnostic or an atheist; it simply means that the supernatural and the transcendent lie outside the field of his investigation. This was affirmed as early as 1903 by the French professor, T. Flournoy, who stated that the psychologist does not affirm or deny the transcendent in the objects of religion but prescinds from a problem that lies outside his scientific competence. The same opinion was voiced more recently by Gordon Allport:

"Psychology as a science cannot prove or disprove the affirmation of religion or the truth of its content... because the element of transcendency escapes the competency of empirical science and observation."³

So much for the limits of the psychological study and investigation of religious belief and practice; the next question is how to define religion in that context. St. Thomas Aquinas had stated very clearly and simply — as is his custom — that "religion denotes properly a relationship to God, for it is he to whom we ought to be bound as our unfailing principle, to whom our choice should be directed as our last end."⁴ Now let us see how the psychologists themselves define religion.

William James: "Religion shall mean for us the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."⁵

² St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, art. 8, ad 2.

³ G. Allport, *Becoming: Basic Consideration for a Psychology of Personality*, Yale University, 1955.

⁴ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 1.

⁵ W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Collins, Glasgow, 1979, p. 50.

R. H. Thouless: "Religion is an attitude (or mode of adjustment) to the world which includes reference to a wider environment than that of the spatio-temporal physical world."⁶

Antoine Vergote: "Religion is an experienced, practical relationship with what is believed in as a supernatural being. It comprises beliefs, attitudes and behavior."⁷

All of the foregoing definitions of religion, including that of St. Thomas Aquinas, postulate an experienced relationship with the unseen, transcendental order of the divine. This means that the objects and content of religion must be accepted in faith; they must elicit a reaction or response that constitutes belief. Everything begins with faith because, as St. Paul says: "It is in the spirit that we eagerly await the justification we hope for, and only faith can yield it" (Gal. 5:5). And in the Letter to the Hebrews (13:1) we read: "Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see." In this regard it is worth noting a statement made by William James:

"[Religion] consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto. This belief and this adjustment are the religious attitude in the soul... All our attitudes — moral, practical or emotional, as well as religious — are due to the 'objects' of our consciousness... Such objects may be present to our senses, or they may be present only to our thought. In either case they elicit from us a *reaction*; and the reaction due to things of thought is notoriously in many cases as strong as that due to sensible presence. It may even be stronger."⁸

FACTORS AFFECTING RELIGION

The capacity for faith is a characteristic of all human beings, but the stimulation and development of faith depend to a large extent on certain psychological factors. According to Catholic teaching, faith is a supernatural, infused virtue and a gift from God. It cannot be merited in a strict sense nor is it the "end-product" of human effort or theological arguments.

⁶ R. H. Thouless, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷ A. Vergote, *The Religious Man*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1969.

⁸ W. James, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Nevertheless, there are certain psychological factors that more readily dispose the individual to receive the gift of faith, and from that, to practice a specific religion. These initiatives or stimuli of faith and religion have been described in detail by Professor Robert Thouless in his *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1971.

1) *The Social Factor*

This is an external factor that comprises the influences exerted on an individual by other persons and by one's social environment in general. This factor is especially evident in children, who are very impressionable and tend to imitate the example of others; and also in adolescents, who tend to conform to their own peer group. The psychological process involved in the social factor is called *suggestion*, a technique that is also used in salesmanship and in propaganda. It is a process of communication that results in the acceptance of a statement or the imitation of behavior without any adequate rational basis or proof being given. Thus, a child will readily accept what a teacher or parent says simply because the teacher or parent said so; or will imitate the behavior of elders simply because elders act in a given way. But even adults who are docile and receptive will respond favorably to suggestion, as is evident in their reaction to the clergy.

The techniques that make suggestion effective are the repetition of statements or actions in a confident manner or the statements or actions coming from a person in authority. In regard to status or authority as reinforcing the power of suggestion, one should note the importance of status symbols, titles and uniforms or vestments. For example, the uniform of the policeman or soldier, the habit of the religious, the priestly garb and the vestments worn in the liturgy are very effective means of disposing people to respond favorably to the authority of the individual. In the area of religion it is the parents, teachers and priests who have the greatest influence through the technique of suggestion, but they should remember that people are usually more impressed by the *example* of others than by their words.

2) *The Cosmic Factor*

This factor consists in an experience of something in nature — a storm at sea, a majestic mountain, a beautiful sunset — and intuitively interpreting it in a religious sense. Usual-

ly this factor is stronger in primitive societies or in those who live close to nature. There are certain aspects of nature that tend to contribute more immediately to the arousal of the religious sentiment. Thus, the beneficence and providence of nature prompt feelings of gratitude to God for a good harvest; the harmony and order of the laws of nature can stimulate religious feelings in the scientist; the beauty of a sunset or a perfect orchid can be seen as a reflection of God's glory; and the majesty of a snow-capped mountain can fill the soul with religious awe. The psalms of the Divine Office are filled with examples of religious sentiment aroused by God's creation and among the saints we need only to point to Francis of Assisi as an outstanding example of a person who contacted the invisible God through the visible works of his hand.

3) *The Moral Conflict*

This is a factor that arises from within the individual person and usually manifests itself as a conflict or tension between one's belief or behavior versus the teaching or moral laws of one's religion. It can occur at any time in the life of an individual, although normally it accompanies the stress of puberty and adolescence. There are good reasons for this, since it is at the adolescent period that the youth reacts against parental control and discipline, search for his own identity, and face the choice of his life's vocation.

Modern psychologists of religion tend to believe that there is no specifically *religious* conflict but that it is all part of the general adaptation of the individual's values, attitudes and beliefs.⁹ Consequently, parents and clergy need not be alarmed at the doubts and rejections that occur during the adolescent period. It does not mean that the young person is "losing his faith" or rejecting religion; he may simply be seeking a rational basis and understanding of his religion. What we would expect to occur at the end of the search is what psychologists call "conversion." A contemporary author explains it as follows:

"In considering the nature of conversion, it is important to note that in addition to conversion to the faith one must also note the conversion from an immature, inchoate, informal or implicit faith to mature, explicit, adult commitment. Perhaps we have failed to understand the nature of the transition that occurs very often in adolescence from the

⁹ Cf. E. F. O'Doherty, *op. cit.*

immature type of faith of the child to the more explicit faith of the adult... It is here above all that one sees the true nature of conversion, i.e., *the voluntary, conscious choice of commitment to a value system which may change one's life, and to a personal faith which certainly should do so.* This can and does occur most often without the internal emotional experiences described by some authors as if they were of the essence of conversion."¹⁰

In modern society we would normally expect the religious conflict and subsequent conversion to occur between the ages of sixteen and twenty, making allowances for differing cultures. The groundwork of one's faith and religion is laid during the years of childhood, but the questioning, the doubting and the conversion should take place during late adolescence. This points to the necessity of Catholic education on the secondary and college level as well as the need for the clergy to preach doctrinal sermons. All too many of our Catholic faithful go through life with the religious education of a child, which means that theirs is an infantile religion.

It should also be noted that moral conflict and conversion are not restricted to adolescence. Anytime a person has fallen away from the observance of God's law, he is in need of conversion. Like St. John the Baptist and Christ himself, the priest must be constantly urging repentance and conversion on the faithful. In this respect, some of the Catholic preachers can learn a great deal from the sermons of Protestant ministers.

4) *The Emotional Factor*

This is another internal factor and it can be stimulated from within the individual (through prayer, meditation, fantasies of a religious nature) or from without (by ritual, music, oratory, visual aids). The majority of persons who practice religion will at some time or other experience this emotional or affective response and it has a great part to play in the deepening of one's faith and the strength of one's religious commitment. The Church has always been aware of the importance of the emotional factor, as is witnessed by the way in which the Church has fostered the fine arts, made use of sacred oratory, provided an emotionally satisfying liturgy of rites and ceremonies. Of all these media, however, the most potent means for inducing a religious emotional experience is sacred oratory — the spoken word.

¹⁰ See E. F. O'Doherty, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

Unfortunately, the emotional factor can also deteriorate into pure sentimentality, and this occurs when religious people seek the emotional experience as an end in itself. Then, as St. John of the Cross remarked, they are seeking *themselves* in God rather than seeking God in themselves. Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a great deal of interest in the emotional factor of religion, although this has always been a characteristic of the Protestant Pentecostal churches. With the expansion of the Catholic Charismatic Movement we are witnessing religious experiences that are highly emotional in content. A terminology common to Protestants has found its way into Catholic circles: "baptism in the Spirit," "slain in the Spirit," and "reborn or born-again Christians." In fact in some countries, where the Charismatic Movement has become ecumenical, significant numbers of devout Catholics are leaving their own Church to join Protestant sects.

As regards the phenomena that sometimes accompany an intensely emotional religious experience, such as speaking in tongues, a state of trance or semi-automatic dancing, the psychologist Thouless has stated: "From the psychological point of view, glossolalia (speaking in tongues) is a speech automatism arising under certain conditions of *expectancy*, which is commonly felt by those experiencing it to be a valuable ingredient in their religious lives. It is not a phenomenon peculiar to Christianity; it has been shown to be widespread and ancient in non-Christian religions of certain types, particularly those which have a tradition of spirit-possession and in which inspired speech is a recognized cultural element."¹¹ From a theological point of view all these phenomena call for a discernment of spirits and, equally important, that practitioners of the charismatic receive a solid, orthodox education in ascetical and mystical theology.

5) *The Human Needs Factor*

The universal practice of the prayer of petition in all religions has led some psychologists to list "human needs" as the predominant factor in all religious belief and practice. This is surely evident not only in primitive religions, where people are more readily threatened by the destructive forces of nature, but also, for example, in the Catholic liturgy, which is permeated with petitions to God. And rightly so, for man is dependent.

¹¹ R. H. Thouless, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

on God and, as the poet Tennyson stated, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

The psychologist Maslow described a *basic* human need as one whose absence causes illness, anxiety or suffering; one that is here and now desired above all other needs; and one whose fulfillment brings peace and security. Among the basic, innate human needs are self-preservation, nutrition, freedom, human rights, justice, the need to love and be loved, and religion. There are other needs that are *acquired*, and some of them may actually be harmful to the individual, such as heavy-smoking, drug addiction or alcoholism, but they nevertheless make their demands in a vehement manner. Hence a person should be prudent in cultivating needs and practice moderation in the satisfaction of any kind of human need.

In modern, technological society, however, psychologists are discovering that one of the more commonly unfulfilled human needs is *the need to love and to be loved*, accompanied by the need for self-affirmation and self-acceptance. In this respect Professor Thouless has stated: "Every human being needs the security and consistency of motivation given by the sense of loving and of being loved. If his ordinary life does not satisfy these needs, he may be driven to find other satisfaction."¹²

The need to love and to be loved is identified as the emotional or psychic element of the sex instinct, and this should be recognized in a special way by those who live a celibate life. Deprived as they are of the companionship of a spouse, celibates should find satisfaction for their psychic needs in friendship and in relating well with other persons. One author has wisely cautioned celibates of the danger of finding their satisfaction in eating or drinking intemperately. Basically, it is a question of being motivated by self-centered "need" love or rising to the level of generous "gift" love, the *amor amicitiae* that is charity.

6) *The Intellectual Factor*

According to William James, the intellectual factor plays a very secondary role in the religious belief and practice of most persons. Faith and religion are not primarily the result of an intellectual process; they involve many non-rational, emotional and voluntary elements. Nevertheless, a person's religious belief and practice will be much more stable and secure if based

(Continued on page 123.)

¹² R. H. Thouless, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

The Involvement of The Church in Politics

As reported in the local papers, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Most Reverend Bruno Torpigliani, gave the inaugural lecture of the course on the social doctrine of the Church, organized by *Theological Centrum*, on 18 July 1984. This course is intended for diocesan priests, and during the open forum the participants engaged in a lively interchange with Msgr. Torpigliani.

The text of the Apostolic Nuncio's answers to questions raised follows:

Question: To the mind of the general public, including non-Catholics, Your Excellency as Papal Nuncio not only represent the Holy Father in the Philippines but also exercise certain functions in the name of the Pope, and even supervise with authority the actuations of all the Bishops in the Philippines. Is this notion correct or needs to be further clarified?

Answer: Aiming at giving a right answer to this question, may I quote the New Code of Canon Law, which says:

"To Legates of the Roman Pontiff (the Apostolic Nuncio for that matter) is entrusted the office of representing in a stable manner the person of the Roman Pontiff in the particular Churches, or in the States and public authorities to whom they are sent." (Canon 363, par. 1)

This, in general, is the Apostolic Nuncio's office.

His main competence or "principal" task is continually, to make more firm and effective the bonds of unity which exist between the Holy See and particular Churches..." (Canon 364).

Regarding the rapport he ought to have with the Bishops, he (the Apostolic Nuncio) has the responsibility: (To quote Canon 364 again:)

1. To inform the Holy See about the conditions in which the particular Churches find themselves, as well as about all matters which affect the life of the Church and the good of souls;

2. To assist the Bishops by action and advice, while leaving intact the exercise of their lawful power;

3. To foster close relations with the Episcopal Conference, offering it every assistance;

4. To work with the Bishops to safeguard, so far as the rulers of the State are concerned, those things which relate to the mission of the Church and of the Apostolic See.

In the light of the foregoing as established by Canon Law, I do not believe that one could properly speak of a true and proper supervision "with authority" on actuaciones of bishops. The Nuncio is not an Inquisitor or Investigator of Bishops but rather he is above all a fraternal co-worker or collaborator in those things which affect the good of both the universal and particular Church.

Question: Again, begging the kindness of Your Excellency, if we may probe more specifically: in the light of certain situations in our country, affecting the relationship between the Church and the State, what is the position of the Holy See represented by the Papal Nuncio on the actions or declarations of local Bishops?

Answer: In reply to this question I wish immediately to state categorically that I have the least intention of ever judging anyone: be they individuals or be they the College of Bishops of the Philippines.

Each Bishop in the Episcopal Conference has his own specific competence and responsibilities which I intend to respect fully and without any reservation.

Whatever the case may be, the silence manifested by the Apostolic Nuncio brought about by certain situations should not be unfairly construed or interpreted as either condemning or approving or giving positive support to some action or actions taken by bishops either individually or collectively. The Bishops are fully aware that in the exercise of their rights, for example, in initiating proposals or in as-

suming some responsibility of a certain program, they are accountable to God, to their conscience, to the Apostolic See and to history.

What the Apostolic Nuncio does is: he observes and reflects on what is happening and what is affecting the local church; he offers his thought or opinion when he is asked; if he deems it right to grant or act on something, he does not hesitate to do so; and if he feels it is within his competence and he feels responsible to issue instructions, he does so.

In order to act within the sphere of his competence, he is duty-bound to inform the Holy See of whatever happens to or is of interest to the Local Church. He is also attuned to whatever reactions or feedback that spring from public opinion in whatever category.

I would like to add that today with the fast means of communication, easily made available, news or information sent by the Apostolic Nuncio may seem at times superfluous inasmuch as they generally arrive at a later date. But still they are useful if at all to confirm the reliability of some news or certain information related to some news that have disseminated through other sources. News from the Apostolic Nunciature may also indicate the impact of these news on public opinion; for example, initiatives or proposals taken by Bishops and the different reactions gleaned from various sectors of the country regarding them.

If afterwards the Holy See judges or finds it fit to intervene on matters where the life of the Church is affected, certainly he will not be remiss in doing so.

Question: Recently, some media reports have aired accusations, referring to "political meddling" on the part of the Church. How should we understand this issue?

Answer: The fact that the Catholic Church is the object of repeated criticisms in that special area called "political meddling" should not be a cause for surprise.

The problem, for me, is not the number of criticisms nor the number of their sources but above all the problem consists in examining the validity of these criticisms.

Christ was also condemned as a consequence of presumed political accusations. On the contrary, many Chris-

tians of the first centuries became martyrs also because they did not want to be involved in politics by refusing, for example, to recognize the divine character claimed by political authority of that period, and reserving their worship only to the true God.

As you see, the nature of certain accusations varies in one and a thousand ways.

I would say very frankly that if the Church is truly meddling in politics she deserves indeed to expect attacks and accusations which may not be totally unjustified. The same thing would be true if the State were to try to intervene in the affairs of the Church. But, here is the problem: when can one say that the Church is meddling with or in politics?

Is it meddling when she clarifies and defends some aspects of morality which are inter-related to social politics? And in the course of performing this task the Church runs the risk of earning the displeasure of politicians. These are TWO altogether different issues.

Politics is not exempted from moral judgment. Vatican Council II clearly affirmed this. And the Church cannot exempt herself from pronouncing certain judgments within and only within the moral sphere. If she exceeds in this, she is wrong and undoubtedly falls prey to error.

At any rate, take note that when a Church renounces always and methodically her prophetic functions — she cannot be considered a Church inspired by the Gospel and the teaching and example of Christ.

And finally, to conclude my reply to this specific question, please allow me to present two quotations from the Holy Father. The first is addressed to the bishops of Argentina, and the second to the faithful in general, pronounced in Geneva:

"Your purpose is not to propose technical solutions to the sum total of problems which are pressing upon your brothers and sisters: the defense of life, of every man's dignity, of his rights, of his duties toward God and neighbor, here understood as his fellow citizen with whom he shares his country and, consequently, with common respon-

sibilities toward the common good. Your purpose is rather to reveal the light and loving presence of Christ the Savior in these complex situations." Pope John Paul II to Bishops of Argentina, 1 June 1984 (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 23 July 1984, p. 8).

"How then do you place the intervention of the Church and its teachings in this (political) context? Like Isaiah and like Jesus, she has no intention of making a merely political discourse. With her religious authority inherited from the Lord, the Church does not even have the competence to offer technical solutions to your problems. She leaves that responsibility to the christian laity and to the christian organizations of the laity, capable of devising, with their solidly formed christian consciences, solutions corresponding to your concrete needs." Pope John Paul II at Mass at the Palexpo, Geneva, 15 June 1982. (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 2 August 1982, p. 5).

Question: It is generally accepted by all sectors of society that the relations between the Church and the State are based on mutual cooperation which avoids any interference in each one's respective sphere of competence. How would this principle be applied to the situation of our country?

Answer: Certainly, the political community and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their own spheres. Since both institutions are ordered to the fulfillment of the human person, the service they render to man will redound the more effectively to the welfare of all; insofar as they practice better cooperation according to the local and prevailing situation.

Any interference of one of the institutions in the field of the other is not acceptable, whether it is the Church that interferes in the affairs of the State or the State in the affairs of the Church. If this were to happen, each party would have the right and the duty to intervene to avoid such interference or "meddling". This intervention, to my mind, ought to come about or happen only by way of dialogue without treading the path of antagonism and accusations.

Question: Your Excellency has cited Vatican II as clearly affirming that the Church may at times pronounce moral judgments on certain political events and issues. What would your Excellency say if some people insist that the Church should limit her activity and judgments to the strictly spiritual issues?

Answer: There is an old and wise saying which says: "Unum facere et aliud non omittere" — which means — that when it is necessary, one has to defend moral issues connected to political affairs without losing perspective, however, of other serious problems of a different nature which might present themselves to the Church.

There would certainly be grave harm done if the Faithful would have the impression that the Church's priority of concern would be political matters. This would certainly be to the detriment of other issues of importance which normally accompany the growth of the Church.

I am confident that nobody to whom the leadership of the Church is entrusted would ever consciously assume such great responsibility of risking such a stance!

Question: To conclude, we would like to ask a summary of principles that could enlighten and orient priests in their difficult role as pastors of the faithful who are presently confronted with many social and political problems.

Answer: The secularist mind wishes to exclude Gospel, Church and faith, from the social, the economic, the political — sometimes even the cultural — area of human society. The Church cannot accept this.

The Christian faith values political life and political action since the political dimension is a constitutive dimension of human beings and a relevant area of human societal life.

Christ gave his Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order, but a religious mission, out of which come a function, — light and energy — which can serve the structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine love.

In the fulfillment of this mission, belonging to the whole Church, the Church herself distinguishes between the divine roles of various sectors of the Christian community. In this connection, we should distinguish between the *science* of politics (normative-ethical dimension) and the *art* of politics (technical dimension): the Church's role in the former is through her sacred ministers in the light of the Gospel and the natural law, while her role in the latter is through the laity, with pluralism of options.

The laity, by their very vocation are called to sanctify the World from within, so that the concrete activity in the socio-political world is entrusted to them through the political action.

In all this, the priests must respect the laity's maturity, trying to avoid any kind of restoration of a new political clericalism.

Very often, lay people have the technical and professional competence in the matter of "political", socio and economic options, which the priest and even "the Official Church" herself do not have, at least as a general rule.

So, what is the priest's role in the presence of the Church in the "socio-political arena"?

According to the teaching of the Church:

1) The priests, are, first of all "ministers and servants of the unity constructed not on the basis of natural bonds alone, or of political positions, ideologies, strategies of any sort (Presbyterorum Ordinis).

2) As any citizen of a free society, priests have a right to select personal options in socio-economic and political issues — In the interest of ecclesial unity, they the priests, "can sometimes be obliged to abstain from exercising their right in this area" (Synod of 1971, Ministerial priesthood, 66-67).

3) It is forbidden for them to take leadership or active militancy of any political party, or to assume political posts in the state (Synod of 1977, 66-68).

4) In the areas of socio-economic and the political, the priest's role is to educate the faithful starting from the Gospel, towards justice and political commitment; so lay people themselves are enabled to search and work out their own effective and real solutions for social problems.

5) Part of the priest's educational work is sometimes to denounce injustices and oppressions, but clearly on the basis of the Gospel and the Church's doctrine, not from ideological analysis or constructions, much less from the hatred against the supposed authors of such injustices and oppressions.

These my statements are not new at all, I have repeatedly made them in many circumstances before the assemblies of priests and bishops during my eleven years of mission in the Philippines.

May I recall, for instance, the Semi-Annual Meeting of the CBCP in Baguio City on July 10, 1982, when the Philippine Hierarchy itself wanted my speech on "The Church's presence and action in the world" printed and spread, as a synthesis of the Church doctrine on this delicate matter.

BRUNO TORPIGLIANI, D.D.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RELIGION

(Continued from page 123)

CONCLUSION

Although brief and incomplete, the foregoing comments should provide the clergy with material for thought and for application to their pastoral ministry. Touching the social factor, which is a dominant influence in the lives of children and adolescents, we may ask whether we are fostering a truly Christian environment in home and family, and whether our own words and actions elicit a favorable response from the faithful. As regards the factor of moral conflict, are we offering a sound and orthodox catechesis to our questioning youth and are we, in our sermons, reaching out for the conversion of those whose lives do not conform to the teaching of the Church? The emotional factor, which is so important to many Christians, should prompt the clergy to keep vigilance over the charismatic aspect which can so easily become excessively emotional and flamboyant. Finally, the intellectual factor can be promoted, not only by providing sound Catholic education from the classroom and the pulpit, but by making better use of the communications media.

DOCUMENTATION

THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH ON LIBERATION THEOLOGIES*

By His Excellency, the Most Reverend Archbishop Bruno Torpigliani, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines.

It is now well known that an Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" was issued on Monday, September 3, 1984, by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (SCDF), Vatican City, — which some international wire-services considered a "condemnation of the Theology of Liberation."

The document was actually dated August 6, 1984, and signed by the Cardinal Prefect of the SCDF, the eminent German theologian, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, one of the theological advisers at Vatican II, and formerly professor at prestigious university faculties of Theology.

Because of the widespread interest in the topic, Archbishop Torpigliani, Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, was invited to prepare a "brief introduction" to the document. This introduction is given in Question and Answer form for the convenience of our readers.

Note: SCDF stands for Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. "TL" stands for "Theologies of Liberation"

1. What is the occasion for the publication of this Instruction on "Liberation Theology" from the SCDF?

Answer: Almost certainly, the repeated petitions of individual Bishops and Episcopal Conferences all over the world, that guidelines on the "Theology of Liberation" be given to them and their priests and faithful. In an earlier article of his own, Cardinal Ratzinger spoke of the "theology of liberation" as

* An introduction to the text of the Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation" Issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (SCDF).

spreading all over the world, and serious problems arising from its teachings. The Holy See usually addresses itself to a theological question only after repeated petitions for clarifications coming from Bishops and their priests and communities.

We might recall that the former Jesuit General, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, wrote a letter of clarification on "certain aspects" too, of "Marxist Analysis" in 1980, because Jesuit superiors in Latin America had repeatedly asked him to do so. I would think the Instruction of the Congregation on Doctrine (hereafter referred to SCDF) is a response to similar request.

2. Can you sum up quite briefly for our readers the "gist" of the Instruction, so that "they who run can read"?

Answer: That is a tall order, as you realize! But let me cite these words that Cardinal Ratzinger himself used, in his Vatican Press Conference, on April 13 this year:

The "Theology of Liberation" (he said) has *diverse expressions*:

- some expressions are entirely legitimate, even necessary;
- others need to be criticized, critically evaluated;
- others cannot be accepted.

With regard to the theologies of liberation, then, a *critical reflection is indispensable*, from the viewpoint of the authentically liberative dimensions of the Christian Faith.

The Faith, in reality, is liberative, but on condition that it remains *authentic faith*, faith that has not been contaminated by "extraneous" elements.

What are the expressions of the theologies of liberation which cannot be accepted?

Those are the kinds of "TL" which reduce the Christian faith to the merely "earthly, intra-historical liberation"; the kinds of "TL" which use Marxist Analysis — in an insufficiently critical way — as a so-called "scientific instrument" with which to interpret history, economics, society, and even the Scriptures and the Christian message itself.

* This text has been partially revised (N. 10) and amplified (NN. 23-24) thus updating the text previously published in the local newspapers.

3. What authority, for Catholics, does this document possess?

Answer: The last paragraph of the Instruction of the SCDF says that this text was adopted by the Congregation in one of its ordinary sessions. It was then read by Pope John Paul II himself, who approved it and then ordered Cardinal Ratzinger to have it published.

We might say then that it is authoritative or official teaching of the Holy See, bearing the personal approval of the Holy Father himself. It forms part, then, of what is called "the ordinary teaching" of the Holy See. Catholics then have the duty, according to their state of life and their position in the Christian community, to get to know it and study it, and to accept the document as providing authoritative guidelines for evaluating "theologies of liberation" and guidelines for any position-taking, if this is called for.

4. The international wire services speak of a "condemnation" of the "theologies of liberation." Is this an accurate statement?

Answer: As it stands, no. The document, with great care and nuance, enumerates several elements to be considered: the aspiration to liberation, the different ways of expressing that aspiration, the different movements which try to make that aspiration operative, etc. — To be fair to the Instruction, one must make certain distinctions clearly. There are some points of methodology and points of teaching and "inferences drawn" from these which are seen as deviations, or points which lead to deviations, — Yes.

5. Can you perhaps tell us what these different elements in the concept of "liberation" and the "theologies of liberation" might be?

Answer: It is difficult to take them up briefly, but we can try. — There is, the SCDF says, the powerful aspiration that increasingly manifests itself everywhere, for liberation. An aspiration especially found among people "who bear the burdens of misery", people who belong "to the disinherited classes," the marginalized groups in society. An aspiration for liberation from cultural, political, racial and economic oppressions.

— There are diverse ways by which this aspiration is expressed: in theoretical positions, in practical manifestations; for instance, in social and political movements for liberation, or in concrete ways of action, and the like.

6. Thus the "theologies of liberation" (TL) is seen as one expression among many, of an underlying aspiration for liberation among the poor, the powerless, the marginalized and oppressed?

Answer: Yes, The Instruction says there are diverse currents of thought and programs of action which try to give substance to the aspirations for liberation.

For instance, there are ideological currents of thoughts and corresponding movements which have their own proposed goals, strategies, choice of means (e.g., violence) which attempt concretely to effect liberation from various forms of oppression.

Surely here in the Philippines we are aware of many such ideologies and also of "liberation" forces and movements!

7. How then would one characterize the "theologies of liberation" (TL) among such movements?

Answer: The SCDF calls it "a theological and pastoral movement." This "movement" involves a special concern for the poor and for victims of oppression. It begets a commitment of justice, a commitment to the promotion of justice and human rights in society.

This concern and this commitment in turn give rise to theologies — in the plural — of liberation. These different "theologies" hold diverse theological (even ideological) positions. These diverse positions are more often that not quite incompatible with one another.

Descriptively one must then speak of different kinds of "TL".

Thus one must be quite careful of a sweeping statement (as made in the wire-services reports) that the "theology of liberation" has been condemned.

8. You spoke, citing Cardinal Ratzinger, of "quite acceptable" forms of the theology of liberation. Can you explain this a little?

Answer: The official teaching offices of the Church (the Roman Pontiff's, the Episcopal Conferences, the Synod of Bishops — with the approval of the Pope) have issued texts and documents which embody and express the "aspirations for liberation" from various forms of unjust oppression... texts and documents which formulate expressions, which we believe are based authentically on the Gospel and on the Christian Tradition, and coherent with those bases of Christian thought and life.

9. You say that there is no outright condemnation of the total movement of the "theologies of liberation." What then does the Instruction intend? What does it do?

Answer: Let me cite a really key paragraph in the Instruction in reply to your question.

It says its purpose is "to draw the attention of pastors, theologians and all the faithful,

- to the deviation, and risks of deviation
 - damaging to the Christian faith and Christian living,
 - which are brought about by certain forms of liberation theology,
 - which use, in an insufficiently critical manner,
 - concepts borrowed from various currents of marxist thought".
- (cfr. Introduction)

Let me say that every "sense line" in the above formulation is quite important. Every word is carefully chosen. The document, it seems to me, cannot be clearer as to what its own intent is.

10. In sum, then, what are given to us are guidelines for the evaluation of "TL" in its various forms. These guidelines are in the form of "warnings regarding certain deviations and risks of deviation" from the Christian faith and the teaching of the Church. Is this a correct way of looking at the Instruction?

Answer: You are quite correct. Necessarily, the instruction cannot give us a "complete picture" of the "TL". That would

take a good-sized book to do! Nor does it intend to develop a more-or-less complete presentation of an acceptable form of "TL". The Instruction promises that such a presentation will be forthcoming, — hopefully after this Instruction has been studied, its points discussed in some depth, and the results of such discussion sent to the SCDF for its own use!

So, necessarily the Instruction dwells on the "negative points", on methods which are not sufficiently critical, on principles and conclusions which in the end lead to harm to Christian faith and Christian life, and — very importantly — harm to the reality of authentic human liberation also.

The perspectives of Faith include an integral vision of man. When we speak of true human liberation, we must have an integral vision of man, or else we reduce human liberation to some dimensions of man only. A reduced vision of human liberation, in the end, can be destructive of man; it imprisons man in other oppressions!

11. Are there any theologians or theological writers "condemned" by the Instruction?

Answer: No. Not a single theologian is named by name. Not a single book or article. Rather, certain determined points of methodology and teaching are given and briefly explained.

We might say, the Congregation of Doctrine says: here are the points that are unacceptable, that are incompatible with Christian Faith and Life. "If the shoe fits, wear it!"

12. What are some of these points of methodology and teaching?

Answer: We could here at least mention: a) the uncritical use of "Marxist Analysis", and b) the Marxist understanding of Truth and the Marxist position on violence.

13. What does the Instruction say regarding "Marxist Analysis" It seems this is seen as a really key element, in relation to "TL"...

Answer: "Marxist Analysis" is — in unacceptable forms of "TL" — simply accepted as a "a scientific analysis of the struc-

tural causes of poverty" and oppression. This so-called "scientific analysis" is then "applied to given Third World situations" — without the thorough going critique of the analysis itself.

Then from such application of Marxist Analysis, one can (they say) move to enlightened and effective action. And that effective action is participation in the class struggle as understood by Marxism.

As the SCDF says, the great difficulty here is that the ideological principles of marxist thought are intimately (perhaps inextricably) interwoven with this so-called "scientific analysis." The basics of marxist ideology are so intimately connected with the elements of marxist analysis that unless a thoroughly critical examination of Marxist Analysis is undertaken from the stand-point of Christian Faith itself, can one bring into the "TL" elements which are contrary to the Gospel. This then produces deviations from Christian Faith in some forms of "TL."

14. You spoke also of a Marxist understanding of Truth and a Marxist position on Violence. What might these be, according to the SCDF?

Answer: First, on the Marxist understanding of Truth.

"There is no truth but the truth which is found (and "made") in the struggle of the revolutionary class."

Thus, only those who engage in "revolutionary class struggle" (as understood in Marxism) can acquire "true consciousness." Only those who have "true liberated consciousness" can in turn "do the analysis" correctly.

Second, the Marxist position on Violence.

Since the class struggle is "the fundamental law of history" there are necessarily two kinds of violence within existing society:

- the violence of the rich over the poor, or the oppressors over the oppressed, and
- the necessary counter-violence of the revolution of the poor and oppressed which must reverse the violence of the rich and the oppressor.

Thus the class struggle and the violence it calls — is an objective and necessary law, the law of history. Only one who struggles in accordance with this law “acts scientifically”; only he or she “makes the truth.”

15. But how are these principles of Marxist thought assumed into Liberation Theologies?

Answer: Again, we will say, more exactly: “into certain forms of Liberation Theology.” These forms of “TL” accept the theory of the class struggle as the fundamental law of all history. This is, they say, “scientific.”

From this fundamental ground, then all of Christianity is reviewed and revised, to follow the logic of the law of the class struggle. The basic Marxist interpretation of all of human society and human history must then be the basis for re-interpreting, re-systematizing everything in Christianity and in the teaching of Christianity so that it can reflect the fundamental law.

Thus arises a wholly new interpretation of Christian Faith and Life. This new interpretation of Christianity departs from the Faith of the Church as taught through all the preceding centuries. But, we are told, “this is the true meaning of the Gospel.”

16. Regarding this “new interpretation” of Christianity, could you give us some points, as examples of what it would be like?

Answer: Some applications or inferences can here be mentioned, somewhat briefly. The Instruction of the SCDF dedicates a good number of pages to these. May I urge those who can to read the full text of the document?

Here are some examples of what is inferred in this “new understanding of the faith.”

a) There is only one history of mankind in the sense that it is “false dualism” to make any distinction between “the history of salvation” and secular or profane history. The meaning of the one history of mankind is “the process of man’s self-redemption through the class struggle” within history itself.

b) There is a transposition of meanings of Christian words and themes. For instance.

Faith is "fidelity to history", that is, fidelity to the revolutionary class struggle.

Hope is "confidence in the future," that is, the ultimate outcome of the class struggle in history.

Charity is the "class option," the option for the poor in the revolutionary struggle.

c) Thus participation in the class struggle becomes the basic requirement of charity. That kind of "love" which is not in service of the class struggle is an illusion, counterproductive sentimentalism.

d) Another transportation: the "Church of the poor" means "the Church of the proletariat (in the Marxist sense)". The "Church of the People." ("People with a capital 'P'"; again in the marxist sense).

The Church of the poor is the Church that has taken the "classist option", i.e. which has become the Church of the oppressed. This Church is wholly dedicated to mobilize the oppressed to enter into the revolutionary struggle, toward its own liberation.

17. It has been said that some "theologies of liberation" apply marxist categories and analysis to the Church itself. How is this done?

Answer: Yes, the "critical analysis" is sometimes turned to the Church. This will then show (they say) that the de facto hierarchy and magisterium (teaching office) of the Church are "objective representatives of the ruling class which must be opposed."

Thus "the People" must choose their own ministers from the ranks of the "the People" in accordance with the needs and demands of their own revolutionary mission and task in history.

From this it follows that members of the hierarchy, priests, theologians — who will not share these positions, clearly belong to the oppressor class. Whatever they teach only reflects the interests of the oppressor class.

This is especially true of the magisterium (teaching) of the Roman Pontiff. This is true of "the social teaching of the Church."

Other inferences which are drawn by deviant form of "TL": Revolutionary praxis is the one criterion, the ultimate criterion, for theological truth. "Orthodoxy" or the right teaching of the Faith is not the real norm for truth. No, it is "orthopraxy", the "doing of the truth" in the class struggle.

The "social teaching of the Church" is illusory. It is the product of middle class (or "bourgeois") consciousness, which does not think "scientifically" in accordance with correct analysis. — Thus we pay no attention to the "social teaching of the Church"; it is another tool of the interests of the oppressor class.

And so on.

18. How widespread and prevalent are these "deviations" among writers and followers of "TL".

Answer: These are deviations or inferences drawn from certain Marxist principles, which are present in various ways and in various degrees in those forms of "TL" which are unacceptable. (I have been told, incidentally, that in greater or lesser ways these statements have been in fact "bandied around" in the Philippines.)

It is not that all these inferences are present in any one author or any one book. Not all kinds of "TL" espouse these positions.

Making an enumeration like the one just given can create the impression that the SCDF text says that these deviations are the necessary content of "TL" tout court. This would be a wrong impression.

On the other hand, we must say that "some forms of 'TL' do make these inferences" and some of their positions do lead to these consequences. These deviations are present and bring great harm to Faith and Christian life!

19. We had asked earlier, are there then acceptable forms of "TL"? Can you tell us about them if they do exist?

Answer: The Instruction says, in effect,

a) That there are, definitely, profound bases in the Scriptures, for a "TL", correctly understood.

There are the great themes of Christian liberty as fruit of the redemption wrought by Christ, of freedom from sin, of the Beatitudes, of love of neighbor, of justice and mercy, of conversion of the heart from sin, of the effects of true conversion and Christian freedom in the social spheres of human life. On these great biblical themes an authentically Christian "TL" can be constructed.

b) The "social teaching of the Church" equivalently gives us "acceptable forms of 'TL'".

There are texts and documents from the Church and the Church's magisterium (teaching office, teaching bodies) which give us Christian teaching on social justice and social responsibility, on solidarity with the poor and the oppressed, on the promotion and defense of human dignity and human rights, on the inter-connections between evangelization and human liberation. This growing body of teaching, rooted explicitly in the distinctive character of the Christian message, in fact gives us a "TL" faithful to the Gospel and Christian Tradition.

c) Throughout the world, Christians (pastors, priests, religious, lay-people) are engaged in the work and struggle to help the poor and the powerless, to participate in the tasks of human development and liberation from all kinds of oppression. The number of these generous and dedicated followers of Christ has increased significantly in our time.

These are motivated by genuine Christian faith, hope and love. They pursue their efforts in the spirit of the Gospel. Their aims and purposes never lose sight of the realities of their Faith: the reality of sin, the reality of the spiritual dimension of people's lives and personhood, the reality of God's love and grace at work in the history of mankind, the reality of the holy Spirit's guidance, the reality of eternal life.

Such people live and act according to a "TL" which truly is rooted in Christian Faith, and which truth draws its energy from Christian love in the Holy Spirit.

20. Does this mean that Christians, Catholics especially, are now being asked to "pull back", to withdraw from urgent commitment to the tasks of historical liberation in their own societies?

Answer: By no means!

The last paragraph in the introductory section of the Instruction could not be more clear and forceful.

The Church, it says, encourages Christians to respond in an authentically evangelical spirit to "the preferential option for the poor."

An attitude of neutrality and indifference in the face of so much human misery and injustice cannot be excused.

The Church urges Christians to be increasingly involved in the struggle to promote true justice, freedom and human dignity — out of deep and authentic Christian faith and love.

More than ever, the Church condemns abuses, injustices and attacks against freedom, wherever they occur and whoever may commit them.

The Church is committed to the defense and promotion of the rights of mankind, especially the rights of the poor — using the means that are according to her nature and mission to pursue this commitment.

21. This is certainly a positive stance with regard to the tasks of the promotion of justice and freedom! It does seem that this positive commitment is repeated again and again in the Text?

Answer: Yes, in Section XI we are told that whatever negative points have been made regarding deviations in "TL", — this must not be taken as some kind of approval, even indirectly,

of those who keep the poor in misery,
of those who profit from that misery,
of those who are aware of that misery
and remain indifferent to it.

"The Church hears the cry for justice and intends to respond to it, with all her might.

"Thus a great call goes out to all in the Church: with boldness and courage, with far-sightedness and prudence, with zeal and strength of spirit, with a love for the poor which demands sacrifice; pastors, priests, religious and laypeople will consider the response to this call a matter of the highest priority.

"The Church especially affirms and reaffirms the fight for the rights of men — the authentic struggle for justice." As we know, the defense of human dignity and the human rights of persons is the centerpiece of Pope John Paul II's teaching on human liberation.

22. What would you say are the basic elements in the genuinely Christian participation in the struggle for the justice and freedom, the brotherhood and love taught by the Gospel itself?

Answer: Some "constants" can be briefly summed up here.

a) The deepest core of all genuine human liberation is the conversion of the human heart and spirit, the turning away from sin in our lives, the opening up to God's redeeming grace and love — these are indispensable elements!

c) The dignity of the human person, image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and the human rights founded on that dignity — these must be basic in any struggle for human liberation.

d) The struggle for bread cannot be separated from struggle for the freedom of the Gospel. The needs of the human spirit (including freedom of religion) cannot be separated from the bodily needs of men and women.

We can never reduce (even temporarily!) the Gospel to a purely earthly liberation.

e) The Church has her own "way of proceeding" in her preferential option for the poor and her struggle for human rights. Her way is rooted in the Gospel, not in any ideology. The Christian search for justice and peace derived from a profound double fidelity: — the Person and Gospel of Jesus, — and to the true understanding of the human person: of every man, woman and child for whom Jesus Christ gave his life.

Her commitment and courage derive from the power of God's Love and the Spirit of God. Today God's Love in Jesus calls us to engage in the struggle for justice and love among men and peoples. A struggle without hatred and violence. But a commitment which at this moment in history responds generously to the cry of the poor and of the victims of inhumanity and injustice all about us in the world. The Asian Bishops, in their meeting in Calcutta in 1978, said:

Our faith teaches us that ultimately the City of Man and all of human history can be saved only by the Passion and the Rising-again of Christ entering into our lives.

Our faith teaches us that liberation from oppression which weighs upon our peoples will not be wrought, nor the

pain and injustice of the world removed, except through our sharing, in prayer and self-gift, in the mystery of the Cross.

We believe finally that the power of God's Love is the only force which can truly renew the world.

These words echo the text from the great Pope Paul VI with which SCDF document concludes. Once again, no well-educated Christian should fail to read the entire Instruction. Above all, every priest and every teacher of religion classes ought to study it with care.

23. You speak of the Church's own "way of proceeding" with regard to authentic human liberation. Can you tell us something more on this particular point?

Answer: Yes. One reaches out to this "way of proceeding" through what has been called "the social teaching of the Church". Since the period of Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum" there has been a remarkable series of documents which have embodied, in changing situations, the Church's "reading" of the social problems of our time. In recent decades we have Pope Paul VI's "Populorum Progressio" ("On the development of Peoples"), "Octogesima Adveniens" (on the 80th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's great encyclical), etc. Only a few years ago, Pope John Paul II issued a magnificent encyclical, "Laborem Exercens" ("On work and man") which has not been sufficiently studied!

So often one meets priests, religious, laypeople, who have not even read these texts, let alone studied them and made them their own. Even some seminaries make no serious study, under competent guidance, of this body of social teaching, so much esteemed even in the secular world! Again and again we must insist that no Catholic seminary, no Catholic college or high school can afford to neglect this social teaching in its curriculum.

Courses in "TL" are given in many Catholic colleges and seminaries, but no study is made of the authentic teaching of the Church. This is to be truly regretted, especially at the present time, when knowledge and understanding of this teaching is so very necessary!

May I express the hope — and the wish — that this new Instruction may lead Catholics and other Christians to the more recent documents of the Roman Pontiffs, beginning with Pope John Paul II's "Laborem Exercens".

24. You have urged the study of the Church's social teaching as one consequence of this Instruction on "TL". What other "good fruits" might one expect from the issuance of this text?

Answer: It is an invitation to reflection. As I said, necessarily much of the document highlights the "negative aspects" of some forms of "TL". But this should stimulate theologians and social action leaders in the Christian churches to "purify" what needs to be "purified" in their own thinking and doing... something only they can do, with the help of these guidelines, with the questioning which these guidelines should stimulate with regard to both thought and praxis.

It is an invitation to dialogue. Pastoral leaders, church people engaged in social action, should take up the Instruction and reflect on it, discuss it, suggest where it needs more development, and the like. The SCDF has promised a fuller study of the Christian teaching on integral human liberation to be issued later. Let us contribute to it ourselves, by sending our own reflections on this SCDF text, our suggestions, our "discernments" as they are made in concrete situations of engagement in the tasks of human liberation — in the light of the Gospel, in the light of Faith.

25. In what is this Instruction especially relevant to the Philippine situations?

Answer: A good number of those who have read it, Bishops, priests, religious and laypeople, have already told me how timely the document is, how useful for us in the Philippines today!

But I will leave it now to the Bishops, the Bishops' Conference (CBCP), pastors and theologians in this country to draw from this text those elements which will prove most helpful to the Church in the midst of the profound crises wherein our beloved people find themselves.

My effort here has been simply to present the text clearly and (I hope) in a way that will invite people to read the document in its entirety, I will be well rewarded if your readers will be encouraged to study the Instruction itself and make it their own!

ERECTION OF THE DIOCESE OF MATI, IN THE PROVINCE OF DAVAO ORIENTAL

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS

Servus Servorum Dei

ad perpetuam rei memoriam

EPISCOPUS TAGAMNUS, Venerabilis Frater Petrus Dean, sollicitus quidem de efficaciore pastoralis cura atque regimine dioecetano omnium Christifidelium sibi in praesentia commissorum nuper in animum induxit, ne convenienter ad Conferentiam Episcopalem Insularum Philippinarum delata, hac a Sede Apostolica petere immo et efficere ut, quibusdam suae dicionis locis semotis, nova inde constitueretur dioecetana communitas. Quamobrem certo quidem Nos intellegentes consortem eiusdem esse consilii Venerabilem Fratrem Brunonem Torpigliani, Archiepiscopum titulo Mallianensem atque Nostrum simul Apostolicum Nuntium ea ipsa in Natione, certioresque ipsi facti eorum simul consensus, quorum interest necnon eorum qui id sua referre contendunt, at maxime animum Nostrum intendentes in ampliorem commoditatem spiritalem omnium fidelium ubique degentium, de plenitudine potestatis Apostolicae Nostrae, qua divino fungimur consilio, hisce Litteris singula quae subsequuntur statuimus fierique omnino iubemus. A dioecesi Tagamna omnem eam civilem subtrahimus provinciam, cui publicum nomen — Davao Oriental —, ex itaque seiuncta regione novam condimus iure dioecesim MATIENSEM in posterum appellandam tempus, quae eisdem prorsus finibus circumscribatur quibus civilis dicio eiusdem nominis illius. Episcopalem vero Sedem novae huius dioecesis in urbe locamus quae Mati nuncupatur ac templum ibidem paroeciale Deo dicatum ad honorem Sancti Nicolai de Tolentino ad gradum evehimus dignitatemque cathedralis aedis, cui insignia cuncta et privilegia, honores et notas tribuimus quibus reliquae in orbe catholico cathedrales fruuntur aedes. Matiensi autem Episcopo pro tempore concedimus honores, insignia necnon privilegia iura, eumque simul oneribus et officiis universis obstringimus, quae ceterorum propria sunt Praesulum Ordinariorum locorum. Hanc praeterea Matiensem dioecesem facimus legitime suffraganeam Archidioecesi Davaensi eiusque tempore Episcopum subicimus metropolitico iuri Archiepiscopi Davaensis. Quo dein certius praesto sit Pastori

novae Ecclesiae adiutorium ad normam iuris in eius Ecclesiae regimine ordinando volumus collegium consultorum ibidem quam primum erigi. Consentaneae et dignae sustentationi Praesulis novae dioecesis providebitur ex Curiae ipsius emolumentis, fidelium oblationibus atque etiam portione ei obveniente ex partitione bonorum, ex norma can. 122 C.J.C. perficienda, quae ad mensam episcopalem Tagamnam pertinuerunt. De seminarii autem aedificatione et sacrorum alumnorum institutione adservabuntur iuris communis praecepta, ante oculos praesertim constitutis regulis ac normis a Sacra Congregatione pro Institutione Catholica emissis. Selecti seminarii alumni, philosophicis et theologicis disciplinis rite imbuendi, tum etiam sacerdotes studia completuri, Romam suo tempore mittantur ad Pontificium Collegium Philippinum. Quod porro attinet ad novae dioecesis regimen et administrationem necnon, sede vacante, electionem administratoris dioecesani, fideliumque iura et onera aliaque id genus, implebuntur diligenter omnia quae his de rebus sacri praestituunt canones. Simul ac dioecesis huius erectio ad proprium deducta erit effectum, iam sacerdotes Ecclesiae illi adscripti censeantur in cuius finibus ecclesiasticum officium detineant; ceteri autem clerici ac seminarii tirones Ecclesiae illi maneant incardinati in cuius finibus legimum habeant domicilium. Acta insuper omnia et documenta, quae constituta dioecesis clericos ac fideles et bona temporalia fortassis respiciunt, ex Curia Tagamna ad Curiam Matiensem rite transvehantur ubi adserventur in tabulario iam condendo. Ad haec denique cuncta legitime exsequenda fidenter quidem destinamus memoratum Venerabilem Fratrem Brunonem Torpigliani cui simul necessarias omnes tribuimus facultates et opportunas potestates, etiam subdelegandi, ad effectum de quo agitur, quemlibet virum in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum, onere et officio iniuncto ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis reddendi authenticum exemplar actus ipsius executionis aliquando susceptae. Tandem haec universa a Nobis sic edicta decretaque valere tam in praesens volumus quam in posterum tempus harum Litterarum virtute, ullis rebus nequaquam obsistentibus. Datum Romae apud Sanctum Petrum die decimo sexto mensis Februarii anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri sexto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a publicis Eccl. negotiis

Bernardinus Card. Gantin
Praef. S. C. pro Episc.
Marcellus Rossetti, Prot. Apost.

CANON LAW

THE APOSTOLATE OF RELIGIOUS IN THE NEW CODE

THE TRIAD OF CHALLENGE

In a recent document of the S.C. for Religious and for Secular Institutes, entitled *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of Apostolate*, issued on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, May 31, 1983, we read a succinct description of three principal difficulties connected with the apostolic works of religious.

"There is no doubt that, in many areas of the world at the present time, religious institutes dedicated to apostolic works are facing difficult and delicate questions with respect to the apostolate. The reduced number of religious, the fewer young persons entering, the rising medium age, the social pressures from contemporary movements are coinciding with an awareness of a wider range of needs, a more individual approach to personal development and a higher level of awareness with regard to issues of justice, peace and human promotion. There is also a temptation to want to do everything. There is also a temptation to leave works which are stable and a genuine expression of the institute's charism for others, which seem more immediately relevant to social needs but which are less expressive of the institute's identity. There is a third temptation to scatter the resources of an institute in a diversity of short-term activities only loosely connected with the founding gift. In all these instances, the effects are not immediate but, in the long run, what will suffer is the unity and identity of the institute itself; this will be a loss to the Church and to its mission." (n. 27).

The situational analysis, with very slight variation, applies to every religious institutes wherever they are. They certainly describe our own situation here. What does the Code provide by way of guiding the various religious institutes which is "by nature, dedicated to works of the apostolate" (c. 675)?

SCOPE

We intend to develop the answers to this question by explaining the provisions of the new Code on the apostolate of Religious Institutes. By "religious" we limit the scope of this article to those members of institutes of consecrated life referred to by c. 607, 2. The norms governing the relationship between bishops and religious in those matters of the care of souls and other works of the apostolate are also applicable to the Societies of Apostolic Life, maintaining, of course, proper individual characters (c. 738, 2).

This article is envisioned as a continuation of the previous one where the relationships between bishops and religious are defined and explained. For this reason, several canonical provisions will not be repeated here anymore; reference however will be made at the proper place.

Finally, we will not limit our explanation to the identification of the provisions of the Code. We will attempt to present, whenever needed, the pertinent ecclesiological orientations of Vatican II on the matter.

Therefore the entire article will be divided into the following:

1. Principal Sources
2. Doctrine and Provisions of the Code
3. Conclusion

1. Principal Sources

In addition to the references already given in our previous lecture, the following may be considered as pertinent: *Christus Dominus*, nn. 33-35; *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, nn. 23-24; a most important source is *Mutuae Relationes*.

2. Doctrine and Provisions

The most fundamental statement of the Code on the matter is found in canon 673, which fittingly opens Chapter V on *The Apostolate of Institutes*. It reads:

“The apostolate of all religious consists primarily in the witness of their consecrated life, which they are bound to foster through prayer and penance.”

This basic affirmation is of particular importance since it places the apostolic role of religious in its true place. Religious life has an irreplaceable value for the life of the Church. While not pertaining to the hierarchical structure, it belongs inseparably to the life and holiness of the Church (LG 44). It is a precious treasure for the Church, the evident testimony of the complete gift of oneself to the love and service of God. As Paul VI recalls in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica Testificatio* (n. 3): “Without this concrete sign, the charity of the Church as a whole would run the risk of growing cold, the salvific paradox of the Gospel would be blunted, the “salt” of faith would lose its savour in a world undergoing secularization.”

What is the nature of this apostolate of witnessing to consecrated life which is the primary duty of every religious? John Paul II answers: “Before being translated into *proclamation* or *action*, the apostolate is the revelation of God present in the apostle. And this revelation postulates that the religious be in intimate and constant contact with the Lord. In this way, it matters little whether she be in the fullness of her strength or infirm, young or of advanced age, active or without any direct activity; evangelization is real and deep to the degree that Christ’s life is reflected through her personal life. The great evangelizers were primarily prayerful souls, interior souls: they always knew how to find the time for prolonged contemplation.” (*Address* 13 May 1983, OR [June 6, 1983] p. 9).

Viewed in the context of this teaching, the witness to consecrated life constitutes for the Church the primary and principal duty of every religious. Hence c. 673.

Apostolic Role of Cloistered Nuns

As if to underline the primacy of this most fundamental apostolate — the witnessing of consecrated life, the Code distinguishes two Institutes, which although differing in the concrete form of witnessing of consecrated life, truly live, nevertheless, an authentic apostolate.

Canon 674 speaks of “Institutes which are wholly directed to contemplation” and declares very strongly their eminently

apostolic role. They leave the world to devote themselves in solitude to deeper and constant prayer — this is none other than a special way of living and expressing Christ's Paschal Mystery, of revealing it to the world and, therefore, of being apostles. Hence, the Code continues, "no matter how urgent the needs of the active apostolate, the members of these institutes cannot be called upon to assist in the various pastoral ministries" (c. 674).

Religious Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate

For the needs of active apostolate there are Institutes which, by nature, are dedicated to this type of apostolate; they continue in our time Christ's "announcing God's Kingdom to the multitude, healing the sick and the maimed, converting sinners to a good life, blessing children, doing good to all, and always obeying the will of the Father who sent him" (LG 46). The whole life of the members is, therefore, to be imbued with an apostolic spirit, and the whole of their apostolic action is to be animated by a religious spirit" (c. 675). More concretely, this osmosis of apostolic and religious spirit means: apostolic action is always to proceed from intimate union with God, and is to confirm and foster this union (*ibid.* 2).

Ecclesial Aspect of the Apostolic Action

Religious life has its own place in relation to the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church. It is not a kind of intermediate way between the clerical and lay conditions of life but comes both as a special gift for the entire Church (cf. LG 43; MR 10; Can. 588.1). In particular, by being an outward, social sign of the mystery of God's consecrating action throughout life, and by being this through the mediation of the Church for the good of the entire Body, the religious life in a special way participates in the sacramental nature of the People of God. This is because it is itself a part of the Church as mystery and as a social reality, and it cannot exist without both these aspects (*Essential Elements*, n. 38).

Canon 675, 3, therefore provides that "apostolic action exercised in the name of the Church and by its command is to be performed in communion with the Church." This is not a matter of simple disciplinary dependence, but of a reality of

faith. The religious, and therefore his apostolic works, is in the Church, intimately incorporated in it, ordained to its missions, inseparable from its life and from its sanctity, as *Lumen Gentium* teaches.

This conception grounds the norms on the rights and obligations of Bishops on matters of apostolate in general, and particular apostolic works of religious institutes.

Communitarian Character of the Apostolate

The ecclesial character of religious apostolate means it is necessarily, i.e. by nature, *communitarian*. This means that the witness given by a religious cannot be purely individual; it is communitarian in nature, and all religious are called to exercise the apostolate along the line of the charism recognized by the Church and through the mandate of their lawful superiors. What does this expression mean? It means:

1. Religious apostolate follows the nature of religious consecration. Religious consecration is lived within a given institute according to the constitutions which the Church, by her authority, accepts and approves. This means that consecration is lived according to the specific provisions which manifest and deepen a distinctive identity. This identity is derived from that action of the Holy Spirit which is the institute's founding gift, and which creates a particular type of spirituality, of life, of apostolate and of tradition (cf. MR 11).

Hence c. 677, 1: "1. Superiors and members are faithfully to hold fast to the mission and works which are proper to their institute. According to the needs of time and place, however, they are prudently to adapt them, making use of new and appropriate means. 2. Institutes which have associations of Christ's faithful joined to them are to have a special care that these associations are imbued with the genuine spirit of their family."

2. Religious apostolate is undertaken as a *community responsibility*. It is to the institute as a whole that the Church commits that sharing in the mission of Christ which characterizes it and which is expressed in works inspired by the founding charism. This corporate mission does not mean that all the members of the institute are doing the same thing, or that the gifts and qualities of the individual are not respected. It does

mean that the works of all the members are directly related to the common apostolate, which the Church has recognized as expressing concretely the purpose of the institute.

This common and constant apostolate is part of the institute's sound traditions. It is so closely related to the identity that it cannot be changed without affecting the character of the institute itself. It is therefore a touchstone of authenticity in the evaluation of new works, whether these services will be done by a group or by the individual religious.

3. The integrity of the common apostolate is a particular responsibility of major superiors. "Superiors... are faithfully to hold fast to the mission and works which are proper to their institute" (c. 677, 1). The guiding principle is to "prudently accommodate them, paying attention to the needs of times and places, even using new and opportune means."

In other words, the superiors must see that the institute is at once faithful to its traditional mission in the Church and open to new ways of undertaking it. Works need to be renewed and revitalized, but this has to be done always in fidelity to the institute's approved apostolate and in collaboration with the respective ecclesiastical authority. The document on *Religious and Human Promotion* succinctly summarizes the four great loyalties that should guide the Superiors in judging forms of apostolic works: "fidelity to humanity and to our times; fidelity to Christ and the Gospel; fidelity to the Church and its mission in the world; fidelity to religious life and to the charism of the institute" (n. 13).

3. Conclusion

We began pointing out the three great difficulties obtaining with respect to the apostolate of the religious. The provisions of the new Code can be summarized into one guiding norm: "always and in everything, behave as loving children of the Church, giving generously and faithfully adhering to its authentic Magisterium, the guarantee of fruitfulness. The fidelity promised to Christ, it is our conviction, can never be separated from fidelity to the Church: 'He who hears you, hears me' (Lk. 10:16)".

† LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.

Administrative and Supervisory Powers of Diocesan Bishops

— THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AND DIOCESAN OECONOMUS —

The diocesan bishop, as head of his church, assumes direct responsibility both on the pastoral needs of his flock and on the worldly affairs of his diocese (cc. 369; 393). In the latter case, he is the administrator of temporalities of the diocese (c. 1279) and the supervisor or guardian of all ecclesiastical property of public juridic persons operating within his territory and under his jurisdiction (c. 1276).

Even as the new Code does not seem to sanction administration by one person — parishes are required to have at least two financial consultants (c. 1280) — the bishop is not left alone in the discharge of his managerial functions. He is given the Board of Financial Administration and the Board of Consultants to aid him, and even to check on his fiscal activities. Thus, he will have to consult with the above-mentioned Boards before going into acts of administration of "greater importance" for his diocese. Again, if and when he wishes to incur "extraordinary" expenses, the bishop needs the advice of the Financial Board and the consent of the Board of Consultants, except in cases wherein common or particular laws decree otherwise (c. 1277).

Though the bishop would seemingly become the final judge in determining the transactions of "greater importance" to his diocese, he can not do so without looking into the general state of diocesan finances. A common rule for all dioceses on the matter will not work, for obviously, transactions which may have a greater impact on the finances of poor dioceses, may turn close to being meaningless in cases of affluent ones.

On the other hand, the task of defining expenses which might be considered "extraordinary" is left to the Episcopal Conference of the region or country. The law adopts here an objective criterion and the bishop, instead of being the final arbiter on the matter, is asked to adhere to the rules issued by the Bishops' Conference (c. 1277).

At the diocesan level, the bishop, like any other Ordinary, exercises control and guardianship over all local administrators under his jurisdiction (c. 1276, 1). While the direct management of the patrimony remains the exclusive concern of the immediate or direct administrator, the Ordinary retains the right to supervise and issue fiscal policies, to insure that all administrative functions, within his territory and jurisdiction, are executed effectively and in accordance with law. The extent and scope of these supervisory powers of the Ordinary are most aptly expressed in the old Latin saying *ius curandi ut administratio sit bona*.

Without any need to interfere in the direct management of temporalities of entities under his jurisdiction, the Ordinary may exert his powers to insure the wholesome and wise administration of church property within his territory, through the exercise of the following rights:

—*ius rationem exigendi*. He has the right to demand for accurate accounts, updated financial reports, supporting evidence of all transactions carried out by administrative functionaries... (c. 1287, 1).

—*ius visitandi*. Visitation rights allow the Ordinary to inspect the properties, official books and other pertinent documents, and check on the observance of rules and laws, as well as on the conduct of administrators and other personnel, etc., (c. 1276).

—*ius praescribendi modum administrationis*. The right to issue rules conducive to an effective administration (c. 1276, 2). Yes, the Ordinary may impose his will on inferior administrative officers, through the issuance and enforcement of particular norms, as long as they are within the framework of general and statutory law. Thus, the Ordinary can forbid, among others, the erection of shops, parking places, amusement centers, mortuaries or crypts... within church grounds or precincts. It is well within his powers to prescribe the manner of making bank deposits and withdrawals, inventories, last will and testaments... He may require that all transactions be signed by several persons, that administrators submit to the respective superior updated copies of their personal properties... But he will definitively be barred from acts which are against or beyond established norms and regulations, except in cases of of negligence on the part of the immediate administrator (c. 1279, 1). Thus without the approval of the administrator, the

Ordinary will not act validly in ordering the disposal of property, vgr. the sale or rent of apartments, farms, fishponds, etc. These are functions exclusively reserved to the person who enjoys in law the right of disposal and such person is the direct administrator. The diocesan bishop, however, may impose taxes upon all juridical entities and even upon physical persons under his jurisdiction, only to the extent that they are in accordance with law and necessary for the good of the diocese (c. 1263).

THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION AND THE DIOCESAN OECONOMUS

As shown above, the administrative task of the diocesan bishop is rather one of great complexity. He is asked to "diligently supervise the management of all goods under his jurisdiction"; to "issue special instructions to regulate the entire field of administration" ... (c. 1219).

This is a tall order for any man and a job that demands special skill and expertise. In order to assist the diocesan bishop in the discharge of his duties as comptroller and guardian of all ecclesiastical property, he must set up, under his chairmanship, a Board or Council of Administration, consisting of at least three members capable of performing such task (c. 492, 1).

This council is not a new entity but rather a counterpart of the Board of Administration of the 1917 Code (c. 1520, 1). However, the new law makes an explicit reference to the "economic competence" and "outstanding integrity" of its members who can be either male or female. The bishop himself is to appoint the members for a five-year term of office, with the possibility of their reappointment for an equal period of term (c. 492, 2).

Among its varied functions, the Council, under the guidance of the bishop, is to prepare each year a budget or forecast of the income and expenditures estimated for the governance of the entire diocese for the coming year; moreover, at the close of each fiscal year, the Council is to approve the report of receipts and expenses (c. 493).

The bishop must always hear the Council on matters of "greater importance" for the diocese (c. 1277). However, the opinion or advice of the Council is purely consultative, unless otherwise mandated by law (cc. 1277; 1292, 1).

The office of the diocesan Oeconomus or Business Manager is a new creation of law, and its establishment, functions and term of office are clearly determined in c. 494.

In the 1917 CIC the diocesan Oeconomus was not an official of the Curia. The bishop was expected to manage the patrimony of the diocese with the assistance of the Board of Administration (c. 1521). It was only when the see was vacant that the law required the appointment of an Oeconomus to manage the the finances of the diocese under the Vicar Capitular (1917 CIC, c. 432, 1).

The positive experience of local churches as well as the complexity of modern financial management is to be credited for the creation of the new office of the diocesan Oeconomus. At present it is compulsory for each diocese to have an Oeconomus to manage the diocesan temporalities under the authority of the bishop, and in accordance with fiscal policies set by the Council of Administration (c. 494, 3).

The Oeconomus is to be appointed by the bishop after consulting with the Board of Administration, and must be a person truly skilled in economic affairs and absolutely distinguished for his honesty (c. 494, 1). His functions are, among others, the following: to meet diocesan expenses legitimately authorized by his bishop or any delegated authority (c. 494, 3); to prepare a yearly report of income and disbursement for the perusal of the Financial Board (c. 494, 4); to aid the bishop in the supervision of property management within the diocese (c. 1276, 1); to assume the management of public juridic persons who lack an administrator of their own (c. 1279, 2).

The Oeconomus and the members of the Council of Administration have five-year terms of office, with another possible five-year renewal. The intent is obviously to stabilize fiscal administration as demanded by modern management techniques. Thus, the Oeconomus may be removed from office by the bishop only for a grave cause and after conferring with the Board of Administration and the Board of Consultors (c. 494, 2).

FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

CASES AND INQUIRIES

1. WOMEN IN THE CHURCH'S LAW

The undersigned belongs to several women associations. The topic of the role of women in the Church has come up quite often in our regular meetings as well as in informal gatherings. We all know that the role of the weaker sex within the Church has been enhanced since the Vatican II, but few people seem to have a clear idea on the proper status of women according to the new Codex of the Church. Will you please give us a general idea of how the new legislation considers women in the Church? Undoubtedly it will help us to know our role in the Church and to give our cooperation to the clergy in matters of our competence.

A Woman Lawyer

The Church's law when dealing on physical persons does not make any distinction among her members based on sex. "Through baptism an individual is incorporated into the Church of Christ and constituted a person in the same, with the duties and rights which, in accordance with each one's status, are proper to Christian" (can. 96). And canon 208 reads: "Flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all Christian faithful. Because of this equality they all contribute, each according to his own condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ."

Though the law acknowledges parity of duties and rights to men and women and considers them equal as members of the Church and as members of the laity itself, it admits of some difference in certain matters. Women, for instance, are not admitted to the sacrament of orders. Thus canon 1024 reads: "Only a baptized man validly receives sacred ordination." The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in her Instruction *Inter Insigniores* of October 15, 1976 explains at length the Church's attitude in not admitting women to the ministerial priesthood. As a logical consequence, women cannot

canonically possess the power of governance in the Church (canon 129, § 1), nor hold any office which implies full care of souls (canon 150). Since only qualified men can be given the stable ministry of lector and acolyte (canon 230, § 1), women are excluded from these offices which are considered as preparatory steps for priestly ministry. Likewise, the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments excludes women in *Inestimabile Donum*, n. 18, of April 3, 1980, from serving at the altar during the eucharistic celebration.

Also, for the validity of marriage different age in men and women is required by law, namely fourteen years in the latter, sixteen years in the former (can. 1083), a difference admitted in almost all civil codes. Likewise, the impediment of abduction (can. 1089) implies the difference of sex, since for the existence of the impediment, the person committing the offence should be a male and the person abducted a female, not the opposite.

In other matters, however, men and women are considered in the same footing. For instance, the Church's law does not admit of any difference in sex in regards to legal separation contrary to what most of the civil codes do. The latter consider adultery of the wife while require concubinage on the part of the husband as enough grounds. The Church's law, however, states that adultery on either party is a valid ground for legal separation. The basic reason for this is that the Church considers both spouses as bound by the same duties and enjoying the same rights to whatever pertains to the partnership of conjugal life (can. 1135), and both spouses have the same obligation and right to maintain and preserve their living together (can. 1151).

Members of the laity are excluded from offices that require the power of order and of ruling. Canon 274, § 1 reads: "Only clerics can obtain an office the exercise of which requires the power of order or the power of ecclesiastical governance." However, canon 129, § 2 states: "Lay members of Christ's faithful can cooperate in the exercise of the power of ruling in accordance with the law." And canon 228 says: "Lay people who are found to be suitable are capable of being admitted by the sacred pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which, in accordance with the provisions of law, they can discharge. Lay people who are outstanding in the requisite knowledge, prudence and integrity, are capable of being experts or advisers, even in councils in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance

to the pastors of the Church." In each diocese a finance committee is to be established, which is composed of at least three Christian faithful truly experts in economic affairs as well as in civil law, and of outstanding integrity, appointed by the Bishop (can. 492, § 1). And canon 537 states that in each parish there is to be a finance committee composed of members of the faithful selected according to norms given by the Bishop to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish.

In regards to the office of teaching, the new Codex says that "lay members of Christ's faithful... can also be called upon to cooperate with Bishops and priests in the exercise of the ministry of the Word" (can. 759). And canon 766 reads: "The laity may be allowed to preach in a church or oratory if in certain circumstances it is necessary, or in particular cases it would be advantageous, according to the provisions of the Episcopal Conference and without prejudice to canon 767, § 1".

Likewise, the new Codex allows the faithful (men and women) to hold offices that only priests held in the past. Thus the Episcopal Conference may allow that lay persons be appointed judges in the ecclesiastical tribunal, as long as they are qualified, i.e. be of good repute and possess a doctorate, or at least a licenciante in canon law (can. 1421, § 2-3). Lay persons may help the sole judge, as assessors (can. 1424). Likewise, the Bishop may appoint a lay person as auditor to help the sole judge or the presiding judge of the collegiate tribunal (can. 1428, § 2). Moreover, a lay person may be appointed by the Bishop as promotor of justice and defender of the bond, as long as they are of good repute, with a doctorate or a licenciante in canon law, and of proven prudence and zeal for justice (can. 1435). A lay person can be appointed notary of the diocesan curia or of the ecclesiastical tribunal, except in cases where the fame or good name of a priest is at stake. In such case, a priest should act as notary (can. 483). The foregoing norms apply equally to men and women.

The basic equality of men and women, previous to any difference derived from the diversity of ministry or vocation is clearly taught by the Church in the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 32. The Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 29 strenuously condemns any discrimination on the fundamental rights of human person by reason of sex, race, color, social condition, religion or language."

2. OBLIGATIONS OF RELIGIOUS

In our last recollection the priest said in his talk to the Community that all religious sisters are bound by the same obligations binding the Laity. It took us all aback. He noticed our surprise and tried to elaborate. However, most of the sisters present seem not to agree with him. We are religious; most of us are professed with solemn vows. How can we still be bound by the obligations of Laity who live in the world and don't belong to any religious Congregation?

A Religious Sister

In the Church there are only two groups which by divine institution are hierarchically different, namely, the clergy and laity. Canon 207, § 1 reads: "By divine institution, among the Christian faithful there are in the Church sacred ministers, who in the law are also called clerics; the others are called lay people." As members of the Church, they all, clerics and lay people alike, have common duties and rights. They all are baptized and as such they all have the same obligations and rights. However, in addition to these common duties and rights, clerics have special duties and rights proper to their canonical state, which do not affect the members of the laity. They are proper to the member of the clergy. In the same way, the members of the laity have some peculiar duties and rights which do not affect the members of the clergy. They are proper to the members of the Church who are not clerics.

Who are the faithful who make up the clergy and who are those constituting the Laity? Canon 266, § 1 states clearly: "By the reception of the diaconate a person becomes a cleric." Therefore, those faithful who have received the sacred Order of diaconate belong to the clergy. Likewise, can. 1008 reads: "By divine institution, some among Christ's faithful are, through the sacrament of Order, marked with an indelible character and are thus constituted sacred ministers." And canon 1009, § 1 says: "The Orders are the episcopate, the priesthood and the diaconate." Clergy, therefore, is constituted by deacons, priests and Bishops. The rest of the faithful who have not received the said Sacred Orders are lay people, constituting the Laity.

What to say about religious? Do they belong to the clergy or to the laity? Canon 588 says clearly: "In itself, the state of consecrated life is neither clerical nor lay." The same statement is found in canon 711, dealing with secular Institutes: "Consecration in a secular Institute does not change the member's canonical status among the people of God, be it lay or clerical." It is clear, therefore, that consecrated life, be in a religious Institute or in a secular Institute, does not affect in any way the canonical status of the members of the Institute nor the nature of the Institute itself.

Consequently, those religious who have not received the sacred Order of diaconate canonically are not members of the Clergy, but they belong to the Laity. They are lay religious. This happens with all religious sisters and lay religious brothers. This is what canon 207, § 2 affirms: "Drawn from both groups clergy and laity are those of Christ's faithful who, professing the evangelical counsels through vows or other sacred bonds recognized and approved by the Church, are consecrated to God in their own special way and promote the salvific mission of the Church. Their state, although it does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church, does pertain to its life and holiness." Therefore, religious who have not received the sacred Order of diaconate are bound by the obligations of all Christians, by the duties binding the members of the Laity, and by their own obligations as religious, in the same way that religious members of the Clergy are bound by the obligations of all Christians, by the obligations of clerics and by the obligations of religious.

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

HISTORY

Dominican Towns in Pangasinan

By

Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.

SAN FABIAN

Foreword

With the description of San Bartolomé de Agno and of Asingan, we have completed the number of towns founded by the Dominicans in Pangasinan in the 17th century. And now, with San Fabián de Anguio we begin the series of those which came into being in the 18th century under the aegis of the same Fathers. These were: *San Fabián* de Anguio (1718); San Andrés de *Salasa* (1720); San José de *Maliongliong* (1739); *Santa Bárbara* de Tolong (1743); Santiago de *Bunlalacao* (1743); San Isidro *Labrador* de Tubuan (1755); and San Antonio de Pandoyocan, now *Villasís* (1763). Purposely we have underlined the names by which they are known in our times. And in passing we wish to share with our readers an observation that has come to our mind when researching on the towns founded by the Religious missionaries in the Philippines, namely: that the said towns retained in the 16th and 17th centuries their original native names; that in the 18th century, as a rule, they were given names of saints along with their native names; and that in the 19th century, they came to be known by the names of governors general or of *alcaldes mayores* or of some other historical or administrative personages. Is this not perhaps symptomatic of the religious decadence of the last of these three historical periods?

Its Location and Boundaries

The town of San Fabián is on the northern end of Pangasinan province, by the seashore on a sandy and flat terrain not

far from the mouth of the Angalacan River, which was also known there by the name of Cayanga.¹

Its bordering towns in 1900 were: to the North, Santo Tomás which belonged to La Union province and under the spiritual care of the Augustinians, at a distance of 20 kms.; to the Northeast, Alava (Sison today), at 16 kms.; to the East, Pozorrubio; to the South, San Jacinto and Mangaldan at 5 and 4½ kms. respectively; and to the West, the Gulf of Lingayen.²

Its Founding

It owes its founding to the Dominican Fathers who, on account of its mild and cool climate, selected it as a good place for an infirmary or house of convalescence where the Father ministers of Pangasinan might regain their lost strength or rest from their apostolic labors. Later, however, as Fr. Juan Ferrando remarks in his *Estado de la Provincia en 1848*, it ceased to be so because the Fathers went to Manila or elsewhere for a much needed rest or for medical attention.³

There was another purpose for its founding, and that was for the conversion of the Igorot pagans who were then living in their makeshift huts very close to the Christian settlements.⁴

To effect its founding, they transferred barrio Anguio which was then the main settlement on that area to the present site of the town of San Fabián. Anguio was situated about 3 kms. away from the present *población* on the road leading to San Jacinto.⁵

¹ Cfr. *Libertas*, Año 1, núm. 109, Manila, 15 de noviembre, 1899.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Estado de la provincia del Santísimo Rosario en 1848*, MS in AUST, Section "Provincia", p. 21.

⁴ "In this year of 1717... a town was founded in a place about a league from Mangaldan, for the better administration of the natives, comfort of travellers and [to stave off] the assaults of the pagan Igorots who dwell in its vicinity." (Cfr. *Anales de la provincia de Ntra. Sra. del Rosario*, MS in AGOP [Archivum Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum], Fol. 56b.)

⁵ "Later, the site of the *población* was transferred near the coast, and only the name of its patron saint, San Fabián, was retained. The old settlement of Anguio, about 3 kms. from the relocated *población* and along the road to San Jacinto, became a mere barrio of the town." (Cfr. Rosario Mendoza-Cortés, *Pangasinan, 1572-1800*, University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City, 1974, p. 116.) Its barrios, among others, were in 1900: Anonang, Anguio, Baybay, Palapat, Sabot, Tampa, and Tiblon. To these must be added the homesteads lined along the road leading to Mangaldan. There were, besides, two ranches of baptized Igorots (*Libertas*, loc. cit.).

Eventually the name "Anguio" was dropped in favor of the patron saint San Fabián, Pope and Martyr. The word *anguio* means "a tree of most bitter fruit."

Its Acceptance

San Fabián was founded with the customary permit from the government. It was granted by Governor General José Torralba. This was, of course, done before the arrival of the proprietary Governor Fernando Bustamante in August of the year 1717. Its name appears for the first time in the Acts of the Provincial Chapter held in Manila in 1718.⁶ It was then entrusted to the pastoral care of Fr. Andrés Caballero who thus became its first Vicar. The succeeding chapter of 1720 appointed as its Vicar Fr. Manuel del Río. This Father later became Provincial and bishop-elect of Nueva Segovia.⁷ In addition to this, he carved for himself a niche in the Annals of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary for having patronized, as Vicar Provincial, the opening of a short-lived trail connecting eastern Pangasinan, through the valley of Ituy, and the Paniqui mission (South of Isabela).

Ecclesiastical Buildings

The original church, which was rather small although planned according to architectural rules, was burned in 1856,⁸ and as a consequence of the fire, it could clearly be appreciated that its walls were built all at once rather than by stages as was often the case in the building of churches during the colonial times. It could also be seen that its construction was directed and supervised by a single man who must have been well-acquainted with architectural techniques.

If we are to believe a tradition that was still fresh in the days of Fr. Suárez, its architect was a Dominican lay brother who was said to have also supervised the construction of the imposing belfry of the church of Lingayen.⁹

⁶ *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, II, 111.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸ For this fire the sacristan was held responsible because, having gone up to the tower to ring the bell for the curfew at 10 o'clock in the evening, he carelessly threw the cigarette-end on the nipa roofing which, as a result, caught fire at once. (Suárez, *loc. cit.*)

⁹ *Libertas*, *loc. cit.* In his *Ensayo*, etc., Fr. Valentín Marín clearly tells us who the architect was. "The church," says he, "all of brick,

When Fr. Juan Gutiérrez rebuilt it, he lengthened the sanctuary and the outcome was a narrow and disproportionately long church, and yet not big enough to hold the ever-growing population of San Fabián.¹⁰

The convent, on the other hand, was rebuilt by Fr. Ramón Fernández at great cost in money and effort; and even so, he was unable to produce a solid and lasting structure.

The fact was that the man who gained an enviable reputation as a physician and parish priest, especially for his tact and ability in keeping at bay and under control the unruly and hard-headed Mangaldanes, failed in San Fabián both as an architect and as economist.

Much later, both church and convent sustained an appreciable damage on account of the earthquakes of March 16, 1892.¹¹

The spacious cemetery fenced with solid brick walls, located South of the town, was built by Fr. Domingo de la Peña in 1830.¹²

Schools

As reported by the periodical *Libertas*, numerous children attended the schools of the *población* and, in addition, there were some in the barrios supported by the Parish priest who solicitously watched over the instruction of the youth.¹³

Population Statistics

The growth of the population in San Fabián shows a steady increase through the 18th and 19th centuries in the "*Estados de Almas*" (population statistics), except for the years following that of 1868 when, having lost a great deal of its territory in favor of the newly created municipality of Alava (Sison), it

including the main altar, was built by Fray Francisco Ferrer, a Dominican lay brother, who was an excellent carpenter, after the British invasion. The convent and belfry were also of brick."

¹⁰ *Libertas*, loc. cit.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Loc. cit.* The municipal building, of mortar and stone, constructed in 1822, was badly shaken and almost ruined by the above-mentioned earthquake.

¹³ *Loc. cit.*

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also lost almost half of its people, as shown in the following numbers:

1751	-----	1,331 souls ¹⁴
1758	-----	2,163 souls ¹⁵
1800	-----	2,044 souls ¹⁶
1848	-----	10,390 souls ¹⁷
1875	-----	6,088 souls ¹⁸
1897	-----	10,180 souls ¹⁹
1980	-----	42,018 souls ²⁰

SALASA

Its Location

Situated on the left bank of the Agno River, Salasa was bound — before its suppression as a municipality — on the North by the same river, and farther beyond by Lingayen at a distance of 5½ kms.; and on the South by Aguilar at 11 kms.; on the East by the Agno which in this direction is only 3 kms. away, and still farther by San Carlos; and on the West by Labrador at 11 kms.²¹

As may be inferred from the foregoing description, Salasa is watered by the Agno which flows close to it on the eastern, northern, and western sides providing its inhabitants with a good fluvial means of transporting their products to Dagupan and Labrador, and forming in the latter town where it joins the river that flows from Lingayen the estuary of Labrador.²² It was also watered by the many streams that descend from the mountains of Zambales.²³

¹⁴ *Informe al Rey Nuestro Señor*, 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelánea," Vol. III, Fol. 44v.

¹⁵ Cfr. APSR, MS, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. 4, Doc. 1, Fol. 15.

¹⁶ Cfr. *Ibid.*, Section "Cagayan," Vol. 18, Doc. 26.

¹⁷ "Estado General de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario, con expresión de los religiosos, ministerios y misiones que tiene en Filipinas, etc., perteneciente al año de 1848," *Revista Católica*, Barcelona, Imprenta y librería de D. Pablo Riera, 1850, No. XCI, Enero de 1850, pág. 547.

¹⁸ *Estado General*, etc., 1875.

¹⁹ *Estado General*, etc., 1897.

²⁰ Republic of the Philippines, Bureau of Census and Statistics, Census of 1980.

²¹ Hilario Ma. Ocio, O.P., *Monumento Dominicano*, MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios," Vol. I, p. 97.

²² "Descripción del pueblo de Salasa," MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. VII, Doc. 24, p. 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

Few of its inhabitants, as Fr. Suárez remarked in 1869, lived in the town proper, close to the church. Most of them had their humble dwellings built along both sides of the roads leading to Aguilar or to Labrador, as it was — and still is, we may add — the custom in Pangasinan.²⁴

Its Founding and Acceptance

Salasa was founded by people who came from Lingayen, San Carlos, and Binmaley who, attracted by the productiveness of the soil, settled on its plains.²⁵

Initially, it was a *visita* of Lingayen until it was accepted by the Provincial Chapter of 1720 as a ministry of the Dominican Order which placed it under the patronage and advocacy of the Apostle St. Andrew, and raised it to the status of a *Vicaría*. At the same time it was given, as its first Vicar, Fr. Benito Pereira.²⁶

Due, however, to some quarrels that immediately arose among the inhabitants this foundation was discontinued until 1733 when the chapter held on that year in Santo Domingo in Manila again accepted it as a *Vicaría*.²⁷

The real founder of Salasa was the Ven. Fr. Antonio Pérez who was later to be beheaded on November 30, 1727, by the Negritos of Bataan where he was temporarily stationed as chaplain of the Pangasinanes employed in cutting timber for the royal service.²⁸

Some Notes of Fr. Mora Regarding Salasa

It will be appropriate to insert here some notes about Salasa written by Fr. Manuel Mora on the occasion of his visit to the town in his capacity as Secretary to the Canonical Visitor on January 2, 1805. Translated from the Spanish and somewhat summarized, they are as follows:

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 188.

²⁵ Ocio, *loc. cit.*

²⁶ *Acta Capitulum Provincialium* ... II, 118.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 205; Ocio, *loc. cit.*

²⁸ Ocio, *Compendio de la Reseña* ... p. 315.

In the afternoon of January 2, 1805, we left Binmaley bound for Salasa. We passed by the end of the main street of Lingayen and within sight of the church, without stopping, except to greet the Father Vicar who was then taking a walk. Soon after, we went across the *tulay* or bridge which is very long and built of palms and bamboo canes over the salt water *estero* which comes from Lingayen. From here, all is a nipa grove as far as the Agno on whose opposite bank the town of Salasa is located.

This river — which receives its waters not only from the river of Bayambang but also from that of Tarlac and from a multitude of small creeks that flow into it from the nearby mountains of Zambales — is very wide; and as they say, it is ten fathoms deep in its canal. We crossed it on a barge that was being pulled with the help of several thick and long pieces of rattan strongly tied at short intervals to two wild palms which were stuck to the bottom of the river. The said river is the territorial boundary of Lingayen since Salasa has its rice-fields towards the East in a place named Balubas where they are planning now to found a new town. To the West are the mountains and San Isidro. Salasa numbers 1,070 tributaries of natives and $8\frac{1}{2}$ of *mestizos de Sangley*. There are in it two houses of Spaniards.

It was founded about the year 1733 as is attested in the Canonical books...

The convent and the church are of brick and facing the North with slight deflection towards the West. The convent is 7-shaped, and has four rooms and a living room (*sala*). The church is fairly good, with three naves separated by columns which are no other than the old *harigues* (wooden posts) lined with bricks.

It also has three new altars and, along the inner face of the walls, several well-wrought chromos framed and covered with glass. It is besides, provided with two bells, one new while the other dates from the time of the founding of the town, both supported by *harigues*, for, although the basement of the belfry has been laid, this has not been built so far. On the said basement there stands the Baptistery on whose entrance to the right and encased in the wall there is a board bearing the following inscription: "This Church was begun and finished by Fr. Francisco

Barroso in the years 1747 and 1748; it was ornamented in 1780; the cemetery was constructed in October of 1779."

Among its jewels, this church has a relic of St. Andrew, that is, a very small bone, duly authenticated and further authorized by the Most Illustrious Bishop Miguel García who donated it to the ex-provincial Fr. Andrés Meléndez.²⁹

More Information on the Church and Belltower of Salasa from Other Sources

The *Atomo Catalán* (Fr. Ramón Vilanova) states in his autobiography that in the year 1867 when he was appointed parish priest of Salasa, its church was in a ruinous condition, so ruinous in fact that it seemed to be ready to collapse at any time. The pavement also needed extensive repairs or a total renovation. However, the burden of repairing or renovating it fell on his successor, Fr. Juan Terrés who, between 1874-1885, replaced the old nipa-palm roof with galvanized iron sheets.³⁰

The belfry was begun in 1817 and, as Fr. Ocio remarked, there was no sign in his time of any progress in its construction nor any hope that it might ever be finished.³¹ Sad, to say, these words are as true today, in 1985, as they were in 1900 when Fr. Ocio wrote his *Monumento Dominicano* or brief report on the ministries founded by the Dominicans in the Philippines from 1587 to 1898. On the other hand, any visitor of Salasa may easily appreciate, judging from what was built, that is, one story and a half, how majestic and imposing it would have been had it been finished:

On the vicissitudes that the ecclesiastical buildings of Salasa have undergone in more recent times, Fr. José Ma. González has this to say:

A few years ago when Bugallon was founded, to whose site they thought of transferring the town of Salasa, they also wished to take along the materials of the church to that same site. Such queer idea only served to bring about the destruction, to a considerable extent, of so beautiful a

²⁹ "Estado de las Casas de la Provincia en Filipinas," MS in APSR, Section "Ministerios," Vol. 2, Fol. 105 r & v.

³⁰ Ramón Vilanova, O.P., *Vida de un Atomo Catalán* (1830-1895) MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. X, p. 235.

³¹ Ocio, *loc. cit.*

temple. The majestic arches that separated the three naves and the beautiful and artistically built vault (ceiling) were torn down. At present (1946) it lacks a vault (ceiling) and the naves are divided by prosaic columns. Yet, there still remains a splendid church, very clean and well ornamented due to the diligence and zeal of Frs. Fernando and Jacinto, O.M.C. This magnificent church is 81 meters long by 21.30 meters wide in its interior.

Its former Patron Saint, St. Andrew, was given to Bugallon while Salasa received for its patroness Our Lady of Lourdes.³²

Salasa's Claim to Glory

Salasa became famous in the pages of Philippine History for having been the last town to surrender to the Spanish army on March 19, 1764, and for the defeat inflicted on the forces of Palaris by the combined squadrons of the Government and the surrendered inhabitants of the town who had turned around to fight on the side of the Spaniards.³³

Another event, although of lesser historical significance, of which Salasa was proud for so many years was the visit paid to the town by Gov. General José Basco y Vargas, on the occasion of his trip to Ilocos, on January 28-29, 1785. The record of this visit was inscribed on one of the beams of the room which Gov. Basco occupied. "Havitó esta celda el M.Y.S. Gov. y Cap. Gen. de Estas Yslas D. José Basco y Vargas."³⁴

Population Statistics

The following figures will show us how the population of Salasa steadily grew through the years from 1751 up to 1898:

1751	2,754 souls ³⁵
1758	1,669 souls ³⁶

³² *Labor Evangelizadora y Civilizadora de los Dominicos en Pangasinán*, (1587-1898, U.S.T. Press, Manila, 1946), pp. 82-83.

³³ "Descripción del Pueblo de Salasa," *loc. cit.* in footnote 22.

³⁴ González, *loc. cit.*, p. 82.

³⁵ "Informe al Rey Nuestro Señor," Año 1751, MS in APSR, Section "Miscelanea," Vol. III, fol. 8.

³⁶ "Mapa de los Pueblos y Almas que Administran los RR. PP. del Sagrado Orden de Predicadores, Vicarios y Ministros de Doctrina de la Provincia de Pangasinán... Año de 1758, MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. IV, Doc. 1, Fol. único.

1795	3,597 souls ³⁷
1824	4,371 souls ³⁸
1848	5,846 souls ³⁹
1875	6,603 souls ⁴⁰
1897	7,067 souls ⁴¹

MALIONGLIONG

This ministry, which some years before had existed under the name of San Bartolomé de Agno, was received by the Provincial Chapter of 1739. Its purpose was to serve as a bridge-head for the christianization of the pagans living in the localities of Ambayauan, Bangauban, Litocob, and Cali, and to be at the same time a place to rest and a shelter from the attacks of the Igorots for the men working in the opening of the road — we better call it trail — that, begun under the supervision of Fr. Manuel del Río, was expected to connect eastern Pangasinan and the Ituy Valley (today Southern Nueva Vizcaya).

However, as the life-span of the road was short, so was also the existence of the ministry of Maliongliong. Its *Expediente*, initiated with due formalities on May 21, 1939, was approved by the government on October 11 of the following year. The Dominican Chapters of 1739 and 1741, on their part, entrusted it to the pastoral care of Fr. Fernando García who was barely able to stay there for two years, that is from March 1740 until 1741.

The government, besides giving its official approval, had provided it with a bell and other appurtenances which, according to the Laws of the Indies, were to be given to all new foundations.⁴²

³⁷ "Número de Tributos de Naturales y Mestizos con el Total de Almas que Administran los PP. Dominicos de la Provincia de Pangasinán en este año de 1795 (Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Pangasinan," Vol. XII, Doc. 17, Fol. 316).

³⁸ "Piano che rappresenta il numero di anime che la Provincia del Ssmo. Rosario dell' Ordine de' Predicatori tiene a carico suo nell'Isole Filippine, nell'Impero della Gran China, e nel Regno del Tonchino, secondo la novissime relazioni" (Cfr. AGOP, "Estadísticas, 1824," XIII-27), 500-5-4-a.

³⁹ *Revista Católica*, loc. cit.

⁴⁰ *Estado General*, Manila, 1875.

⁴¹ *Estado General*, Manila, 1897.

⁴² *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*... II, 254, 27; Ocio, *Monumento*, p. 98; Rosario Mendoza Cortés, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

ROSA DE SANTA MARIA, t.o.p.*

By

Remedios Mijares Austria, T.O.P.

Introduction

The documents of Vatican II are full of citations from the New Testament that show that holiness is a call addressed to all classes of people and not, therefore, the special preserve of only some classes of Christians.

The Divine Teacher — model of all perfection — preached to each and everyone regardless of his situation: "You, therefore, are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48) He sends His Holy Spirit upon all men that He may inspire them from within to love God with their whole being (cf. Mk. 12:30) and love one another as Christ loved them (cf. Jn. 13:34).

Philippine history has records of men and women who were called to holiness and lived holy lives which by their heroism are shining testimonies to the Christian Faith, and worthy of admiration and emulation.

Biographical Sketch

One of the blessed fruits of Spanish missionary works in the Philippines was a woman, an "Igorota" by birth and a school teacher by vocation who lived in the 18th century.

On the occasion of the blessing of a magnificent church in the town of Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya province, on July 5, 1747, a solemn mass was sung, and to enhance this propitious event, twenty-seven children from various pagan tribal groups were baptized as the first-fruits offered to the Lord in the new church. Rosa de Santa María who was then three years old was among those baptized that memorable day. She was the daughter of the pagan chief Sumiring and Ana Ingangaron, a Christian of the town of Bambang.

* The life of Rosa de Santa María was chronicled by Fr. Domingo Caro, O.P., her spiritual director. The chronicle was summarized in 1853 by Fr. Francisco Gainza, O.P. The references are from the archives of the University of Santo Tomás, Folletos, vol. XIV, pp. 358-364.

Rosa grew up with little education but had high aims in the practice of virtue, all due to her docile response to the inspiration of the grace of God. She had a clear mind, a retentive memory, and a marked skill for tasks appropriate for a young girl of her times. She learned to read and write and some handicrafts common to the people in the town.

As a young woman, Rosa was distracted and dissipated with a desire to show off and vanity. She was fond of wearing fine dresses and worldly adornments, although nothing is known that may have tarnished her good name. At seventeen she married, but continued to live in worldly fashion. At thirty-three, she was chosen to be the school mistress for girls on account of her being a daughter of a chief and the best trained in the village.

She had been teaching for three years when the good Lord Who wished that such good natural qualities would not go to waste, and Who, besides, willed to give a proof of His power and grace among those fierce and blood-thirsty tribes, so deeply touched the heart of the carefree Rosa that she decided to change completely her lifestyle. This happened in the year 1773 on the day dedicated to the virgin St. Thecla towards whom she was to be devoted with a tender affection for the rest of her lifetime.

She readied herself, says the well-known Fr. Caro (who directed her for 19 years), for a general Confession which she made in the midst of deep humility and extraordinary proofs of sorrow. Cleansed of her failings and negligence with profuse tears of sorrow, she proceeded to get rid of unnecessary adornments and display of vanity, as well as of her manner of dressing to which she had been habituated until then. She began to wear, instead, a hairshirt. The ardor with which she began to mortify her body, her chronicler remarks, was of such degree that it seemed as if she were taking a holy revenge upon herself. In the practice of mortification, she came to realize that she would have to moderate her rigors in due regard to her social standing and also for reasons of health.

From these effects, we may infer how sincere and complete her conversion must have been!

From the very moment that she was enlightened by the Lord, she realized the immense favor that she had received from God; and in order to fulfill better her promises and commitments, she started the pious practice of renewing sometimes during the year, and especially on July 5, her profession of

faith. For this she prepared herself with two or three days of rigorous fasting, made a general confession filled with sorrow and contrition, and received the Holy Eucharist with deep humility. Then she would spend the remainder of the day in acts of thanksgiving, being filled with new and burning desire for virtue and perfection.

As a proof of this profession of faith that was always in her heart, at the hour of her death, a small purse was found on her breast containing a protestation which began thus: 'I, Rosa de Santa María, believe...' and ended with: 'And as proof that it is so in my heart, I attach my signature to it on this day of April, 1774.'

Judging from the appearance of the little paper in which the aforesaid profession of faith was written, her father confessor concluded that with the reckoning in time and by the appearance of this worn-out paper it must have been carried close to her heart for about 18 years.

After her conversion, Rosa began the practice of rising at midnight to pray right on the mat (*petate*) while her husband was sleeping. She kept this practice during the rest of her life. She also set aside all Fridays of the year to meditate on the Passion of our Lord. And on Saturdays and other feasts dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, she busied herself with devotional exercises in honor of the Blessed Mother.

As she grew in maturity, and in spite of her many chronic ailments, she grew, too, in her fondness for penitential exercises. Her Father confessor would admonish her to moderate them, but due to her earnest protestations that such penitential practices were like breathing to her, he would allow her to go on.

Because her devotion to Our Lady was intense and tender, she prepared with special diligence for her feasts. On such days, her fastings were more rigorous, her prayers longer and more fervent. She tried to sanctify all the days of the year in that manner. She would read several books translated in her dialect, meditating deeply on their meaning. By reading them, she fully lived the spirit of the Church and from them she drew abundant fruits of virtue, especially throughout the season of Advent. She exerted special effort to prepare herself for the feast of the Nativity so as to live in a state of greater fervor through the Christmas season. For the feast of Pentecost she would prepare herself beginning on Ascension Day. On the days of Lent, she spent her time full of works of humility and penance and in the practice of rigorous austerities despite

the admonition of her confessor to moderate them lest she would impair her health. Later on during her last illness, she wrote thus to her confessor:

"Long live Jesus. Father, I ask you to have mercy on me because I feel more desirous than ever to see the frontals and curtain with which the altars are adorned. Look, Father, that you are perhaps mistaken since I do not need to be curtailed (in the practice of penance) inasmuch as my self-love is still alive. Look, Father, that perhaps you may regret it because you do not know whether this may be my last Lent and I am heavily indebted with God. Nothing more... May God keep you safe".

She was wont to make a holy retreat by withdrawing into solitude for ten days. For spiritual advancement she often immersed herself in spiritual reading and self-examination. This she even did in her last illness. This diligence she carried even when handling the affairs of her housekeeping and the duties of her motherly concern, even as her only daughter died while still an infant. She would at every opportunity instill into the members of her family the virtues of piety and holy fear of God.

The life of Rosa was a good example to the whole town, which in her time underwent a visible change for the better. As school mistress, she shaped for many years the Christian formation of a new generation, and Bambang became the best-behaved town in the missions, and even perhaps in the Philippines.

To the whole town of Bambang she practiced charity to the fullest by assisting, helping, and consoling the sick. She visited the Blessed Sacrament before entering and before leaving the school. She avoided worldly events and profane celebrations. Her great love for purity moved her to make a vow of continence should she survive her husband. This fact was later discovered after her death. The vow had been written on a piece of paper and signed by her.

In 1790, on her 47th year, in consideration of her fervent Christian life, and with the permission of the Dominican superiors in Manila, she was clothed with the habit of St. Dominic. She made her profession on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

During the years 1789 and 1790, the Mission suffered a famine such as had never been witnessed before. One day while the missionary was preaching the practice of penance, and recalling to his audience the example of David who, weighed down by the calamities suffered by his people, asked

the Lord to spare them and place the burden of this terrible indignation on his person, in a like manner, Rosa, burning with charity and moved by God, begged of Him to have pity on the people of her town and allow her to bear the punishment of their sins on her person.

It seemed that God heard her plea, the Chronicler noted, because after a while there was good harvest. She, however, fell sick from a simple wound resulting from a misstep when she stumbled and fell to the ground. After a long and painful suffering from that wound, she died.

Deep in her soul Rosa was sure that the good harvest and her suffering from that wound were God's answer to her prayer. She felt happy that she could not be persuaded to make a promise in order to regain her health. On the contrary, she remarked that having offered herself to God as a victim for the hapless people of the village, it was not just and fair to entreat the Lord to have her wound healed and her health restored to her.

She took her painful illness with meekness and resignation. She prayed continually. She took delight in spiritual reading, and when it was no longer possible for her to read, she would ask someone in her family to read for her. While listening to the readings she was always immersed in holy meditations from which she drew much strength to conform her will to the will of God. At times, she was so filled with joy that she would break into song and praises saying often: "I do not wish to get rid of this illness; on the contrary, I welcome it." Or at other times, she would say, "If it has to be so, let Your will be done." Or, "Oh how much there is in heaven, how little there is on earth."

When Rosa de Santa María made her confession in preparation for the Viaticum she asked the missionary to beg forgiveness in her name from the townspeople in the church. This act edified the whole town. She often made her confession during her last illness. She finally left this earthly life at early dawn of July 9, 1792 after five hours of agony, bequeathing to the whole town a sweet odor of virtue and many holy examples to emulate. Before her death, she asked not to be buried in a cemetery thinking that she was unworthy of such honor. The Religious, believing that she was deserving of a worthier burial place, interred her body in the transept of the church in front of the altar of our Lady to whom she was deeply devoted.

MEDITATIONS FOR PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

by Guillermo Tejon, O.P.

2. "WE ARE WITNESSES"

(Credibility)

When they had brought them in to face the Sanhedrin, the high priest demanded an explanation. "We have given you a formal warning" he said "not to preach in this name, and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and seem determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us." In reply Peter and the apostles said, "Obedience to God comes before obedience to men; it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you who had him executed by hanging on a tree. By his own right hand God has now raised him up to be leader and saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins through him to Israel. We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

(Ac 5:27-32)

Christ, the Word, came as a witness to the Truth. The Truth being God, he came as a witness to God. His preaching and the mighty works he performed while on earth bore witness to the fact that his testimony was true. However, this was not enough for some of his listeners. The Pharisees argued with him: "You are testifying on your behalf; your testimony is not valid" (Jn. 8:12).

Perhaps a testimony on one's own behalf is not accepted in a court of law; but in Jesus' case it was valid, for he was the Word, the Wisdom of God. Still, to satisfy his interlocutors, who argued from a legal point of view, he produced a witness: "The Father who sent me is my witness too." (Jn. 8:19) Since he knew the Father, Jesus could speak with authority about the Father, and since he came from the Father, his teaching was necessarily true. And the Father, who was with him all the

time and who spoke on his behalf at his baptism and on the mount of the Transfiguration, bore witness to the fact that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Not satisfied with one witness, Jesus later invokes another, the Spirit: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, he will be my witness" (Jn. 15:26).

And so Jesus could announce authoritatively: "I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice" (Jn. 18:37).

If Jesus was a witness to the truth so, though on a smaller degree, were his apostles: "And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset" (Jn. 15:37).

When the time came, the apostles rose to the occasion with courage and gave valiant testimony on behalf of Jesus. The truth that lived in them compelled them to witness for it. Told by the authorities not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, they retorted: "You must judge whether in God's eyes it is right to listen to you and not to God. We cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard." (Ac. 4:19-20) And they invoked an extraordinary witness to testify on their behalf: "We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Ac. 5:32).

The end of John's Gospel says: "The disciple is the one who vouches for these things and has written them down, and we know that his testimony is true." (Jn. 21:24) John was an eyewitness to the teachings and miracles of Christ, and so were all the others who had been with the Lord "from the outset." However, they had another more valid argument to prove that their testimony was true. The Holy Spirit, who came on them on Pentecost Day and filled their hearts with his gifts, testified on their behalf.

Urged by Christ's command, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples," (Mt. 28:19) the apostles "went and preached everywhere" (Mk. 16:20); and Jesus, who had promised to be with them until the end of time (Mt. 28:20) was their constant companion and witness: "And the Lord worked with them and proved that their preaching was true by the miracles that were performed" (Mk. 16:20).

We also preach. What proof do we produce that it is really the truth that we preach, and not something else? A

lectures would have to find their way into the waste-paper basket? (At this point, I must admit in all sincerity that I feel like giving up this writing, but at the same time something inside me tells me to go on, and so I do with an apology for the lack of witnessing in my life).

How do we feel when it dawns upon us that we are talking about things of which we are not true witnesses, things we have read about in books or heard from others, but of which we have little or no experience? Are we not liable to have, applied to us, the words that in a time of crisis a few years ago, a Christian addressed to the Church: "If you have anything particularly Christian to say at this hour, for God's sake say it! If you have nothing to say but the echo of what is heard on every street corner and in every luncheon club, for God's sake keep still!" Discoursing on the 'Voice' that was John the Baptist and the 'Word' that was Christ, and applying it to preachers, St. Augustine says:

Take away the word, the meaning, and what is the voice? Where there is no understanding, there is only a meaningless sound. The voice without the word strikes the ear but does not build up the heart.

And John Paul II:

In practical terms, the only priest who will always prove necessary to people is the priest who is conscious of the full meaning of his priesthood: The priest who believes profoundly, who professes his faith with courage, who prays fervently, who teaches with deep conviction, who serves, who puts into practice in his own life the program of the Beatitudes, who knows how to love disinterestedly, who is close to everyone, and especially to those who are most in need.

Of course, the word we preach and the sacraments we administer work *ex opere operato*, that is, they carry an inner force (God's power) that makes them effective; but we also know that that force is increased and the fruits multiplied if all the attention is paid to the *ex opere operantis* (the inner disposition and attitude) not only on the part of the recipient of the sacrament or word, but also on the part of the minister.

Nemo dat quod non habet, we used to say in our Philosophy classes: No one can give what he does not possess. In a recent

apostolic letter, addressed to the religious, John Paul II says the same but using the terms *being, having, giving*: No one can give unless he has, and no one can have unless he is. The Pope actually reduces the whole problem, indeed the whole Gospel, to "a programme of being." In other words, unless we are true disciples of the Lord we cannot have a genuine Christian life in us, and if we do not have such life, how can we effectively, as witnesses, share it with others?

Of course, in all this we must keep clear of all types of meticulousness and exaggeration. No one can know and experience everything. There are things, simply too high and too out of reach for any mortal to experience in this life, like the beatific vision; and other things about which, in spite of all our Theology, we know very little, like death, resurrection, heaven, etc. Besides, every man has his own particular vocation, even within the general priestly or religious vocation, and not all are led by the Holy Spirit along the same spiritual path and granted the same mystical experiences. Moreover, oftentimes we have, for the sake of the people of God, to talk about things of which we have little understanding and for which perhaps we have little predilection. Furthermore, since we believe and live in the communion of saints, we have to make use of the knowledge and experience of other Christians (theologians, spiritual writers, mystics, etc.) in our teaching and preaching.

However, after having put forward all these considerations and more that could be added, and after allowing room for all the necessary qualifications and reservations, it seems to me that the question is still valid: If we only talked and preached about those matters of which we have some personal experience, what could we talk and preach about? A formidable question indeed!

Surely, here we are not thinking in terms of perfection, which does not exist in this world, but simply in terms of sincerity in seeking the Lord, in preaching his word as it should be preached, in living our vocation to the full.

We all know the value of true witnessing and, should we forget, the world is there to remind us of it.

What catches the imagination of the world and really impresses people? A word that is accompanied by a strong testimony. Even if the word is uttered in a soft voice, or not

uttered at all, it carries a sound; and the sound grows in volume and becomes loud and convincing because of the testimony that accompanies it.

The silent and humble work of Mother Teresa of Calcutta has done more for the faith and the Church than many volumes of high learning and many sermons preached from famous pulpits. Watching her in action, British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge decided to become a Catholic.

On the other hand, how small we feel when we hear Gandhi say, "I admire Christ but not Christians," or R. W. Emerson, "Every Stoic was a Stoic, but in Christendom where is the Christian?"

We know where the Christian is, for we know that there are countless good Christians in the world and many real saints among them. And we also know that Christianity's detractors often generalize and launch accusations against the Church for the purpose of excusing their unbelief. But we have to admit that oftentimes the accusation is well-founded. Are the so-called 'Christian' countries really Christian? Isn't the tremendous disunity among Christian churches a great scandal to the world?

In his *Why I am not a Christian*, philosopher Bertrand Russell gives many reasons for not being one. A good number of them are not valid; but when he wags his finger at scandalous Christians, it is not easy to rebut him. Sandhu Sing made a biting appraisal of 'Christian' Europe when he said:

One day I was sitting on the bank of a river. I took from the water a round stone and I broke it. Inside it was perfectly dry. The stone had been lying in the water for a very long time, but the water had not penetrated it. Then I thought that the same thing happened to men in Europe. For centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity, but Christianity has not penetrated, does not live within them.

Bringing the matter home to us, priests and religious, let us ask some pertinent questions: To what extent is my life a witness to what I preach? Can I say with the apostles, "I am a witness, and the Spirit is a witness with me"? Is my vocation credible? Is my life credible? Is my word credible? Am I a round stone in the river?...

We have to ask these questions, because the world is asking them.

We are continually being asked, sometimes tacitly, sometimes openly: Do you believe yourselves what you are saying to us? Is your life in accord with your beliefs? Is your preaching in accord with your life?

(Paul VI)

It would be a disaster of immeasurable proportions if the reaction of those who listen to our preaching were: "Physician, heal thyself!" or "Do what they tell you and listen to what they say, but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practise what they preach" (Mt. 23:3) or, worse still, "Jesus I recognize, and I know who Paul is, but who are you?" (Ac. 19:15)

Oh, if we, priests and religious, could say: "If you refuse to believe in me, at least believe in the work I do!" (Jn. 10:38).

How do you feel when people ask you for prayers, and when you ask for theirs in return, they answer, "You do not need our prayers, you are holy"? Every time I go through this experience, I feel like burying my head in the sand.

These are the good people of God. They believe in us, and we cannot afford to disappoint them.

There is a story in the life of St. Francis of Assisi which reminds us vividly of this. After a night spent in prayer, he felt too weak to travel on foot; so his companions asked a poor local peasant to lend Francis his donkey. The peasant readily agreed, helped Francis into the saddle, and they all continued their journey toward Mount Alverna. After they had gone a little while, the man who up to that moment had walked behind his donkey, approached Francis and asked: "Tell me, are you Brother Francis of Assisi?" The saint said that he was. "Well, then" — said the peasant — "try to be as good as everyone thinks you are, because many people have great faith in you. So I urge you: never let anything be in you that is different from what they expect of you." Upon hearing this, Francis got off the donkey, threw himself on his knees before the peasant and kissed his feet, thanking him for having admonished him so charitably.

Don't we all need a friendly and charitable 'peasant' every now and then?

PASTORAL SECTION

PARISH APOSTOLATE

Through this issue, the Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas would like to inaugurate once again a Pastoral Section. At the outset, however, we would like to recall what St. Thomas Aquinas uttered on his deathbed. He said that for love of God, he studied and taught to others the fruits of his learning. He never intended to say or write anything against God or His Church. If, however, unfortunately, he said or wrote anything against God or His Church, no matter how unintentionally, he would like it to be known that he did not insist on it. But rather, he placed everything under the corrective authority of the Church.

We would like to do the same.

In this section, moreover, we would like to deal primarily on the parish. For, as Pope John Paul II recently said "... It is necessary to re-affirm the importance and the validity of the parish. Despite the crises, real or supposed, that have afflicted it, the parish remains an institution that must be preserved as the moral and primary expression of the care of souls. This, moreover, is the conclusion reached after an analysis very carefully conducted by ... (the Congregation for the Clergy) ... regarding the revision of this canonical institution. Without doubt it is not a self-sufficient reality in a pastoral programme adapted to present needs; it must be perfected and integrated with many other forms, but it nevertheless remains an indispensable organism of primary importance among the visible structures of the Church. The parish is in fact the first ecclesial community: after the family, it is the first school of faith, of prayer and of Christian conduct; it is the first field of ecclesial charity; the first organ of pastoral and social action; the ground best suited to make priestly and religious vocations blossom; the primary seat of catechesis. For all these reasons, speaking of the parish's importance for catechesis, I expressed myself as follows in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*: 'Whatever one may think, the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people, even for the non-

practising' (*Catechesi Tradendae*, n. 67)" (Pope to Plenary Assembly of Congregation for the Clergy, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 3 December 1984, p. 4).

Furthermore, we shall treat on this subject as law provides and as experience teaches us. On the one hand, we shall try to point out the alternatives found within the provision of law. On the other, we shall also put forward suggestions within the ambience of experience. On both, however, we do not pretend exhaustiveness due to the vastness of both fields.

PARISH ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

The composition of this council shall include the parish priest, the parochial vicar or assistant parish priest and the religious doing pastoral work in the parish.

PARISH PRIEST — Pope John Paul II, in the same discourse quoted above, also emphasized the following when he said: "Another important point always to keep in mind is the necessity for the closest, most organic and personal collaboration of all the elements of the parish with its pastor."

In big parishes, this close, organic and personal collaboration of all elements of the parish with its pastor is usually rendered almost impossible. Hence, delegation becomes a necessity even in the parish level. In such cases, the creation of an administrative council in a parish may greatly help the pastor. Here, all activities in the parish are discussed. Specially those things which are ordinarily not discussed with laypersons can find their outlet in this council.

Since the parochial vicar and the religious are supposed to be one with their parish priest in their dedication of self in service to the Church, they are expected to more easily understand one another. The parish priest, therefore, should find in them the much needed support specially when he has to make unpopular decisions.

All parochial activities must be divided among the members of the administrative council. One, for example, may be in-charge of the parochial school. Another may take care of the liturgical committee. Still another may take care of the committee on education-formation. And so on.

This administrative council must meet regularly. For example, once a month. It must have a system of reporting. Everyone must report. The parish priest must report on the pastoral council over which he presides (c. 536,1). Each one must report on all the parochial jobs assigned to him or her: on the school, on the different committees, on the different religious organizations and so forth.

In this way, the parish priest is kept abreast of what is happening in the whole parish. And, therefore, he can supervise, check and be really responsible.

PAROCHIAL VICAR — The new canonical name for assistant parish priest is parochial vicar. Parochial vicars are defined by the New Code as priests who render their services in the pastoral ministry as co-workers with the parish priest in counsel and endeavor (c.545,1). Their rights and obligations are defined in the Code, in the diocesan statutes and in the letter of appointment. They are determined with greater specification in the commission given him by the parish priest (c. 548,1).

A parochial vicar can be assigned to direct his efforts toward fulfilling the entire pastoral ministry in behalf of the whole parish (cc. 545, 2; 548, 2). This job is very similar to that of the vicar general in the diocese. The parochial vicar can also be assigned to direct his efforts to some definite part of the parish, or to a certain group of the parish's Christian faithful, or towards fulfilling certain type of ministry in several determined parishes concurrently (c. 545). Such a role is very much like that of the episcopal vicar in the diocese.

The parochial vicar is also required to regularly consult with the parish priest on parish programs (c. 548, 3). When a parish becomes open or when the parish priest is absent (c. 533, 3) or is hindered from exercising his pastoral duty, the parochial vicar is to assume the governance of the parish in the meantime until a parochial administrator is appointed (c. 541).

Through the creation of the administrative council, the parochial vicar can easily see and appreciate the particular apostolate which he does in the parish in the context of the whole parochial ministry. Through this council, he can also more regularly consult with the parish priest on parish programs. Thus, conflicts are avoided. And, in case he has to take over

the governance of the parish, he can do so with facility since, through this council, he is already acquainted with all the activities in the entire parish. Hence, he can continue the parish programs without any obstacle.

THE RELIGIOUS — By the religious, we mean ordinarily the sisters who do pastoral work in the parish. The ministry which sisters can do in a parish cannot be overemphasized. The very fact that they are women can mean that they can more easily penetrate into the greater majority of our church-goers who are women. This can also mean that they can more easily persuade these women to influence their husbands, sons, and grandsons to take active part in church activities.

The sisters can be in-charge of the school, the parish catechetical program, house-to-house visitations, the parish staff and so on. They can take care of the cleanliness of the church, the school and their surroundings. They can even act as directresses of religious organizations. They will more readily take care of the poor, the sick and the aged in the parish.

The administrative council can put order and direction to these activities which may be assigned to the religious.

In general, the administrative council can act as the planning body of the parish. It is here where what is to be done in the parish is first decided. It is here where the unity of those who are completely dedicated to the service of God and His Church is welded. It is here where the center of the total parish apostolate must reside.

WILFREDO C. PAGUIO

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HOMILETICS

by

Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (March 3, 1985)

Readings:

Gen. 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Rom. 8:31-34

Mk. 9:1-9

ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

It is one thing to know about a person, his life and his teaching, and quite another thing to know that person with loving knowledge and genuine friendship. Many know a good deal about Christ, his life and teaching, but it is quite another thing to know Christ personally. That comes with a personal encounter with Christ in the depth of one's heart or Christ discovered hidden in one's fellowman. Such is the encounter that changed Paul from a rabid persecutor of Christ to his most ardent follower and champion. And such a spiritual experience is converting many today, both young and old from a lukewarm, careless way of life, even from a life of sin and all manner of indulgence, to a fervent and meaningful life of genuine Christian commitment. They have experienced a deep insight into his love for them and feel impelled to make a return of love by leading a life worthy of Christ's love. It is amazing how many people of all classes have had this experience in this our day of materialism and permissiveness.

Peter, James and John had been in the company of Jesus for a long time already. Daily they had seen his exemplary life, heard his dynamic words, listened to his parables and their explanations, witnessed his signs and miracles and shared his companionship. But on that day when they climbed the moun-

tain with Him, something happened. They could not explain it too well. None of the saints have been able to describe adequately their deeply spiritual encounters with the Deity. But they never doubted the reality of that special experience which they enjoyed that day. It formed part of the kerygma of the Early Church, and all three evangelists narrate it at some length (Mt. 7:1; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:28). Jesus knew only too well that his trusted friends would need strengthening for the great hour of trial that lay ahead, the hour of his passion and death.

God often gives his friends special graces and favors before letting them taste the bitter cup of suffering, and letting them share a greater portion of the cross. He foresees that unexpected failure, that illness paralyzing all effort, that death entering into the family circle, that hour of discouragement because of personal disgrace or losses. It is part of our growing in Christ, part of our becoming more like the Master, that we shoulder our cross manfully and willingly, bitter though it may be. But before the blow falls, he grants his beloved ones beforehand special marks of his love, glimpses of God's plan, a tasting of God's immense love, joys that fill the heart with delight in the things that God has provided. God's presence seems so real again, Christ's gentle and personal care so manifest.

This is the Lord's strengthening hand assuring the earnest heart that he is near; he is with us like he was with his chosen ones of old. We realize clearly again what a Father he has been to us all along; we sense the reality of his indwelling Spirit guiding and leading us to our destined goal. Under the impact of his grace our ears are opened to his voice speaking to us in the depth of our hearts, or in the word of God in the divine Scriptures, or again in the signs that surround us in persons and events. This is the day of transfiguration. It is not yet the day of glory and final reward. There lies ahead the many challenges that constitute our special cross, our Golgotha, through which we must pass to resurrection and new life.

Like the three Apostles entering into the overshadowing cloud, we determine to be more involved than ever with the mystery and the Person of Christ, who alone is our Way and our Life. Like Paul, we resolve to champion his cause, to spend ourselves for others, be they in our close family circle or our fellowmen whom we know to be in need of our help. God's special graces are given with a purpose. We do not wish to default.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

(March 10, 1985)

Readings:

Ex. 20:1-17

1 Co. 1:22-25

Jn. 2:13-25

CHANGING THE STRUCTURES

Change affects people in different ways. Many welcome it when structures have become outmoded, stagnating, paralyzing. They realize that changes are at times not only good but imperative, if the organism is to continue in vigorous and fruitful activity. Others are allergic to any change. Often they fail to distinguish between changing essential things and changing things that are non-essential, and oppose every change as a challenge to the "status quo". It may be on account of a lack of openness to new developments and realities of a changing world, or a spirit entrenched on its own narrow outlook. Or again it may be fear of the risk of the new, because one has not kept up with the world around. Those who see the need of structural changes and are helpless to bring them about, suffer greatly. Jesus did not fear to make changes when he saw they had to be made.

For years the traders had encroached on the sacred Temple precincts with their sheep and oxen, their doves and exchange cashiers. Here change was not only useful but imperative. It was the House of God, and Christ let nothing stand in the way until he had cleansed the Temple, even though it meant a show of great indignation and fierce anger. He restored the sacred halls as a house of prayer, his Father's House.

In doing so, the Lord symbolized that far greater changes were at hand. The material Temple, the sacrifice of animals, the minute ceremonial prescriptions of the Law for worship in God's house were about to be abolished and taken over by a more perfect form of worship for the People of God of the New Covenant. He was the Living Temple of God, the offering of himself would henceforth be the only sacrifice pleasing to the Father; a new rite of worship in a sacrificial meal would be established for all future time. Old structures were no longer

sufficient. The New Covenant in his Blood would demand structures that were not focused on the Law but were Christocentric.

In the world at large, the Church is the Body of Christ and the living Temple of the Spirit. But also here, structures become decrepit. Institutions that were established to help those in need are no longer sufficient or have become impractical. The realities facing the Christian world are changing rapidly and quickly. Today the Church has become more aware of minority groups, those that are marginalized, those who are living in subhuman conditions, those who are not able to make a decent living for their families, those that are forced to work in conditions unworthy of a human person. Action is necessary, bold action. Structures need to be reformed and transformed. Not with violence that would harm others or their property. Jesus harmed no man in expelling the buyers and sellers from the sacred precincts they had usurped. He harmed no property in driving out the cattle, for the owners could easily find their cattle in the narrow streets of the city. Ill-gotten gain was justly overthrown. Nor was it lost to any degree, one can be sure.

It takes courage to stand up for what is right, and only concerted effort can bring it about. No just laws are in question. No violent methods are invoked. There is no honest man who does not respect such needed action, even though he be the lawgiver himself. Once concerted action is inaugurated, it is surprising how many more timid admirers will come to the fore and back the needed reform. The Body of Christ is a living organism, growing daily in a changing world. As it experiences the new conditions of the times, the crying needs of the members of Christ and the inadequacy of present structures, it will do all it can to put forth new ideas, new methods, new solutions, so that life and vigor would flourish. This will bring about dissension at times and suffering. There is no growth without some pain.

A concentrated effort of every parish in all the dioceses and of every family in each parish, to follow the Alay Kapwa program of our Bishops for this Lenten period cannot but bring results. It would deepen each one's awareness of the problems to be faced, so that everyone, rich and poor alike, would enter into a self-examination as to whether he is really doing his best to help the oppressed, those deprived of their living wages, and all those who suffer injustice. Lent will then bring about a true renewal, a cleansing of structures, a transformation of the "status quo".

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
(March 17, 1985)

Readings:

2 Chron. 36:14-16, 19-23
 Eph. 2:4-10
 Jn. 3:14-21

THE PROPHETIC ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN

Any organization or community that would develop well its potential must have genuine leaders, who are not out for their personal advancement, but for the good of the organization or the community. In aiming at a definite goal, a leader will meet obstacles and even opposition, if the ideals he sets forth jar with the lower standards of those less concerned about the good of the organization than with the good of their own personal interests. Opposition is no sign of poor leadership. It may evidence just the contrary.

By the witness of his gospel message and his powerful deeds, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God to be at hand. He himself is the great Prophet of God, God's mouthpiece, the very Word of God Incarnate, clearly manifesting to his brothers in the flesh what the will of the Father is for them. The fact that he boldly proclaims what is right in God's eyes, and what the Father in heaven wants his children to do, brings upon him mounting opposition, "because men loved darkness rather than light" (Jn. 3:19); and the opposition breaks out into open hostility until he is "lifted up" on the Cross, betrayed by one of the Twelve, rejected by his own People, and handed over to the pagans. Yet, he did proclaim that "I, once I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn. 12:32).

Christ continues to fulfill his prophetic office in the Church today. This he does not only through the hierarchy but also through the laity. They also have been called to be his witnesses. Both the understanding of the faith and the grace of speech have been given to them. Endowed with these gifts, the power of the Good News is to shine forth in their lives, and the virtues of the gospel message blossom fully, shining like the Christ-life itself in the midst of men (Vat. II, The Church, 35). Continuing the prophetic role of Christ, the Christian spreads

the faith by word and deed. He is not primarily concerned with revealing the unknown future and if this is occasionally resorted to, it is always in relation to conversion and renewal in the Christian commitment. His main task is to admonish, reprimand, instruct and console, always exhorting God's People to carry out the mind of Christ in his commandment of universal love.

While the role of the teacher is to preserve and hand down the doctrine of Christ, interpreting it for the People, the role of the prophet is to render the message more relevant by applying it to existing situations which need proper and immediate attention, as well as by proposing solutions for rising problems in the light of the Gospel. Therefore the prophetic Christian has to be dynamic, stirring up his fellowmen to the urgent need at hand. He speaks boldly like John the Baptist or the Savior himself and is not afraid to call misdeeds by their proper name. Hence he will often stir up opposition, and even hostility, because men are too often more interested in material gain than in the Law of Love of Jesus Christ. The prophet brings to light by his words and by his example the falsehood that is latent in every man, and the inner sinfulness which pride is unwilling to acknowledge and confess. His role is to lead men to the Light so that they see what their calling as Christians should be, so that they recognize that Christ alone can bring salvation, fulfillment and universal peace.

To function worthily in his role, the Christian needs constant contact with the deposit of faith as handed down from apostolic times. Without this loyal adherence to the guidance of those in authority, prophetic voices soon degenerate into misguided individualism and fanatical imposition of their own views. At times, some self-styled prophets like to compare themselves with the ancient prophets of Israel, and imitate them in denouncing those in authority or existing institutions. Yet the parallel is defective. Israel was a theocratic state, Yahweh was its true King and Ruler. Government and religion were intended to be unified. The modern world has separation of state and Church. The motivation for the Christian prophet is Christ's gospel and his Law of Love.

The Christian exercises his prophetic role chiefly by his example of a good Christian life, his fidelity to Christian principles, and willingness to stand up for them in face of opposition. He likewise deepens his knowledge continually of what God has revealed to be his will in the Scriptures, especially the

Gospels, and he willingly hearkens to the Voice of Christ resounding in the words of those whom Christ has placed over his flock to feed and guide them. This knowledge will enable him to come to the aid of others who are groping for the truth, and to defend the stand of the Church when it is attacked. He is not afraid to speak up boldly, even though that may merit him to "be lifted up with his Lord" and to suffer derision and opprobrium.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (March 24, 1985)

Readings:

Jer. 31:31-34
Heb. 5:7-9
Jn. 12:20-33

SUFFERING WILL BEAR FRUIT

Kathie was 12 years old when she was run over by a truck, the first time such a tragedy had hit a lovely family of devoted Catholic parents and seven children. Kathie was rushed to the hospital and through the intense care of specialists, nurses and interns, Kathie survived, though it was a long road back to a somewhat normal life again. During all that time, not only every member of the family but dozens of hospital staff members showered love and attention on the plucky little girl. It seemed that everyone was intensely interested in her recovery and wanted to do everything possible to help it along. Love resulted from what was first the greatest suffering for the whole family. Again it showed how suffering can bear the choicest fruits in ways known only to God.

Suffering enters into everyone's life and many cannot find the right answer for it. Why is a father killed in a plane crash, leaving a young widow to care for a growing family? Why do thousands live homeless and starving only to die on the very streets of our large cities? Why must war fill our wards with maimed and crippled men? Why: the universal cry of man. Those without faith conclude "There is no God" (Ps. 10:4) and blame it on the cruelty of fate. Blasphemers curse God as Job's wife suggested for him to do (Job. 2:9). The friends of Job claimed that all suffering was the result of personal sins. Jesus denied this. When they came upon a blind man, the disciples

asked him: Was this blindness due to the man's sins or those of his parents? Neither, the Lord replied. Rather, it happened to let the works of God shine forth (John 9:1-3).

What then is the explanation of the mystery of universal suffering? The answer of Jesus makes it plain that suffering is in the hands of God who has various purposes in mind when allowing man in this period of exile and transition to undergo suffering. He reveals his purposes in many pages of the bible. Joseph suffered much from his own brothers when sold to traders going to Egypt but in the end Joseph himself saw clearly the divine hand of God in his sufferings, when he told his brothers: "Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve his present end, the survival of many people" (Gen. 50:20). Or again, the test God gave Abraham must have caused him untold suffering in the thought that he was to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, but God's reward for Abraham's obedience brought on him untold blessings (Gen. 22:17).

Jesus did not remove all suffering but he was deeply moved by it. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus (Jn. 11:32), he felt compassion for the multitude without proper guidance (Mt. 9:36). He spent himself in relieving those suffering (Lk. 4:40), yet he himself chose to share man's common lot of suffering. All during his public life he suffered much from scheming adversaries, an incredulous crowd and incomprehending disciples. Then in his passion all possible human suffering concentrated to give him pain, from betrayal by one of his most intimate friends to apparent abandonment by God himself. He underwent death itself with all its excruciating agony.

He did not remove all suffering, because he realized that suffering can have a maturing effect, since it makes a man more patient and understanding, if properly accepted. It purifies the heart of man like fire purifies the gold of its dross. It gives a man a compassionate heart toward all fellow-sufferers. But in his own case, Jesus realized that like the grain of wheat, he had to give up his mortal life, and be broken up like a grain of wheat buried in the earth, in order to let new Life rise as the fruit of his sufferings and death, abundant fruit both for himself as for all who are buried with him in baptismal covenant. Only through his death would life be given to his fellow-men. Only through his sufferings would mankind be granted the Spirit of love by which they too could bear their own sufferings gladly, so that united with his sufferings they could bear

abundant fruit, a life of virtue now, and a life of everlasting glory then in the world to come.

That is why in today's gospel he exhorts us to follow him, and not to prefer the comforts and pleasures of this life to that which awaits man as a reward in glory. "The man who lives this life loses it," he said. Life is then the passageway to true life with Christ in glory. His sufferings have a deep meaning. Like Paul, one can find joy in suffering, for he "fills up in his own flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his Body, the Church" (Col. 1:24). Suffering, borne out of love, will bring fruit in abundance, both for the one suffering, and for all the members of Christ's Body.

Endeavoring to help minority groups or those in dire need, we may suffer much because of our very inability to aid them adequately, but this very entering into the sufferings of others may help them more than material help itself. What people need most is love and an understanding heart. If we can show them the value of their suffering, much is already accomplished. But only if we relate all suffering in some way to the suffering Christ, will there be any lasting effect. Suffering has a meaning, when we let Christ suffer in us for the designs of God.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

(March 31, 1985)

Readings:

Is. 50:4-7

Phil. 2:6-11

Mk. 14:1 to 15:47

First Reading. This is the third of the "servant songs" in Deutero-Isaiah, which the Christian Church has seen fully realized only in Christ. It first depicts the power of his preaching in his ministry of mercy. His vocation as Servant of Yahweh is fraught with difficulty, since it calls for continual submission in face of insults and persecution. Persevering in humble obedience, his total trust is in God, confident that he will come out victorious.

Gospel Reading. Though innocent, Jesus submitted to all manner of insult and torture, being condemned to death by the malice of the rulers in Israel, who brought pressure to bear on the

Roman governor. But in death, even the pagan centurion acknowledged him to be the Son of God (14:39), which Mark presents in its full meaning as the profession of the Gentile converts.

Second Reading. A magnificent hymn on the kenosis or humiliation of the God-Man and his subsequent exaltation is the reading from Philipians.

EASTER SUNDAY

(April 7, 1985)

Readings:

Acts 10:34, 37-43

Col. 3:1-4

Jn. 20:1-9

THE TRIUMPH OF VICTORY

Death was by no means the end of the work of Jesus, as his adversaries supposed and even his disciples feared at first. On the contrary, it led to the full flowering of the Paschal Mystery, the passageway to new life, a totally new mode of existence, the glorified life of the Risen Christ. Christ is risen, never more to die. He has vanquished death, he has triumphed over Satan, he has been victorious over all the adversaries of mankind.

Now the Father rewards his Son for the "reverent submission" (Hebr. 5:7) with which he accepted the divine will in all things even to the excruciating death on the cross. Now the Father glorifies his Son with the glory that was his before the world began (Jn. 17:5). Now "all authority is given to him in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18), for he is King and Lord supreme, exalted Head of the church, sovereign heir of the universe (Hb. 1:2), and source of divine life for everyone who accepts him.

Christ's resurrection is not an isolated event. It has its effect in everyone who in baptism is immersed into his paschal mystery. Having died with Christ, the Christian rises spiritually to a new life in the Spirit, to help build a better world by living fully the Christ-life in the environment in which he lives. He awaits with deep Christian hope the full redemption of his

entire being, "when Christ will raise our mortal bodies and make them like his own in glory" (Euch, prayer III). Then the whole universe will participate in the fullness of redemption, actuated by the glorious resurrection of the Saviour of the World.

Let us lift up our hearts today in joyful praise for the mighty works of God, and anticipate already now that outburst of exultation on the lips of all the blessed, Alleluja! Praise the Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

(April 14, 1985)

Readings:

Acts 4:32-35

1 Jn. 5:1-6

Jn. 20:19-31

BLEST ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE

A woman lay dying on a street corner in India. Pale and emaciated, with a child at her breast, she was the victim of starvation. No one seemed to care. No one bothered to stoop down to help her. When at last a merciful heart bent over to inquire, it was too late. But there was no complaint on her lips. With her finger pointing upward, she gasped: There is One who will take care. And with that she died. What a remarkable example of deep faith and trust in God!

If Jesus demanded anything from his followers it was faith in his person and in his message. How easy it had been to accept him when he cured the sick of all kinds of ailments, fed them when they were hungry, and taught them of the kingdom in such a dynamic manner that it fired them with new hope! But that he had died and had risen from the dead was something that even Thomas, one of the twelve had to see before he accepted it. Bluntly he set his conditions. But Jesus did not disdain to take up the challenge. He did let Thomas do exactly as he had demanded: his finger into the nail-prints, his hand into his side. The evidence was insurmountable. And it resulted in that grand profession of faith acknowledging Jesus for what he really is: Lord and God; bringing to a climax the long series of witnesses to the person of Jesus, running through the entire Fourth Gospel.

But it is the response of Jesus that the author wishes to highlight. Blest are those who have not seen and have believed. The gaze of Christ is on the great mass of the faithful down the centuries who have never seen the Risen Christ like Thomas did, yet, relying on the solid witness of the Apostles, staunchly accepted Christ for what he really is, their Lord and God. It is for this great multitude that Jesus pronounces the ninth beatitude. Blest are those who have not seen and have believed. The Hebrew word "to believe" in its root meaning expresses the notice of firmness and solidity. Faith is a divine virtue and it makes one's security be based on God, who reveals himself. By faith man no longer relies on his own resources, but throws himself squarely into the loving arms of God, relying on his saving action.

Jesus demands such faith in himself from anyone who wishes to be his follower. He has been sent by the Father to be mankind's Savior, Redeemer and Divine Brother. "There is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are saved" (Acts 4:12). All the hopes of each individual and of mankind as a whole lie in him. It is faith in Christ that enables a man to go through the vicissitudes of life with hope and endurance, and come to the aid of his fellowmen as Christ commanded. Faith opens up vast new vistas and lets the Christian participate in Christ's paschal mystery which gives meaning to his present suffering and hope for the glory to come. Faith is the one solid anchor in the ever-changing world. Without it, man is plunged into pagan darkness, or into the bleak incertitude of the skeptic. Christ alone is Light and Peace. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn. 14:6).

When God showers us with blessings, such as health, a happy family, a suitable job, it is not difficult to bless and thank him believing in his love and goodness. But when suffering or sickness befall us, a setback in business or some public calamity, man's faith in that same love and goodness is often sorely tried. Then is when the Christian who is truly Christian at heart and not merely in name, proves the genuineness and depth of his faith. With his eye on the crucified, he does not waver from the narrow path that leads to salvation, for his faith tells him that Christ is sharing his sufferings with him, in order to let him share more fully in his magnificent glory.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (April 21, 1985)

Readings:

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
1 Jn. 2:1-5
Lk. 24:35-48

THE CALL TO SINCERE REPENTANCE

Chain-smokers or heavy drinkers may go on for years until suddenly they become aware that their health is in precarious condition. It is either they give up the bad habit or expect the worst. It will require more than a superficial and half-hearted resolution to accomplish this. What is needed is solid conviction that a change of habits is a dire necessity if life is to be preserved.

Having conquered Satan, the source of all sin and its consequences of sickness and death, the Risen Savior now gives a universal commission to his chosen band. They are to sound the message far and wide that man has sinned and stands in need of God's mercy. This offer of mercy is available through God's Beloved Son who died for their sins and rose again to be with his own as their continual sacrifice of expiation and their Living Bread in the Eucharist. Therefore there is need of a true, internal conversion, a sincere repentance, a change of living habits.

This is the self-same message that needs to be sounded far and wide today, when sin has been belittled, and the doors flung wide open to all manner of self-indulgence. An avalanche of obscene literature, comics and cheap paperbacks floods the market, where young and old can buy at will and avidly read the latest forms of sadistic perversion. Many movie houses think nothing of bringing down everything that is sacred in marriage and sex to the level of the gutter, in anything that might cater to man's lowest instincts. Nor is that the only angle of man's sinfulness. The crying need of the impoverished goes unheeded, the low-wage earner and the marginalized sectors are passed over with a helpless shrug. Daily the newspapers give accounts of murder, rape, robberies, bribes and other injustices. Can anyone doubt that there is great need to heed the Savior's call to sincere internal repentance? The wages of sin are death.

Like air pollution that gradually and almost unnoticeably affects every one living in a modern city, the evils of the day

also begin to enter into everyone's life and almost imperceptibly choke the good spirit. Conscience is dulled, attitudes adapt to pragmatic circumstances, the heart of man becomes hardened. There is a definite need of self-examination and reflection to discover whether one's spiritual health has not been impaired and good principles eroded by the wide-spread corruption. Turning to the Spirit promised by the Savior will enable the sincere Christian to recognize the ailments, apply the proper remedies and grow steadily into the proper Christ-life which was begun in baptism. Christ has undergone his paschal mystery for each individual. It costed him exceeding pain. Should all this go unheeded and in vain?

From time to time a brief scrutiny of our inner attitude towards sin is very much in place. This can be done in a recollection or at home at the week-end. One ought to pinpoint how far one has come from the Catholic standpoint and the Church's views. It may mean life or death for our inner spirit. If we go regularly to the physician for a check-up to avoid any sudden fatal sickness, we ought to do the same for our spiritual health which has for its objective, life that is eternal.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER **(April 28, 1985)**

Readings:

Acts 4:8-12

1 Jn. 3:1-2

Jn. 10:11-18

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In North Dakota years ago, a young married couple went in for sheep-raising on a large scale. They really liked sheep. Coming one day upon the flock as they were riding in their brand new station-wagon, they were horrified to see the sheep in a pile-up. This easily happens when the first row falls into a ditch or trench and those following (with the stupidity of sheep) keep piling on top of those beneath, killing several and maiming many others. With one swift action the young couple dashed into their midst, flung the sheep on top aside and opening the doors of the new station-wagon, placed the wounded

sheep on the newly covered seats. It mattered little to them that the seats became a mess of blood and dirt. What mattered was the life of their sheep. For they loved their sheep.

Jesus fulfills eminently the three characteristics of a good, model shepherd:

1) Whole-hearted care and interest in the sheep out of sheer love, for they are his own. It is a joy to be attentive to their needs, guiding them, wandering with them in search of pasture. The hired man, working for his salary, has little interest in the sheep, and none at all when his own life is endangered. We are the flock of the Incarnate Son of God who has the greatest care and interest in each individual for whom he died and whom he is constantly leading to an ever more perfect form of Christ-life. He wisely surrounds them with the protection of his Church and his sacraments, especially his own Flesh and Blood.

2) Self-sacrifice in time of danger. A true shepherd faces the danger, and guards the helpless sheep from the wolf. Christ the perfect Shepherd goes forth boldly and battles the Destroyer, who seeks the life of the sheep. Innumerable are the wounds inflicted on him, and five scars he will retain for all eternity. Gladly he gave himself up to death for by that death his sheep will have life in abundance, life for ever. He himself has power to take up his life again and he lives in the midst of his flock at all times.

3) Intimate personal knowledge of the sheep. A true shepherd knows his sheep from the time they are born. He calls them by name and they respond eagerly. Between them there is understanding, confidence and intimacy. Christ the loving Savior knows each of his sheep in detail. He was there when we were born, when we were at the baptismal font to become his own, and all through the years, caring for us with love. But his sheep know him also, and follow his voice faithfully as it echoes in his ministers. So close is this personal union between him and his own that it is a double of the unspeakable union between the Father and the Son themselves. Theirs is a union of perfect love in their Spirit, resulting in perfect joy and happiness. This is the happiness the Good Shepherd desires for his own.

One must be quite hardened in heart not to be touched by this exquisite love of the Good Shepherd for his sheep. It is not difficult to let oneself be guided by his all-powerful hand and tended by his mighty love. Even when we fail, he goes in search for the lost sheep and brings it back with tender care. Who else had laid down his life for us but he?

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