

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

**INSTRUCTION ON CERTAIN ASPECTS  
OF THE "THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION"**

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith

**LIBERATION THROUGH JUSTICE AND LOVE:  
LIBERTY, LIBERALISM AND  
LIBERATION THEOLOGY**

Joseph de Torre

**RECONCILIATION: AN IMPOSSIBLE  
DREAM?**

Javier Gonzalez, O.P.

**DIVORCE AND QUESTION MARKS**

Oscar Cruz, D.D.

**CAN THE MASS OF THE ASSUMPTION  
BE ANTICIPATED?**

Excelso Garcia, O.P.

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## THE PHILIPPINE ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW

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## EDITORIAL

### THE YEAR OF THE YOUNG

It is very interesting to note that Jesus Christ had a special place in His heart for the young. He earlier warned that unless one becomes like a child he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (*Mk. 18:2-4*). His first serious communication about eternal life was with a young man to whom He recommended the treasure of heaven through the following of Him (*Mk. 10:17-19*). Other Gospel passages chronicle more astounding meeting of Christ with young people — the raising of the daughter of Jarius from the dead (*Lk. 8:49-50*) and the raising likewise, of the widow of Nain's son from the dead (*Lk. 7:11-17*), ~~and~~ though suggesting that the young should not die in order to continue life in the church.

The Church looks to the young in a rather special way since she sees herself in the young. The II Vatican Council bears particular testimony of this. Looking at herself as "a Sacrament, a sign or means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind" (LG. I), the Church envisions herself in relationship to the whole great human family which is young, since it is in constant growth.

Pope Paul II speaks of the youth as the hope of the Church, the special treasure of man, the great challenge of the future, the witnesses of truth, the builders of peace, the dynamic witnesses of divine life... among other things.

As the Church joins the world in dedicating 1985 as International Youth Year, would it not be very appropriate and timely if the Philippines, 85% of whose population are below 25 years, were to prepare the young and tap their tremendous potentiality — both spiritual and temporal, with a view of recognizing and assuring their place in the fabric of Philippine history?

The talents of the young Filipinos should be utilized to propel our country towards the establishment of a genuine and stable indigenous culture, art, politics, economy, liturgy, etc., which is our cherished desire. The bishop, the priests, the religious and the lay, especially the parents should not be wanting in this respect.

JOSE MA. TINOKO, O.P.

## FEATURES

# *Instruction on certain aspects of the* **"Theology of Liberation"**

### Introduction

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of freedom and a force for liberation. In recent years, this essential truth has become the object of reflection for theologians, with a new kind of attention which is itself full of promise.

Liberation is first and foremost liberation from the radical slavery of sin. Its end and its goal is the freedom of the children of God, which is the gift of grace. As a logical consequence, it calls for freedom from many different kinds of slavery in the cultural, economic, social and political spheres, all of which derive ultimately from sin, and so often prevent people from living in a manner befitting their dignity. To discern clearly what is fundamental to this issue and what is a by-product of it, is an indispensable condition for any theological reflection on liberation.

Faced with the urgency of certain problems, some are tempted to emphasize, unilaterally, the liberation from servitude of an earthly and temporal kind. They do so in such a way that they seem to put liberation from sin in second place, and so fail to give it the primary importance it is due. Thus, their very presentation of the problems is confused and ambiguous. Others, in an effort to learn more precisely what are the causes of the slavery which they want to end, make use of different concepts without sufficient critical caution. It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to purify these borrowed concepts of an ideological inspiration which is incompatible with Christian faith and the ethical requirements which flow from it.

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith does not intend to deal here with the vast theme of Christian freedom and liberation in its own right. This it intends to do in a subsequent document which will detail in a positive fashion the great richness of this theme for the doctrine and life of the Church.

The present Instruction has a much more limited and precise purpose: to draw the attention of pastors, theologians, and all the faithful to the deviations, and risks of deviation, damaging to the faith and to Christian living, that are brought about by certain forms of liberation theology which use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of marxist thought.

This warning should in no way be interpreted as a disavowal of all those who want to respond generously and with an authentic evangelical spirit to the "preferential option for the poor". It should not at all serve as an excuse for those who maintain an attitude of neutrality and indifference in the face of the tragic and pressing problems of human misery and injustice. It is, on the contrary, dictated by the certitude that the serious ideological deviations which it points out tends inevitably to betray the cause of the poor. More than ever, it is important that numerous Christians, whose faith is clear and who are committed to live the Christian life in its fullness, become involved in the struggle for justice, freedom and human dignity because of their love for their disinherited, oppressed and persecuted brothers and sisters. More than ever, the Church intends to condemn abuses, injustices and attacks against freedom, wherever they occur and whoever commits them. She intends to struggle, by her own means, for the defense and advancement of the rights of mankind, especially of the poor.

### I — *An Aspiration*

1. The powerful and almost irresistible aspiration that people have for liberation constitutes one of the principal *signs of the times* which the Church has to examine and interpret in the light of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> This major phenomenon of our time is universally widespread, though it takes on different forms and exists in different degrees according to the particular people involved. It is, above all, among those people who bear the burdens of misery and in the heart of the disinherited classes that this aspiration expresses itself with the greatest force.

2. This yearning shows the authentic, if obscure, perception of the dignity of the human person, created "in the image and likeness of God" (Gen. 1:26-27), ridiculed and scorned in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4.

midst of a variety of different oppressions: cultural, political, racial, social and economic, often in conjunction with one another.

3. In revealing to them their vocation as children of God, the Gospel has elicited in the hearts of mankind a demand and a positive will for a peaceful and just fraternal life in which everyone will find respect and the conditions for spiritual as well as material development. This requirement is no doubt at the very basis of the aspiration we are talking about here.

4. Consequently mankind will no longer passively submit to crushing poverty with its effects of death, disease and decline. He resents this misery as an intolerable violation of his native dignity. Many factors, and among them certainly the leaven of the Gospel, have contributed to an awakening of the consciousness of the oppressed.

5. It is widely known, even in still illiterate sections of the world, that, thanks to the amazing advances in science and technology, mankind, still growing in number, is capable of assuring each human being the minimum of goods required by his dignity as a person.

6. The scandal of the shocking inequality between the rich and poor — whether between rich and poor countries or between social classes in a single nation — is no longer tolerated. On one hand, people have attained an unheard of abundance which is given to waste, while on the other hand so many live in such poverty, deprived of the basic necessities, that one is hardly able even to count the victims of malnutrition.

7. The lack of equity and of a sense of solidarity in international transactions works to the advantage of the industrialized nations so that the gulf between the rich and the poor is ever widening. Hence derives the feeling of frustration among third world countries, and the accusations of exploitation and economic colonialism brought against the industrialized nations.

8. The memory of crimes of a certain type of colonialism and of its effects often aggravates these injuries and wounds.

9. The Apostolic See, in accord with the Second Vatican Council, and together with the Episcopal Conferences, has not ceased to denounce the scandal involved in the gigantic arms race which, in addition to the threat which it poses to peace, squanders amounts of money so large that even a fraction of it would be sufficient to respond to the needs of those people who are in want of the basic essentials of life.



with all movements of ideas, the "theologies of liberation" present diverse theological positions. Their doctrinal frontiers are badly defined.

4. The aspiration for *liberation*, as the term itself suggests, repeats a theme which is fundamental to the Old and New Testaments. In itself, the expression "theology of liberation" is a thoroughly valid term: it designates a theological reflection centered on the biblical theme of liberation and freedom, and on the urgency of its practical realization.

The meeting, then, of the aspiration for liberation and the theologies of liberation is not one of mere chance. The significance of this encounter between the two can be understood only in light of the specific message of Revelation, authentically interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV — *Biblical foundations*

1. Thus a theology of liberation correctly understood constitutes an invitation to theologians to deepen certain essential biblical themes with a concern for the grave and urgent questions which the contemporary yearning for liberation, and those movements which more or less faithfully echo it, pose for the Church. We dare not forget for a single instant the situations of acute distress which issue such a dramatic call to theologians.

2. The radical experience of *Christian liberty*<sup>3</sup> is our first point of reference. Christ, our Liberator, has freed us from sin and from slavery to the Law and to the flesh, which is the mark of the condition of sinful mankind. Thus it is the new life of grace, fruit of justification, which makes us free. This means that the most radical form of slavery is slavery to sin. Other forms of slavery find their deepest root in slavery to sin. That is why freedom in the full Christian sense, characterized by the life in the Spirit, cannot be confused with a licence to give in to the desires of the flesh. Freedom is a new life in love.

3. The "theologies of liberation" make wide use of readings from the book of Exodus. The exodus, in fact, is the fundamental event in the formulation of the chosen people. It represents freedom from foreign domination and from slavery. One

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Gal.* 5, 1 ff.



will note that the specific significance of the event comes from its purpose, for this liberation is ordered to the foundation of the people of God and the Covenant cult celebrated on Mt. Sinai.<sup>4</sup> That is why the liberation of the Exodus cannot be reduced to a liberation which is principally or exclusively political in nature. Moreover, it is significant that the term *freedom* is often replaced in Scripture by the very closely related term, *redemption*.

4. The foundational episode of the *Exodus* will never be effaced from the memory of Israel. Reference is made to it when, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon, the Jewish people lived in the hope of a new liberation and, beyond that, awaited a definitive liberation. In this experience God is recognized as the Liberator. He will enter into a new Covenant with His people. It will be marked by the gift of His Spirit and the conversion of hearts.<sup>5</sup>

5. The anxieties and multiple sufferings sustained by those who are faithful to the God of the Covenant provide the theme of several Psalms: laments, appeals for help and thanksgivings all make mention of religious salvation and liberation. In this context, suffering is not purely and simply equated with the social condition of poverty or with the condition of the one who is undergoing political oppression. It also includes the hostility of one's enemies, injustice, failure and death. The Psalms call us back to an essential religious experience: it is from God alone that one can expect salvation and healing. God, and not man, has the power to change the situations of suffering. Thus the "poor of the Lord" live in a total and confident reliance upon the loving providence of God.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, throughout the whole crossing of the desert, the Lord did not fail to provide for the spiritual liberation and purification of his people.

6. In the Old Testament, the prophets after Amos keep affirming with particular vigor the requirements of justice and solidarity and the need to pronounce a very severe judgment on the rich who oppress the poor. They come to the defense of the widow and the orphan. They threaten the powerful: the accumulation of evils can only lead to terrible punishments.

Faithfulness to the Covenant cannot be conceived of without the practice of justice. Justice as regards God and justice as regards mankind are inseparable. God is the defender and the liberator of the poor.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ex.* 24.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Jr.* 31, 31-34; *Ez.* 36, 26 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ze.* 3, 12 ff.

7. These requirements are found once again in the New Testament. They are even more radicalized as can be shown in the discourse on the *Beatitudes*. Conversion and renewal have to occur in the depths of the heart.

8. Already proclaimed in the Old Testament, the commandment of fraternal love extended to all mankind thus provides the supreme rule of social life.<sup>7</sup> There are no discriminations or limitations which can counter the recognition of everyone as *neighbour*.<sup>8</sup>

9. Poverty for the sake of the kingdom is praised. And in the figure of the poor, we are led to recognize the mysterious presence of the Son of Man who became poor himself for love of us.<sup>9</sup> This is the foundation of the inexhaustible words of Jesus on the judgment in *Mt. 25:31-46*. Our Lord is one with all in distress; every distress is marked by his presence.

10. At the same time, the requirements of justice and mercy, already proclaimed in the Old Testament, are deepened to assume a new significance in the New Testament. Those who suffer or who are persecuted are identified with Christ.<sup>10</sup> The perfection that Jesus demands of His disciples (*Mt. 5:18*) consists in the obligation to be merciful "as your heavenly Father is merciful" (*Lk. 6:36*).

11. It is in light of the Christian vocation to fraternal love and mercy that the rich are severely reminded of their duty.<sup>11</sup> St. Paul, faced with the disorders of the Church of Corinth, forcefully emphasizes the bond which exists between participation in the sacrament of love and sharing with the brother in need.<sup>12</sup>

12. New Testament revelation teaches us that sin is the greatest evil, since it strikes man in the heart of his personality. The first liberation, to which all others must make reference, is that from sin.

13. Unquestionably, it is to stress the radical character of the deliverance brought by Christ and offered to all, be they politically free or slaves, that the New Testament does not

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Dt. 10, 18-19*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Lc. 10, 25-37*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *2 Co. 8, 9*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Mt. 25, 31-46; Ac. 9, 4-5; Col. 1, 24*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Jm. 5, ff.*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *1 Co. 11, 17-34*.

require some change in the political or social condition as a prerequisite for entrance into this freedom. However, the *Letter to Philemon* shows that the new freedom procured by the grace of Christ should necessarily have effects on the social level.

14. Consequently, the full ambit of sin, whose first effect is to introduce disorder into the relationship between God and man, cannot be restricted to "social sin". The truth is that only a correct doctrine of sin will permit us to insist on the gravity of its social effects.

15. Nor can one localize evil principally or uniquely in bad social, political or economic "structures" as though all other evils came from them so that the creation of the "new man" would depend on the establishment of different economic and socio-political structures. To be sure, there are structures which are evil and which cause evil and which we must have the courage to change. Structures, whether they are good or bad, are the result of man's actions and so are consequences more than causes. The root of evil, then, lies in free and responsible persons who have to be converted by the grace of Jesus Christ in order to live and act as new creatures in the love of neighbour and in the effective search for justice, self-control and the exercise of virtue.<sup>13</sup>

To demand first of all a radical revolution in social relations and then to criticize the search for personal perfection is to set out on a road which leads to the denial of the meaning of the person and his transcendence, and to destroy ethics and its foundation which is the absolute character of the distinction between good and evil. Moreover, since charity is the principle of authentic perfection, that perfection cannot be conceived without an openness to others and a spirit of service.

#### V — *The voice of the Magisterium*

1. In order to answer the challenge levelled at our times by oppression and hunger, the Church's Magisterium has frequently expressed her desire to awaken Christian consciences to a sense of justice, social responsibility and solidarity with the poor and the oppressed, and to highlight the present urgency of the doctrine and imperatives contained in Revelation.

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Jm.* 2, 14-26.

2. We would like to mention some of these interventions here: the papal documents *Mater et magistra*, *Pacem in terris*, *Populorum progressio*, and *Evangelii nuntiandi*. We should likewise mention the letter to Cardinal Roy, *Octogesima adveniens*.

3. The Second Vatican Council in turn confronted the questions of justice and liberty in the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et spes*.

4. On a number of occasions, the Holy Father has emphasized these themes, in particular in the encyclicals *Redemptor hominis*, *Dives in misericordia*, and *Laborem exercens*. These numerous addresses recall the doctrine of the rights of man and touch directly on the problems of the liberation of the human person in the face of the diverse kinds of oppression of which he is the victim. It is especially important to mention in this connection the Address given before the 26th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, October 2, 1979.<sup>14</sup> On January 28 of that same year, while opening the Third Conference of CELAM in Puebla, John Paul II affirmed that the complete truth about man is the basis for any real liberation.<sup>15</sup> This text is a document which bears directly upon the theology of liberation.

5. Twice the *Synod of Bishops* treated subjects which are directly related to a Christian conception of liberation: in 1971, justice in the world, and in 1974, the relationship between freedom from oppression and full freedom, or the salvation of mankind. The work of the Synods of 1971 and 1974 led Paul VI in his Apostolic Constitution *Evangelii nuntiandi* to clarify the connection between evangelization and human liberation or advancement.<sup>16</sup>

6. The concern for the Church for liberation and for human advancement was also expressed in the establishment of the Pontifical Commission, *Justice and Peace*.

7. Numerous national Episcopal Conferences have joined the Holy See in recalling the urgency of authentic human liberation and the routes by which to achieve it. In this context, special mention should be made of the documents of the General

<sup>14</sup> Cf. AAS 71 (1979) pp. 1144-1160.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. AAS 71 (1979) p. 196.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 25-33, AAS 68 (1976), pp. 23-28.

Conferences of the Latin American episcopate at Medellin in 1968 and at Puebla in 1979.

Paul VI was present at the Medellin Conference and John Paul II was at Puebla. Both with the themes of conversion and liberation.

8. Following Paul VI, who had insisted on the distinctive character of the Gospel message,<sup>17</sup> a character which is of divine origin, John Paul II, in his address at Puebla, recalled the three pillars upon which any authentic theology of liberation will rest: *truth about Jesus Christ, truth about the Church, and truth about mankind.*<sup>18</sup>

#### VI — *A new interpretation of Christianity*

1. It is impossible to overlook the immense amount of selfless work done by Christians, pastors, priests, religious or laypersons, who, driven by a love for their brothers and sisters living in inhuman conditions, have endeavored to bring help and comfort to countless people in the distress brought about by poverty. Among these, some have tried to find the most effective means to put a quick end to the intolerable situation.

2. The zeal and the compassion which should dwell in the hearts of all pastors nevertheless run the risk of being led astray and diverted to works which are just as damaging to man and his dignity as is the poverty which is being fought, if one is not sufficiently attentive to certain temptations.

3. The feeling of anguish at the urgency of the problems cannot make us lose sight of what is essential nor forget the reply of Jesus to the Tempter: "It is not on bread alone that man lives, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (*Mt.* 4:4; cf. *Dt.* 8:3).

Faced with the urgency of sharing bread, some are tempted to put evangelization into parentheses, as it were, and postpone it until tomorrow: first the bread, then the Word of the Lord. It is a fatal error to separate these two and even worse to oppose the one to the other. In fact, the Christian perspective naturally shows they have a great deal to do with one another.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 32, AAS 68 (1976) p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. AAS 71 (1979) pp. 188-196.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 39; Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*: AAS 23 (1931) p. 207.

4. To some it even seems that the necessary struggle for human justice and freedom in the economic and political sense constitutes the whole essence of salvation. For them, the Gospel is reduced to a purely earthly gospel.

5. The different theologies of liberation are situated between *the preferential option for the poor*, forcefully reaffirmed without ambiguity after Medellin at the Conference of Puebla<sup>20</sup> on the one hand, and the temptation to reduce the Gospel to an earthly gospel on the other.

6. We should recall that the preferential option described at Puebla is two-fold: for the poor and *for the young*.<sup>21</sup> It is significant that the option for the young has in general been passed over in total silence.

7. We noted above (cf. 3) that an authentic theology of liberation will be one which is rooted in the Word of God, correctly interpreted.

8. But from a descriptive standpoint, it helps to speak of *theologies* of liberation, since the expression embraces a number of theological positions, or even sometimes ideological ones, which are not simply different but more often incompatible with one another.

9. In this present document, we will only be discussing developments of that current of thought which, under the name "theology of liberation", proposes a novel interpretation of both the content of faith and of Christian existence which seriously departs from the faith of the Church and, in fact, actually constitutes a practical negation.

10. Concepts uncritically borrowed from marxist ideology and recourse to theses of a biblical hermeneutic marked by rationalism are at the basis of the new interpretation which is corrupting whatever was authentic in the generous initial commitment on behalf of the poor.

## VII — *Marxist analysis*

1. Impatience and a desire for results have led certain Christians, despairing of every method, to turn to what they call "marxist analysis".

<sup>20</sup> Cf. n. 1134-1165 and n. 1166-1205.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Doc. de Puebla*, IV, 2.

logy, or to enter into the practice of class-struggle and of its marxist interpretation while failing to see the kind of totalitarian society to which this process slowly leads".<sup>22</sup>

8. It is true that marxist thought ever since its origins, and even more so lately, has become divided and has given birth to various currents which diverge significantly from one another. To the extent that they remain fully marxist, these currents continue to be based on certain fundamental tenets which are not compatible with the Christian conception of humanity and society. In this context, certain formulas are not neutral, but keep the meaning they had in the original marxist doctrine. This is the case with the "class-struggle". This expression remains pregnant with the interpretation that Marx gave it, so it cannot be taken as the equivalent of "severe social conflict", in an empirical sense. Those who use similar formulas, while claiming to keep only certain elements of the marxist analysis and yet to reject this analysis taken as a whole, maintain at the very least a serious confusion in the minds of their readers.

9. Let us recall the fact that atheism and the denial of the human person, his liberty and his rights, are at the core of the marxist theory. This theory, then, contains errors which directly threaten the truths of the faith regarding the eternal destiny of individual persons. Moreover, to attempt to integrate into theology an analysis whose criterion of interpretation depends on this atheistic conception is to involve oneself in terrible contradictions. What is more, this misunderstanding of the spiritual nature of the person leads to a total subordination of the person to the collectivity, and thus to the denial of the principles of a social and political life which is in keeping with human dignity.

10. A critical examination of the analytical methods borrowed from other disciplines must be carried out in a special way by theologians. It is the light of faith which provides theology with its principles. That is why the use of philosophical positions or of human sciences by the theologian has a value which might be called instrumental, but yet must undergo a critical study from a theological perspective. In other words, the ultimate and decisive criterion for truth can only be a criterion which is itself theological. It is only in the light of faith, and what faith teaches us about the truth of man and the ultimate meaning of his destiny, that one can judge the validity or degree

<sup>22</sup> Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, n. 34, AAS 63 (1971) pp. 424-425.



of validity of what other disciplines propose, often rather conjecturally, as being the truth about man, his history and his destiny.

11. When modes of interpretation are applied to the economic, social and political reality of today, which are themselves borrowed from marxist thought, they can give the initial impression of a certain plausibility, to the degree that the present-day situation in certain countries is similar to what Marx described and interpreted in the middle of the last century. On the basis of these similarities, certain simplifications are made which, abstracting from specific essential factors, prevent any really rigorous examination of the causes of poverty and prolong the confusion.

12. In certain parts of Latin America, the seizure of the vast majority of the wealth by an oligarchy of owners bereft of social consciousness, the practical absence or the shortcomings of a rule of law, military dictators making a mockery of elementary human rights, the corruption of certain powerful officials, the savage practices of some foreign capital interests constitute factors which nourish a passion for revolt among those who thus consider themselves the powerless victims of a new colonialism in the technological, financial, monetary or economic order. The recognition of injustice is accompanied by a *pathos* which borrows its language from marxism, wrongly presented as though it were scientific language.

13. The first condition for any analysis is a total openness to the reality to be described. That is why a critical consciousness has to accompany the use of any working hypotheses that are being adopted. One has to realize that these hypotheses correspond to a particular viewpoint which will inevitably highlight certain aspects of the reality while leaving others in the shade. This limitation which derives from the nature of human science is ignored by those who, under the guise of hypotheses recognized as such, have recourse to such an all-embracing conception of reality as the thought of Karl Marx.

### VIII — *Subversion of the meaning of truth and violence*

1. This all-embracing conception thus imposes its logic and leads the "theologies of liberation" to accept a series of positions which are incompatible with the Christian vision of humanity. In fact, the ideological core borrowed from marxism, which we

are referring to, exercises the function of a *determining principle*. It has this role in virtue of its being described as "*scientific*", that is to say, true of necessity.

In this core, we can distinguish several components.

2. According to the logic of marxist thought, the "analysis" is inseparable from the *praxis*, and from the conception of history to which this *praxis* is linked. The analysis is for the marxist an instrument of criticism, and criticism is only one stage in the revolutionary struggle. This struggle is that of the proletarian class, invested with its mission in history.

3. Consequently, for the marxist, only those who engage in the struggle can work out the analysis correctly.

4. The only true consciousness, then, is the *partisan* consciousness.

It is clear that the concept of *truth* itself is in question here, and it is totally subverted: there is no truth, they pretend, except in and through the partisan praxis.

5. For the marxist, the *praxis*, and the truth that comes from it, are partisan *praxis* and truth because the fundamental structure of history is characterized by *class-struggle*. There follows, then, the objective necessity to enter into the class struggle, which is the dialectical opposite of the relationship of exploitation, which is being condemned. For the marxist, the truth is a truth of class: there is no truth but the truth in the struggle of the revolutionary class.

6. The fundamental law of history, which is the law of the class struggle, implies that society is founded on violence. To the violence which constitutes the relationship of the domination of the rich over the poor, there corresponds the counter-violence of the revolution, by means of which this domination will be reversed.

7. The class struggle is presented as an objective, necessary law. Upon entering this process on behalf of the oppressed, one "makes" truth, one acts "scientifically". Consequently, the conception of the truth goes hand in hand with the affirmation of necessary violence, and so, of a political amorality. Within this perspective, any reference to ethical requirements calling for courageous and radical institutional and structural reforms makes no sense.

"dualism". Affirmations such as these reflect historicist immanentism. Thus there is a tendency to identify the kingdom of God and its growth with the human liberation movement, and to make history itself the subject of its own development, as a process of the self-redemption of man by means of the class struggle.

This identification is in opposition to the faith of the Church as it has been reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council.<sup>23</sup>

4. Along these lines, some go so far as to identify God Himself with history and to define faith as "fidelity to history", which means adhering to a political policy which is suited to the growth of humanity, conceived of as a purely temporal messianism.

5. As a consequence, faith, hope and charity are given a new content: they become "fidelity to history", "confidence in the future", and "option for the poor." This is tantamount to saying that they have been emptied of their theological reality.

6. A radical politicization of faith's affirmations and of theological judgments follows inevitably from this new conception. The question no longer has to do with simply drawing attention to the consequences and political implications of the truths of faith, which are respected beforehand for their transcendent value. In this new system, every affirmation of faith or of theology is subordinated to a political criterion, which in turn depends on the mass struggle, the driving force of history.

7. As a result, participation in the class struggle is presented as a requirement of charity itself. The desire to love everyone here and now, despite his class, and to go out to meet him with the non-violent means of dialogue and persuasion, is denounced as counterproductive and opposed to love.

If one holds that a person should not be the object of hate, it is claimed nevertheless that, if he belongs to the objective class of the rich, he is *primarily* a class enemy to be fought. Thus the universality of love of neighbour and brotherhood become an eschatological principle, which will only have meaning for the "new man" who arises out of the victorious revolution.

8. As far as the Church is concerned, this system would see her *only* as a reality interior to history, herself subject to those

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Lumen gentium*, n. 9-17.

laws which are supposed to govern the development of history in its immanence. The Church, the gift of God and mystery of faith, is emptied of any specific reality by this reductionism. At the same time, it is disputed that the participation of Christians who belong to opposing classes at the same Eucharistic Table still makes any sense.

9. In its positive meaning the *Church of the poor* signifies the preference given to the poor, without exclusion, whatever the form of their poverty, because they are preferred by God. The expression also refers to the Church of our time, as communion and institution and on the part of her members, becoming more fully conscious of the requirement of evangelical poverty.

10. But the "theologies of liberation", which reserve credit for restoring to a place of honor the great texts of the prophets and of the Gospel in defense of the poor, go on to a disastrous confusion between the *poor* of the Scripture and the *proletariat* of Marx. In this way they pervert the Christian meaning of the poor, and they transform the fight for the rights of the poor into a class fight within the ideological perspective of the class struggle. For them, the *Church of the poor* signifies the Church of the class which has become aware of the requirements of the revolutionary struggle as a step toward liberation and which celebrates this liberation in its liturgy.

11. A further remark regarding the expression, *Church of the People*, will not be out of place here. From the pastoral point of view, this expression might mean the favored recipients of evangelization to whom, because of their condition, the Church extends her pastoral love first of all. One might also refer to the Church as people of God, that is, people of the New Covenant established in Christ.<sup>24</sup>

12. But the "theologies of liberation" of which we are speaking, mean by *Church of the People* a Church of the class, a Church of the oppressed people whom it is necessary to "conscientize" in the light of the organized struggle for freedom. For some, the people, thus understood, even become the object of faith.

13. Building on such a conception of the Church of the People, a critique of the very structures of the Church is developed. It is not simply the case of fraternal correction of pastors of the Church whose behavior does not reflect the evangelical spirit of

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 39.

service and is linked to old-fashioned signs of authority which scandalize the poor. It has to do with a challenge to the *sacramental and hierarchical structure* of the Church, which was willed by the Lord Himself. There is a denunciation of members of the hierarchy and the magisterium as objective representatives of the ruling class which has to be opposed. Theologically, this position means that ministers take their origin from the people who therefore designate ministers of their own choice in accord with the needs of their historic revolutionary mission.

### X — *A new hermeneutic*

1. The partisan conception of truth, which can be seen in the revolutionary *praxis* of the class, corroborates this position. Theologians who do not share the theses of the "theology of liberation", the hierarchy, and especially the Roman Magisterium are thus discredited *in advance* as belonging to the class of the oppressors. Their theology is a theology of class. Arguments and teachings thus do not have to be examined in themselves since they are only reflections of class interests. Thus, the instruction of others is decreed to be, in principle, false.

2. Here is where the global and all-embracing character of theology of liberation appears. As a result, it must be criticized not just on the basis of this or that affirmation, but on the basis of its classist viewpoint, which it has adopted *a priori*, and which has come to function in it as a determining principle.

3. Because of this classist presupposition, it becomes very difficult, not to say impossible, to engage in a real dialogue with some "theologians of liberation" in such a way that the other participant is listened to, and his arguments are discussed with objectivity and attention. For these theologians start out with the idea, more or less consciously, that the viewpoint of the oppressed and revolutionary class, which is their own, is the single true point of view. Theological criteria for truth are thus relativized and subordinated to the imperatives of the class struggle. In this perspective, *orthodoxy* or the right rule of faith, is substituted by the notion of *orthopraxy* as the criterion of the truth. In this connection it is important not to confuse practical orientation, which is proper to traditional theology in the same way that speculative orientation is, with the recognized and privileged priority given to a certain type of *praxis*. For them, this *praxis* is the revolutionary *praxis* which thus becomes the supreme criterion for theological truth. A healthy theolo-

gical method no doubt will always take the *praxis* of the Church into account and will find there one of its foundations, but that is because that *praxis* comes from the faith and is a lived expression of it.

4. For the "theologies of liberation" however, the social doctrine of the Church is rejected with disdain. It is said that it comes from the illusion of a possible compromise, typical of the middle class which has no historic destiny.

5. The new *hermeneutic* inherent in the "theologies of liberation" leads to an essentially *political* re-reading of the Scriptures. Thus, a major importance is given to the *Exodus* event inasmuch as it is a liberation from political servitude. Likewise, a political reading of the *Magnificat* is proposed. The mistake here is not in bringing attention to a political dimension of the readings of Scripture, but in making of this one dimension the principal or exclusive component. This leads to a reductionist reading of the Bible.

6. Likewise, one places oneself within the perspective of a temporal messianism, which is one of the most radical of the expressions of secularization of the Kingdom of God and of its absorption into the immanence of human history.

7. In giving such priority to the political dimension, one is led to deny the *radical newness* of the New Testament and above all to misunderstand the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, and thus the specific character of the salvation he gave us, that is above all liberation from sin, which is the source of all evils.

8. Moreover in setting aside the authoritative interpretation of the Church, denounced as classist, one is at the same time departing from tradition. In that way, one is robbed of an essential theological criterion of interpretation and, in the vacuum thus created, one welcomes the most radical theses of rationalist exegesis. Without a critical eye, one returns to the opposition of the "*Jesus of history*" versus the "*Jesus of faith*".

9. Of course the creeds of the faith are literally preserved, especially the Chalcedonian creed, but a new meaning is given to them which is a negation of the faith of the Church. On one hand, the Christological doctrine of Tradition is rejected in the name of class; on the other hand, one claims to meet again the "*Jesus of history*" coming from the revolutionary experience of the struggle of the poor for their liberation.

10. One claims to be reliving an experience similar to that of Jesus. The experience of the poor struggling for their liberation, which was Jesus' experience, would thus reveal, and it alone, the knowledge of the true God and of the Kingdom.

11. Faith in the Incarnate Word, dead and risen for all men, and whom "God made Lord and Christ"<sup>25</sup> is denied. In its place is substituted a figure of Jesus who is a kind of symbol who sums up in Himself the requirements of the struggle of the oppressed.

12. An exclusively political interpretation is thus given to the death of Christ. In this way, its value for salvation and the whole economy of redemption is denied.

13. This new interpretation thus touches the whole of the Christian mystery.

14. In a general way, this brings about what can be called an inversion of symbols. Thus, instead of seeing, with St. Paul, a figure of Baptism in the Exodus,<sup>26</sup> some end up making of it a symbol of the political liberation of the people.

15. When the same hermeneutical criterion is applied to the life and to the hierarchical constitution of the Church, the relationship between the hierarchy and the "base" becomes the relationship of obedient domination to the law of the struggle of the classes. Sacramentality, which is at the root of the ecclesial ministries and which makes of the Church a spiritual reality which cannot be reduced to a purely sociological analysis, is quite simply ignored.

16. This inversion of symbols is likewise verified in the area of the *sacraments*. The Eucharist is no longer to be understood as the real sacramental presence of the reconciling sacrifice, and as the gift of the Body and Blood of Christ. It becomes a celebration of the people in their struggle. As a consequence, the unity of the Church is radically denied. Unity, reconciliation and communion in love are no longer seen as a gift we receive from Christ.<sup>27</sup> It is the historical class of the poor who by means of their struggle will build unity. For them, the struggle of the classes is the way to unity. The Eucharist thus becomes the Eucharist of the class. At the same time, they deny the triumphant force of the love of God which has been given to us.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Ac. 2, 36.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. 1 Co. 10, 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ep. 2, 11-22.



XI — *Orientations*

1. The warning against the serious deviations of some "theologies of liberation" must not at all be taken as some kind of approval, even indirect, of those who keep the poor in misery, who profit from that misery, who notice it while doing nothing about it, or who remain indifferent to it. The Church, guided by the Gospel of mercy and by the love for mankind, hears the cry for justice<sup>28</sup> and intends to respond to it with all her might.

2. Thus a great call goes out to all the Church: with boldness and courage, with farsightedness and prudence, with zeal and strength of spirit, with a love for the poor which demands sacrifice, pastors will consider the response to this call a matter of the highest priority, as many already do.

3. All priests, religious and laypeople who hear this call for justice and who want to work for evangelization and the advancement of mankind, will do so in communion with their bishop and with the Church, each in accord with his or her own specific ecclesial vocation

4. Aware of the ecclesial character of their vocation, theologians will collaborate loyally and with a spirit of dialogue with the Magisterium of the Church. They will be able to recognize in the Magisterium a gift of Christ to His Church<sup>29</sup> and will welcome its word and its directives with filial respect.

5. It is only when one begins with the task of evangelization understood in its entirety that the authentic requirements of human progress and liberation are appreciated. This liberation has as its indispensable pillars: *the truth about Jesus the Savior, the truth about the Church, and the truth about man and his dignity*.<sup>30</sup>

It is in the light of the Beatitudes, and especially the Beatitude of the poor of heart, that the Church, which wants to be the Church of the poor throughout the world, intends to come to the aid of the noble struggle for truth and justice. She addresses each person and for that reason, every person. She is the "universal Church. The Church of the Incarnation. She is not the Church of one class or another. And she speaks in the name of

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Doc. de Puebla*, I, II, 3. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Lk.* 10, 16.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Address at the Opening of the Conference at Puebla*, AAS 71 (1979) pp. 188-196; *Doc. de Puebla* II P, c. 1.

truth itself. This truth is realistic". It leads to a recognition "of every human reality, every injustice, every tension and every struggle".<sup>31</sup>

6. An effective defense of justice needs to be based on the truth of mankind, created in the image of God and called to the grace of divine sonship. The recognition of the true relationship of human beings to God constitutes the foundation of justice to the extent that it rules the relationships between people. That is why the fight for the rights of man, which the Church does not cease to reaffirm, constitutes the authentic fight for justice.

7. The truth of mankind requires that this battle be fought in ways consistent with human dignity. That is why the systematic and deliberate recourse to blind violence, no matter from which side it comes, must be condemned.<sup>32</sup> To put one's trust in violent means in the hope of restoring more justice is to become the victim of a fatal illusion: violence begets violence and degrades man. It mocks the dignity of man in the person of the victims and it debases that same dignity among those who practice it.

8. The acute need for radical reforms of the structures which conceal poverty and which are themselves forms of violence, should not let us lose sight of the fact that the source of injustice is in the hearts of men. Therefore it is only by making an appeal to the *moral potential* of the person and to the constant need for interior conversion, that social change will be brought about which will truly be in the service of man.<sup>33</sup> For it will only be in the measure that they collaborate freely in these necessary changes through their own initiative and in solidarity, that people, awakened to a sense of their responsibility, will grow in humanity.

The inversion of morality and structures is steeped in a materialist anthropology which is incompatible with the dignity of mankind.

9. It is therefore an equally fatal illusion to believe that these new structures will of themselves give birth to a "new man" in the sense of the truth of man. The Christian cannot

<sup>31</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Address to the Favela "Vidigal" at Rio de Janeiro*, 2 July 1980, AAS 72 (1980) pp. 852-858.

<sup>32</sup> *Doc. de Puebla*, II, c. II, 5. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Doc. de Puebla*, IV, c. 3. 3. 1.

forget that it is only the Holy Spirit who has been given to us Who is the source of every true renewal and that God is the Lord of History

10. By the same token, the overthrow by means of revolutionary violence of structures which generate violence is not *ipso facto* the beginning of a just regime. A major fact of our time ought to evoke the reflection of all those who would sincerely work for the true liberation of their brothers: millions of our own contemporaries legitimately yearn to recover those basic freedoms of which they were deprived by totalitarian and atheistic regimes which came to power by violent and revolutionary means, precisely in the name of the liberation of the people. This shame of our time cannot be ignored: while claiming to bring them freedom, these regimes keep whole nations in conditions of servitude which are unworthy of mankind. Those who, perhaps inadvertently, make themselves accomplices of similar enslavements betray the very poor they mean to help.

11. The class struggle as a road toward a classless society is a myth which slows reform and aggravates poverty and injustice. Those who allow themselves to be caught up in fascination with this myth should reflect on the bitter examples history has to offer about where it leads. They would then understand that we are not talking here about abandoning an effective means of struggle on behalf of the poor for an ideal which has no practical effects. On the contrary, we are talking about freeing oneself from a delusion in order to base oneself squarely on the Gospel and its power of realization.

12. One of the conditions for necessary theological correction is giving proper value to the *social teaching of the Church*. This teaching is by no means closed. It is, on the contrary, open to all the new questions which are so numerous today. In this perspective, the contribution of theologians and other thinkers in all parts of the world to the reflection of the Church is indispensable today.

13. Likewise the experience of those who work directly for evangelization and for the advancement of the poor and the oppressed is necessary for the doctrinal and pastoral reflection of the Church. In this sense, it is necessary to affirm that one becomes more aware of certain aspects of truth by starting with *praxis*, if by that one means pastoral *praxis* and social work which keeps its evangelical inspiration.

14. The teaching of the Church on social issues indicates the main lines of ethical orientation. But in order that it be able

to guide action directly, the Church needs competent people from a scientific and technological viewpoint, as well as in the human and political sciences. Pastors should be attentive to the formation of persons of such capability who live the Gospel deeply. Laypersons, whose proper mission is to build society, are involved here to the highest degree.

15. The theses of the "theologies of liberation" are widely popularized under a simplified form, in formation sessions or in what are called "base groups" which lack the necessary catechetical and theological preparation as well as the capacity for discernment. Thus these theses are accepted by generous men and women without any critical judgment being made.

16. That is why pastors must look after the quality and the content of catechesis and formation which should always present the *whole message of salvation* and the imperatives of true liberation within the framework of this whole message.

17. In this full presentation of Christianity, it is proper to emphasize those essential aspects which the "theologies of liberation" especially tend to misunderstand or to eliminate, namely: the transcendence and gratuity of liberation in Jesus Christ, true God and true man; the sovereignty of grace; and the true nature of the means of salvation, especially of the Church and the sacraments. One should also keep in mind the true meaning of ethics in which the distinction between good and evil is not relativized, the real meaning of sin, the necessity for conversion, and the universality of the law of fraternal love.

One needs to be on guard against the politicization of existence which, misunderstanding the entire meaning of the Kingdom of God and the transcendence of the person, begins to sacralize politics and betray the religion of the people in favor of the projects of the revolution.

18. The defenders of orthodoxy are sometimes accused of passivity indulgence or culpable complicity regarding the intolerable situations of injustice and the political regimes which prolong them. Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbour, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone, and especially of pastors and those in positions of responsibility. The concern for the purity of the faith demands giving the answer of effective witness in the service of one's neighbour, the poor and the oppressed in particular, in an integral theological

fashion. By the witness of their dynamic and constructive power to love, Christians will thus lay the foundations of this "civilization of love" of which the Conference of Puebla spoke, following Paul VI.<sup>34</sup> Moreover there are already many priests, religious and laypeople who are consecrated in a truly evangelical way for the creation of a just society.

### *Conclusion*

The words of Paul VI in his *Profession of Faith*, express with full clarity the faith of the Church, from which one cannot deviate without provoking, besides spiritual disaster, new miseries and new types of slavery.

"We profess our faith that the Kingdom of God, begun here below in the Church of Christ, is not of this world, whose form is passing away, and that its own growth cannot be confused with the progress of civilization, of science of human technology, but that it consists in knowing ever more deeply the unfathomable riches of Christ, to hope ever more strongly in things eternal, to respond ever more ardently to the love of God, to spread ever more widely grace and holiness among them. But it is this very same love which makes the Church constantly concerned for the true temporal good of mankind as well. Never ceasing to recall to her children that they have no lasting dwelling here on earth, she urges them also to contribute, each according to his own vocation and means, to the welfare of their earthly city, to promote justice, peace and brotherhood among men, to lavish their assistance on their brothers, especially on the poor and the most dispirited. The intense concern of the Church, the bride of Christ, for the needs of mankind, their joys and their hopes, their pains and their struggles, is nothing other than the great desire to be present to them in order to enlighten them with the light of Christ, and join them all to Him, their only Savior. It can never mean that the Church is conforming to the things of this world, nor that she is lessening the earnestness with which she awaits her Lord and the eternal Kingdom".<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Doc. de Puebla*, IV, II, 2. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Paul VI, *Profession of Faith of the People of God*, 30 June 1968, AAS 60 (1968) pp. 443-444.

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# Liberation Through Justice and Love: Liberty, Liberalism, and Liberation Theology

By Joseph M. de Torre

"If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."<sup>1</sup> Thus said Jesus to "the Jews who had come to believe in him."<sup>2</sup> He spoke about truth and freedom, and about himself teaching it to those who believe in him; and that this truth *liberates*, or delivers, or releases, or sets free, or redeems, or saves. Echoes of the Old Covenant, like for example, "When the just cry out, the Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the Lord delivers him."<sup>3</sup> The Lord relieves man from all that *oppresses* him. This is the continuous refrain of the Old Covenant, which culminates with the New, ushered in with the prophetic words of Zachary, John the Baptist's father: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and wrought redemption for his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us . . . Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us. To show mercy to our forefathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant, of the oath that he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant us, that delivered from the hand of our enemies, we should serve him without fear, in holiness and justice before him all our days."<sup>4</sup> That land promised to Moses, "a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey,"<sup>5</sup> is the prophetic and poetic foreshadowing of "holiness and justice" before God, and the deliverance from "enemies" is the liberation from the slavery or oppression of sin, that is, from all the impurities of the *heart*, as Ezechiel will put it: "For I will take you away

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<sup>1</sup> Jn. 8:31-32.

<sup>2</sup> Jn. 8:31.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 33:18-20.

<sup>4</sup> Lk. 1:68-69, 71-75.

<sup>5</sup> Ex. 3:8.



from among the nations, gather you from all the foreign lands,<sup>6</sup> and bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you."<sup>7</sup> "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord," says Simeon holding the Child of Mary in his arms, "according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for thy people Israel."<sup>8</sup>

*A kingdom not of this world, but for this world*

When Jesus was brought to the Roman governor on charges of subversion,<sup>9</sup> he categorically denied having anything to do with social or political agitation, just as he had resolutely escaped from those who wanted to make him a king when they saw his power to turn a few loaves into thousands.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, he did not deny his kingship, which, however, was "not of this world,"<sup>11</sup> and was concerned with bearing witness to the truth: "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."<sup>12</sup>

A few hours earlier, at the Last Supper, he had declared to his disciples that he *was* the truth: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."<sup>13</sup> He made this statement in a context which showed that "way" to be the way to heaven, where he was about to go "to prepare a place for you."<sup>14</sup>

Heaven is the abode or manner of being of God, and Jesus declares himself the way there, by being the truth, a truth that liberates and thus brings to the fullness of life and total exclusion of death: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> This is the original meaning of *alienation*, the estrangement and exile in a foreign land, the desolation and oppression of being away from the Father's house, a concept which first Hegel, and then Marx, secularized.

<sup>7</sup> Ez. 36:24-26.

<sup>8</sup> Lk. 2:29-32.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lk. 23:1-4, and Jn. 19:12-15.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jn. 6:14-15.

<sup>11</sup> Jn. 18:36. For a deeply scholarly treatment of this point, see J. M. Casciaro, *Jesus and Politics*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, Ireland, 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Jn. 18:37.

<sup>13</sup> Jn 14:6.

<sup>14</sup> Jn. 14:2.

<sup>15</sup> Jn. 3:16.

Faith in the divinity and consequent sovereign power of Jesus to save or liberate all men from sin and death is "the victory that overcomes the world."<sup>16</sup> He "bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live to justice."<sup>17</sup>

Under the law of Moses, we were still enslaved by sin, waiting for the promised Messiah — Christos in Greek — or anointed one of God, who would bring to fulfillment all that was foreshadowed in the Old Covenant. The Christ gathers into one the roles of patriarch (Abraham), priest (Melchisedech), lawgiver (Moses), judge (Joshua), king (David) and prophet (Elias).<sup>18</sup> And just as Moses led the people of God only to the brink of the promised land of freedom, but it was Joshua or Jesus — i.e. "he who saves", the liberator — who actually took them into it, the Son of God,<sup>19</sup> conceived by the power of the Spirit of God in Mary's virginal womb,<sup>20</sup> in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaias,<sup>21</sup> would be named also Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins."<sup>22</sup>

### *The power of grace*

Thus, grace has overcome sin, and love has driven out fear: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear brings punishment. And he who fears is not perfected in love."<sup>23</sup> Here is the freedom of the children of God, redeemed, rescued, saved, liberated, delivered by the Son of God (perfect God) and of Mary (perfect Man).<sup>24</sup>

St. Paul puts it splendidly in the Epistle to the Romans:<sup>25</sup>

"The law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and of death. For what was

<sup>16</sup> Jn. 5:4.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Pet. 2:24.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. my *The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, ch. V, Sinag-tala, Manila, 1984.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ps 2:7.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Lk. 1:35.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Is. 7:14 and Mt. 1:23.

<sup>22</sup> Mt. 1:21.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Jn. 4:18.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Gal. 4:4.

<sup>25</sup> Here is a shining sample of a real theology of liberation. Theology means *thinking about God*, i.e. reasoning from the faith, through the faith, in the faith, and for the faith, without adapting divine revelation to convenient or biased human ways of thinking. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." (Is. 55:8)

impossible to the law, in that it was weak because of the flesh, God has made good. By sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin-offering, he has condemned sin in the flesh... Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live. For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"<sup>26</sup>

And this liberation affects the whole of creation, just as the slavery or alienation of sin<sup>27</sup> has affected it:

"The eager longing of creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For creation was made subject to vanity — not by its own will but by reason of him who made it subject — in hope, because creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God."<sup>28</sup>

This is "the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free."<sup>29</sup> This is "the perfect law of liberty"<sup>30</sup> by which we shall be judged.<sup>31</sup>

### *A new heaven and a new earth*

As man opens himself to the kingdom of heaven with a free response of loving repentance and faith in Christ the liberator from sin,<sup>32</sup> this kingdom of heaven is infused into earthly society, and thus salvation-history enlivens secular history (human: economic, social, political, cultural) without getting confused with it, "like leaven, which a woman took and buried in three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."<sup>33</sup> "Behold,

<sup>26</sup> Rom. 8:2-3, 12-15.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ez. 14:7; Eph. 2:12 and 4:18; Col. 1:21.

<sup>28</sup> Rom. 8:19-21.

<sup>29</sup> Gal. 4:31.

<sup>30</sup> Js. 1:25.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Js. 2:12.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the first two Encyclicals of John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* and *Dives in misericordia*.

<sup>33</sup> Lk. 13:21. Cf. my *The Leaven of the Gospel in Secular Society*, Sinag-tala, Manila, 1983.

truth would liberate them,<sup>38</sup> they reacted in a polemical fashion. They claimed that since they were children of Abraham they had never been slaves to anyone, to which Jesus replied that "everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."<sup>39</sup> And as they refused to regard themselves as in need of liberation from sin, Jesus uttered these significant words: "The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie he speaks from his very nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the first lie ever told was that of the serpent in paradise: "No, you shall not die; for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."<sup>41</sup> By believing this outrageous lie, "sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed unto all men because all have sinned . . . death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of him who was to come."<sup>42</sup>

So, when the Messiah-Liberator, i.e. Christ Jesus, arrives, John the Baptist announces him as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,"<sup>43</sup> and tells people to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>44</sup>

It is in this sense, as a liberator from the oppression of sin and death, through the perfect sacrifice or sin-offering<sup>45</sup> which brings total forgiveness to those who repent and believe,<sup>46</sup> that Jesus of Nazareth accepts the title of King of the Jews affixed above his head, crowned with thorns, at the top of his cross. His kingdom, "not of this world,"<sup>47</sup> but "within us"<sup>48</sup> like leaven in the dough,<sup>49</sup> is the kingdom of heaven beginning here on earth

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<sup>38</sup> See notes 1 and 2 above.

<sup>39</sup> Jn. 8:34.

<sup>40</sup> Jn. 8:44.

<sup>41</sup> Gen. 3:4-5.

<sup>42</sup> Rom. 5:12, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Jn. 1:29.

<sup>44</sup> Mt. 3:2.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Heb. 5:1-10.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Mk. 1:15.

<sup>47</sup> Jn. 18:36.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Lk. 17:21.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Lk. 13:21.

in the inner life of those who receive it with a true conversion of heart: "The kingdom of God does not consist in food and drink, but in justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."<sup>50</sup>

Thereupon, since "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,"<sup>51</sup> this heaven has its effects on the surrounding dough of human society, and transforms its structures and institutions:<sup>52</sup> "The good man from his good treasure brings forth good things; and the evil man from his evil treasure brings forth evil things."<sup>53</sup>

### *What oppresses man*

A man can therefore be oppressed only by his own sins, which deprive him of his true liberty, i.e. the liberty to *be* good and thereby *do* good — *agere sequitur esse* —: "For you have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not use liberty as an occasion for sensuality, but by charity serve one another."<sup>54</sup> "Live as freemen, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for malice but as servants of God."<sup>55</sup> "Thanks be to God that you who were the slaves of sin have now obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which you have been delivered, and having been set free from sin, you have become the slaves of justice."<sup>56</sup>

Social structures and institutions externalize and compound the good or evil of the human heart. "For from within, out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, adulteries, immorality, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, shamelessness, jealousy, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man."<sup>57</sup>

Social structures and institutions are the cumulative effect of the total production of good or evil put out by individual human hearts. They are not necessarily the cause of evil, but rather the effect or consequence of it. "Nor can one localize evil principally or uniquely in bad social, political or economic 'structures' as though all other evils came from them so that

<sup>50</sup> Rom. 14:17.

<sup>51</sup> Mt. 12:34.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. my *The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, ch. VI.

<sup>53</sup> Mt. 12:35.

<sup>54</sup> Gal. 5:13.

<sup>55</sup> 1 Pet. 2:16.

<sup>56</sup> Rom. 6:17-18.

<sup>57</sup> Mk. 7:21-23.

the creation of the 'new man' would depend on the establishment of different economic and socio-political structures. To be sure, there are structures which are evil and which cause evil and which we must have the courage to change. Structures, whether they are good or bad, are the result of man's actions and so are consequences more than causes. The root of evil, then, lies in free and responsible persons who have to be converted by the grace of Jesus Christ in order to live and act as new creatures in the love of neighbor and in the effective search for justice, self-control and the exercise of virtue (cf. Jer. 2:14-26)."<sup>58</sup>

The evil of sin is something personal, but since the being of man is both personal and social, every sin is primarily and originally personal, but secondarily and derivatively social. "The full ambit of sin, whose first effect is to introduce disorder into the relationship between God and man, cannot be restricted to 'social sin'. The truth is that only a correct doctrine of sin will permit us to insist on the gravity of its social effects."<sup>59</sup>

When social structures show symptoms of evil, such as injustice, violence, cruelty, in short, absence of solidarity, these symptoms indicate the presence of a root cause in the hearts of men. "To demand first of all a radical revolution in social relations and then to criticize the search for personal perfection is to set out on a road which leads to the denial of the meaning of the person and his transcendence, and to destroy ethics and its foundation which is the absolute character of the distinction between good and evil."<sup>60</sup> It is by attacking the sickness at its roots that its effects are eliminated. An unjust structure ceases to be unjust when justice is established in the hearts of men.

### *Justice and love, not violence and hatred*

This is, then, how man is liberated from sin, and hence from all forms of oppression or alienation: by establishing justice and love in his heart, not by hurling him against the social structures seething with hatred and vindictiveness: "since charity is the principle of authentic perfection, that perfection can-

<sup>58</sup> *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation*, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 6 August 1984, IV, 15: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English, 10 September 1984.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 14.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 15.

not be conceived without an openness to others and a spirit of service."<sup>61</sup>

The marxist "class struggle", even if conceived as the path towards the classless society of universal solidarity, cannot be forced to fit into any reasonable form of love. Evil can never be the path to good. "The universal brotherhood of men is not specifically Marxian... In actual fact, for Marx, hatred is the creative force, since conflict is at the heart of matter. Hatred and violence, rather than love and reason, are the Marxian forces for progress. By contrast, according to the New Testament, violence is not something to be done to others but to oneself: cf. Mt. 11:12; 18:21-22; 18:8-9; 7:12-14; 5:38-48; Mk. 9:42-49; Lk. 6:27-38; 9:22-25; 9:52-56; 14:27; 17:3-4; Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 8:17; 12:1-3, 9-14; 13:1-10; 1 Cor. 1:18-25; 13:1-13; 2 Cor. 4; Gal. 2:19-21; 5:13-26; Eph. 4:1-3; 5:1-2; Phil. 2:1-5; Col. 1:19-24; 3:5-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-11; 1 Tim. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 4:5-8; Tit. 2:11-14; Js. 3:13-18; 1 Pet. 1:13-17; 2:11-17; 3:8-13; 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:4-7, etc."<sup>62</sup>

The idea of the class struggle and the need to speed it up by revolutionary "praxis" and "conscientization"<sup>63</sup> is grounded on the Marxian assumption that a man is not a free and responsible person but just the member of a class dialectically opposed to the antithetical class, and bound to clash with it violently sooner or later. For some "theologies of liberation"<sup>64</sup> "participation in the class struggle is presented as a requirement of charity itself. The desire to love everyone here and now, despite his class, and to go out to meet him with the non-violent means of dialogue and persuasion, is denounced as counterproductive and opposed to love."<sup>65</sup>

### *The true meaning of liberty*

There has been a distortion of the true meaning of liberty whose historical origin it is useful to recall here, as it is related to the broad issues of liberalism, socialism and liberation.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> J. M. de Torre, *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity*, 2nd ed., Sinagala, Manila, 1983, p. 19. See also my *The Roots of Society*, 2nd ed., Sinagala, Manila, 1984, pp. 120-121.

<sup>63</sup> The term "conscientization" was coined by Paulo Freire in the 60's: see for example his *Educacao como practica da liberdade*, translated into several languages. He is a Brazilian educator, greatly influenced by marxist ideas.

<sup>64</sup> See specifically Gustavo Gutierrez, *teologia de la liberación. Perspectivas*. CEP, Lima, Peru, 1971, pp. 342-343.

<sup>65</sup> *Instruction on Certain Aspects*... IX, 7.



"Man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains," said Rousseau, claiming that man is good by nature but becomes evil in society, so society must be changed in the direction of liberty. Earlier, Locke had maintained a similar belief in the natural goodness of man, which led him to advocate the sacred rights to liberty, property and happiness, and to oppose the absolutism of Hobbes, also maintained by Machiavelli and Spinoza, based on the belief that man is evil by nature — "man is a wolf to man", said Hobbes —, and only an absolute and irrevocable political power can tame him: this is what was called "enlightened despotism". No wonder that not only Locke and Rousseau but the general movement of romanticism and liberalism reacted against all these constraints on human freedom.

It should be borne in mind, however, that that sort of absolutism originated in certain monarchs who took advantage of Luther's rejection of the spiritual power of the Church and consequent sole reliance on the civil power of the secular ruler, to bolster their absolute power and claim the "divine right of kings" as directly given them by God with no intervention of the people. When the Catholic theologians like Suarez, Vitoria and Bellarmine answered such claims by stating that although political power is indeed given by God, "for there exists no authority except from God,"<sup>66</sup> the ruler is only a trustee and his power is for the service of the people and their rights, the absolutist Stuart king James I had their books publicly burned in London.

Luther was driven to put all power in the secular ruler due to his denial of human liberty: for him, man has no freedom of choice as to good and evil, since his nature has been totally corrupted by original sin, and so he must be coerced to be good.<sup>67</sup> Calvin also maintained that human freedom is only an illusion, for we are all inexorably predestined to heaven or hell,<sup>68</sup> which led him to look for the signs of predestination in material prosperity through hard work and thrift: wealth as a reward for labor or industry, as Adam Smith would later explain in his famous *Wealth of Nations*, published in the year of the outbreak of the American Revolution (1776).

While Luther's denial of freedom had bolstered the absolutist claims of rulers, Calvin's version of this denial replaced

<sup>66</sup> Rom. 13:1. Cf. my *The Roots of Society*, 2nd ed., pp. 105-106.

<sup>67</sup> The Catholic Church countered by stating that original sin did not totally corrupt human nature and thereby its freedom, but wounded it, leaving man still free to answer to grace, or to fall into sin.

<sup>68</sup> For Catholic faith God wants the salvation of *all* men. (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4), but man is free to accept it or reject it.

freedom of choice with the freedom of movement or freedom from external constraint, which, coupled with Locke's and Rousseau's belief in the natural goodness of man gave rise to liberalism, with its claims to all political power in the people, the State limited to protecting the rights of liberty and property, and for the rest *laissez faire* (allow to do), i.e. freedom of enterprise, freedom of competition, freedom of market, freedom from as many constraints as possible. The anarchism of Stirner, Proudhon, Herzen and Bakunin radicalized this individualism into a boundless cult of absolute freedom from any rule or authority, while socialism proposed to fight for the equality of a classless society, either by political or democratic methods (non-marxist socialism) or by violent revolution through a class struggle (marxist socialism), but always on the materialist assumption that material wealth is the only basis for liberty.<sup>69</sup>

### *Political consequences*

All these ideas on freedom gave rise in turn to powerful calvinist movements in France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Scotland. In England it led first to the *Mayflower* voyage across the Atlantic early in the 17th century which laid the foundations of the United States, and later to the Puritan revolution of the 1640's, which put an end to the absolutist reign of Charles I, and consolidated liberalism after the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688, which ousted the last Stuart and turned over the throne to the Dutch calvinist William of Orange. This English revolution was followed by other liberal revolutions, such as the American (1776) and the French (1789, 1830 and 1848), and counterpointed by an industrial revolution which spawned both material wealth and an unequal distribution of it, which in turn gave rise to the socialist movements and revolutions of the 20th century. The "theologies of liberation" referred to by the abovementioned document of the Holy See derive their inspiration from socialist and marxist ideas of universal equality by the abolition of classes and of the right of private property that produces them. What the document objects to is that those ideas are radically materialistic, and cannot therefore be combined with the biblical concept of liberation, as they claim.

### *What is freedom?*

Man is indeed born free, not however in the sense that at his birth he has attained the fullness of his perfection and hap-

<sup>69</sup> See *The Roots of Society*, ch. II, and *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity*, ch. X.

piness, but rather in that the seed of liberty is at the core of his being:

"Liberty, the highest of natural endowments, being the portion only of intellectual or rational natures, confers on man this dignity — that he is 'in the hand of his counsel' (Sir. 15:14) and has power over his actions. But the manner in which such dignity is exercised is of the greatest moment, inasmuch as on the use that is made of liberty the highest good and the greatest evil alike depend. Man, indeed, is free to obey his reason, to seek moral good, and to strive unswervingly after his last end. Yet he is free also to turn aside to all other things; and, in pursuing the empty semblance of good, to disturb rightful order and to fall headlong into the destruction which he has voluntarily chosen."

Thus wrote Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Libertas* of 1888 on the misconceptions of liberalism.<sup>70</sup> Closer to our time, the Second Vatican Council echoes him:

"Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly... authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed that man be left 'in the hand of his own counsel' (Sir. 15:14) so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice. Such a choice is *personally motivated* and *prompted from within*. It does not result from blind internal impulse nor from mere external pressure.

"Man achieves such dignity when, emancipating himself from all *captivity to passion*, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is *good*, and procures for himself, through effective and skillful action, apt means to that end. Since man's freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the help of God's grace can he bring such a relationship with God into full flower. Before the judgment seat of God each man must render an account of his own life, whether he has done good or evil."<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Three years later, he issued his celebrated Encyclical *Rerum novarum* on the misconception of both liberalism and socialism. The quotation from *Libertas* is from *The Church Speaks to the Modern World*, ed. by E. Gilson, Image Books, New York, 1954.

<sup>71</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, no. 17 (Abott Edition; italics added).

It is worth recalling here the words of a homily given by that "forerunner of the Second Vatican Council,"<sup>72</sup> Msgr. Escriva, in 1956:

"We will never fully understand Jesus' freedom. It is immense, infinite, as is his love. But the priceless treasure of his generous holocaust should move us to ask, 'Why, my Lord, have you granted me this privilege which I can use to follow in your footsteps, but also to offend you?' Thus we come to appreciate that freedom is used properly when it is directed towards the good; and that it is misused when men are forgetful and turn away from the Love of loves. Personal freedom, which I defend and will always defend with all my strength, leads me to ask with deep conviction, though I am well aware of my own weakness: 'What do you want from me, Lord, so that I may freely do it?'"

"Christ himself gives us the answer: *veritas liberabit vos* (Jn. 8:32), 'the truth will set you free.' How great a truth is this, which opens the way to freedom and give it meaning throughout our lives. I will sum it up for you, with the joy and certainty which flow from knowing there is a close relationship between God and his creatures. It is the knowledge that we have come from the hands of God, that the Blessed Trinity looks upon us with predilection, that we are children of so wonderful a Father. I ask my Lord to help us decide to take this truth to heart, to dwell upon it day by day; only then will we be acting as free men. Do not forget: anyone who does not realize that he is a child of God is unaware of the deepest truth about himself. When he acts he lacks the dominion and self-mastery we find in those who love our Lord above all else.

"Convince yourselves that to get to heaven we must commit ourselves freely, with a wholehearted, constant and voluntary determination. By itself, however, freedom is insufficient: it needs a guide, a pole-star. 'The soul cannot proceed without someone to guide it; this is why it has been redeemed in order that it may have as its King, Christ, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light (Mt. 11:30), and not the devil, whose rule is oppressive.' (Origen, *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Romanos*, 5, 6: PG. 14, 1034-1035)

"Reject the deception of those who appease themselves with the pathetic cry of 'Freedom! Freedom!' Their cry often masks

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<sup>72</sup> Decree of the Archdiocese of Rome Introducing the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, 19 February 1981.

a tragic enslavement, because choices that prefer error do not liberate. Christ alone sets us free (cf. Gal. 4:31), for he alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn. 14:6)."<sup>73</sup>

Reading these reflections, there easily come to mind the tremendous words of the Second Epistle of St. Peter: "For by high sounding, empty words they entice with sensual allurements of carnal passion those who are just escaping from such as live in error. They promise them freedom, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption; for by whatever a man is overcome, of this also he is the slave."<sup>74</sup>

### *The growth towards maturity*

St. Paul tells the Ephesians to build up the body of Christ, "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ. And this he has done that we may be now no longer children, tossed to and from and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, according to the wiles of error. Rather are we to practice the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ."<sup>75</sup> This is what freedom is for: for love, for good, for the truth, for the common good, for solidarity, for making one another grow in the awareness and dynamism of our God-given dignity of being free and intelligent agents in cooperation with God.<sup>76</sup>

Man is indeed born free: not with the freedom of fulfillment but with the freedom of potentiality. The seed of liberty is at the core of his being, but what man eventually makes of this liberty depends on him. He may attain the fullness of his perfection, and hence of his liberty and happiness,<sup>77</sup> if he allows his transcendent powers of intellect and will to establish their sovereignty over his sensible and emotional powers. One of the consequences of original sin was precisely the loss of this sovereignty, and this is why the total liberation of man begins with his liberation from sin.

The struggle for freedom within man is like the endeavor of human reason (*logos*) to civilize the wilderness (*physis*), the

<sup>73</sup> *Friends of God*, no. 26.

<sup>74</sup> 2 Pet. 2:18-19.

<sup>75</sup> Eph. 4:13-15.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 3:9 and Col. 1:24.

<sup>77</sup> "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." (Jn. 16:23-24)

effort of intellect and will, or of the whole human heart or self, to spiritualize the passions or emotions, i.e. to passionately love the truth, the good, the beautiful, the unity and harmony of all being, and to have the courage, full of hope and joy, of making a wholehearted commitment to this divine adventure.

Man can choose to be enslaved and oppressed by his inner senses of imagination and instinct (selfish day-dreaming and wishful thinking; merely animal self-preservation externalized in impersonal conformity to the group, without any real self-awareness, self-mastery and self-commitment), with the corresponding emotions of like and dislike, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow, fear and courage, hope and despair, and anger, all of them responding to sensible pleasure and pain,<sup>78</sup> or to be liberated by the superior rule of rational knowledge and free will, which respond not to pleasure or pain as such, but to good as perfection of being, or evil as its absence.

The intellect is actuated, and hence liberated, by the truth (*aletheia* or revelation), which consists in adjusting to *reality*, but since reality enters into the intellect through the external senses (eyes, ears...), these are more necessary and useful to the intellect than the internal senses. Hence it is observation and experiment, along with the conceptualization and reasoning based on them and abstracted from them, that are essential to science or the conquest of truth, and to *justice* or the conquest of moral good, rather than day-dreaming and myth-making imagination. Here lies the road towards total liberation, as John Paul II has repeatedly put it: in the alliance of science and conscience, in the total culture of humanity.

The will is actuated, and hence liberated, by the *good* as understood by the intellect. When man discovers what is good for him as man, and freely directs himself to it, he has discovered the *law* of his being, i.e. the way he must follow to reach his fulfillment, and hence happiness. His liberty thus attains its purpose: the total liberation of man, or the state of perfect justice.

### *The overflow of personal creativity*

To attain this liberation man must allow the innermost core of his being, i.e. the self, to be liberated from the tyranny of the senses and emotions, and from an impersonal, unthinking

<sup>78</sup> "Pain and pleasure are our sovereign masters," said Jeremy Bentham in the 19th century, thus voicing a typical feature of bourgeois liberalism.

and instinctive conformity to the environment. He must become aware of his own self, through his superior powers of intellect and will.<sup>79</sup> Having thus become free, he can then be an agent or propagator of freedom in whatever social structures he may be operating.

When the sensible feelings and emotions assume leadership in man's actions, he becomes self-centered, and gives into an individualistic indifference or hatred towards others, driven by envy or greed, or anger; or he gives into narcissistic sex, or gluttony, or drugs, or alcohol; or he succumbs to comfort-loving sloth by just conforming to the group, without personal thinking. These are all forms of oppression or alienation flowing from the human heart, not from social structures or systems. Their classical name is the *capital sins*.

"Certain educators confuse personality with individuality, and mistake the display of sheer individuality for the development of personality. Personality means interiority to oneself; this internal selfhood grows in proportion as the life of reason and freedom dominates over the life of instinct and sensual desire — which implies self-sacrifice, striving towards self-perfection and love. But individuality, in the strict Aristotelian sense in which I am using this word, individuality means the material ego the displaying of which consists in giving a free hand to the irrational trends of this ego. Thus, while becoming the center of everything, the ego is in reality scattered among cheap desires or overwhelming passions and finally submitted to the determination of matter."<sup>80</sup>

Or, as I put it in *The Roots of Society*,<sup>81</sup> individuality is rooted in matter in the biochemical composition of the body determining the temperamental traits, and expressing itself in infrarational emotions. Therefore, man cannot change his individuality (freedom is not rooted in matter), but he can perfect it and transcend it by means of his other dimension: his rational nature, where his personality is rooted, with his freedom and immortality. The roots of personality are in *spirit*, i.e. understanding and love of self-giving. It is in this that man

<sup>79</sup> "Environment is such an influence,' you've told me. And I have had to answer: No doubt. That's why you have to be formed in such a way that you can carry your own environment about with you in a natural manner, and so give your own tone to the society in which you live." (J. Escriva, *The Way*, no. 376)

<sup>80</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, Yale Paperbound, New Haven, 1969, p. 34.

<sup>81</sup> 2nd ed., cf. pp. 26-28.

is free, master of his destiny, builder of his own *character*, as distinct from temperament. This is the true basis of his social nature, which should incline him to the common good, not his material individuality, which is self-centered.

Let me conclude with the following words of John Paul II at Puebla:

"Perhaps one of the most obvious weaknesses of present-day civilization lies in an inadequate view of man. Without doubt, our age is the one in which man has been most written and spoken of, the age of the forms of humanism and the age of anthropocentrism. Nevertheless it is paradoxically also the age of man's deepest anxiety about his identity and his destiny, the age of man's abasement to previously unsuspected levels, the age of human values trampled on as never before.

"How is this paradox explained? We can say that it is the inexorable paradox of atheistic humanism. It is the drama of man being deprived of an essential dimension of his being, namely, his search for the infinite, and thus faced with having his being reduced in the worst way...

"Faced with so many other forms of humanism that are often shut in by a strictly economic, biological or psychological view of man, the Church has the right and the duty to proclaim the truth about man that she received from her Teacher, Jesus Christ. God grant that no external compulsion may prevent her from doing so. God grant, above all, that she may not cease to do so through fear or doubt, through having let herself be contaminated by other forms of humanism, or through lack of confidence in her original message.

"When a pastor of the Church proclaims clearly and unambiguously the truth about man that was revealed by Him who 'knew what was in man' (Jn. 2:25), he must therefore be encouraged by the certainty of doing the best service to the human being.

"This complete truth about the human being constitutes the foundation of the Church's social teaching and the basis also of true liberation. In the light of this truth, man is not a being subjected to economic or political processes; these processes are instead directed to man and are subjected to him.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> John Paul II, Puebla Address to Latin American Bishops, 28 January 1979 (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition).



# RECONCILIATION:

## *An Impossible Dream?*

(Highlights of the Document "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia")

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With the date of December 2, 1984, Pope John Paul II issued a document entitled *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, intended to be, as the fruit of the last Synod of Bishops, a doctrinal and pastoral message on the subject of *Penance and Reconciliation*.

The document is an invitation to rediscover the very words with which Jesus began his preaching: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel".

Why does the Church put forward once more this subject and this invitation?

The Church, in the carrying out of her mission of reconciliation is particularly aware of the existence of many deep and painful divisions in the world of our time: divisions between individuals and groups, and also between nations.

The trampling upon the basic rights of the human person, hidden attacks against the freedom of individuals and groups, the use of torture, the stockpiling of conventional or atomic weapons, the various forms of discrimination, violence and terrorism, an unfair distribution of the world's resources, etc., are among the many painful social phenomena, whose overwhelming power makes the world in which we live a world shattered to its very foundations, and reconciliation little more than an impossible dream.

But is reconciliation really an impossible dream? Some think so. For others, on the contrary, it is something to be gained by arduous efforts, through serious reflection and action.

Whatever the case may be, the desire for peace, the longing for reconciliation, and reconciliation itself, will be complete and effective only as in so far as they heal that original wound which is the root of all other wounds: sin.

That is why the theme of *Reconciliation* was discussed by the Synod of Bishops together with the theme of *Penance*: for reconciliation with God, with oneself and with others implies overcoming that radical break which is sin. And this is achieved only through interior transformation or conversion.

It is this reconciliation, the result of conversion, which is dealt with in the present Apostolic Exhortation. In its *first* part the Pope speaks of the Church in her mission of reconciling man with God, man with his brothers, man with the whole of creation. In the *second* and *third* parts, after pointing out to sin as the radical cause of all wounds and divisions, the Pontiff speaks of the means that enable the Church to promote and encourage full reconciliation.

## CONVERSION AND RECONCILIATION: THE CHURCH'S TASK AND COMMITMENT

Three main points sum up the first part of the document:

1) *Reconciliation is a gift from God.* Well known is the parable of the Prodigal Son: from the brother who was lost, to the brother who stayed at home. But the most striking element of the parable is the inexpressible love of a Father -God- who offers to his sons the gift of full reconciliation.

2) *Christ, the Reconciler.* This initiative on God's part is made concrete and manifest in the redemptive act of Christ. He is the Liberator of man from sin in all its forms and, through his death on the Cross, became "reconciliation" for all.

3) *The Church, a reconciled and reconciling Community.* God remains faithful in love. His message of reconciliation has been entrusted not only to the Apostles, but also to the whole community of believers. Hence, the reconciling mission of the Church.

But, of course, if the Church is to be "reconciling", she must begin by being a "reconciled" Church, seeking a unity which is to be the fruit of true conversion, mutual forgiveness, theological dialogue, prayer and docility to the Holy Spirit.

## THE LOVE THAT IS GREATER THAN SIN

The Bible story is repeated in our own lives:

— *The tragedy of man.* Made in the image of God and with the whole world at our disposal, we abuse our freedom, make the wrong choices, and place ourselves in the centre, instead of God... We want to build a Tower of Babel whose top would reach heaven, without thinking of its disastrous end. This is the root of the trouble with human nature. Rebellion, defiance.

— *The mystery of sin.* Sin is a product of man's freedom. It involves disobedience to God, by rejecting the way of life he has laid down for us, and deciding to follow the way that seems easiest or most pleasant or best for ourselves.

As rupture with God leads tragically to division among brothers, it is right to speak of *personal* and *social* sin. And so does the document, reminding us also of the question of sin's gravity (mortal and venial), and one of modern man's unfortunate characteristics: the loss of sense of sin.

— *Mysterium Pietatis.* This beautiful expression of Saint Paul refers to the Mystery of Christ: God's salvific plan would remain incomplete or even totally defeated, if it were not made part of the dynamism of history in order to conquer man's sin. Every individual now is invited to a reconciled life.

## THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

To evoke conversion and penance in man's heart and to offer him the gift of reconciliation is the specific mission of the Church. In her pastoral ministry some concrete means are used:

- *Dialogue* with all those who compose the one People of God;

- *Catechesis* on the values of "penance": conversion and repentance;
- *The Sacraments*, particularly the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*.

The Sacramental rite of Penance, in its evolution and variation of forms, has always preserved some fundamental truths, expressed even more clearly in the new "Rite of Penance" (1974):

- that this Sacrament is the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness;
- that Confession is a celebration of God's mercy, not a court of judgment;
- that the sacramental moment of confession focuses on the love of God rather than on sin;
- that confession is a peak moment in the total process of conversion.

With regard to the confessor's role, and the extraordinary way of celebrating the Sacrament with General Absolution, the document refers us to the new Code of Canon Law (1983).

### AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE

The document ends with a word of encouragement and hope: "Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right?"

"Have unity of spirit", urged the first Bishop of Rome at a critical hour of the beginning of the Church.

"Have unity of spirit", repeats John Paul II, at an hour of history which is no less critical.

With our trust in God and Mary, reconciliation is possible. Perhaps most of us regard it only as a dream. But certainly it is not an impossible one.

JAVIER GONZALEZ, O.P.

## REVERENCE LIFE: A CALL TO THE CATHOLIC FILIPINO WOMEN TODAY

Leonardo Z. Legaspi, D.D.  
Archbishop of Caceres

I am sure you all understand my immediate trepidation when I was invited to address you this morning on the occasion of your 21st Biennial General Assembly. The thought of being in the presence of so many women can really make a man, even an Archbishop for that matter, feel very uneasy indeed.

On second thoughts, however, I decided to accept, consoling myself with the thought that this is no ordinary gathering of women and that this is, in truth and in fact, a gathering of Catholic Women of the Archdiocese of Caceres.

The Catholic Women's League is one religious organization whose enormous contribution to the Church and the Community is well known. I take your invitation therefore as a signal honor for my humble self to address your organization which is so worthy of distinction. Please accept then, at the outset, my utmost thanks.

Beloved Officers and members of the Catholic Women's League of Caceres, Good Morning:

The theme of your General Assembly — "Reverence Life: A Call to the Catholic Filipino Women Today" — contains a relevance that borders on urgency in our times. It is a sad note to realize that our society has found a reason for those it wishes to destroy. Under the guise of national security and the welfare of the common good, so casually and hastily alleged always, we have been witness to an almost daily attack on the most basic human right to life. This should raise among us a very grave concern.

We are a people who have a high regard for life. It is a common knowledge how we put so much value on our respon-

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\* Keynote Speech delivered on the occasion of the 21st Biennial General Assembly of the Catholic Women's League of Caceres on September 8, 1984, at the Colegio de Santa Isabel Auditorium, Naga City.

There are many more examples we can cite that spell irreverence for life in our society. They are a shameful indictment of our failure to render concrete proof to our avowed character and attitude as life-loving people. They are also a painful reminder of our obligation to do something about this sordid situation which barks at our conscience as a result of unconcern.

My dear Officers and Members of this Assembly, when we come to think of it then we realize that if there is anybody who should be most affected by this situation, and feel deeply this concern then we conclude that it should be the woman. If I may add further, it should be the Catholic Woman and, because we are speaking of our own society, the Catholic Filipino Woman.

There are at least three reasons why this has become the paramount concern of the Catholic Filipino Woman. Let us first talk of the woman in general and then of the Filipino Woman in particular.

1. The woman has been assigned the delicate and noble role of motherhood. Only she feels how it is to bring forth life into this world, seeing a baby's tiny perfection, and dreaming of his future greatness. It is the highest fulfillment of her womanhood, a moving experience filled with wonder and exaltation. The men can only guess such feeling and gape in envy. Only she also is the subject to the risk that entails her very life. She should therefore feel most aggrieved by these manifestations of irreverence for life. She should also be the most concerned to put a stop to it because it is her prime duty as a mother to rear and protect her children. Indeed, only a woman and mother can feel the burning rage against another woman who has decided to abort her child; only she can feel the pangs of failure at the sight of wayward children; only she can truly share the grief of another mother over the death of her son.

2. And then we go to the Catholic Woman who is mandated by her faith to pay extra care and valuation for the sacred gift of life.

The Catholic Woman believes that Jesus the Lord became man to save all men without exception and distinction. Every man, therefore, no matter how sinful he may become, is eminently redeemable.

The Catholic Woman believes that by becoming incarnate, Jesus Christ further ennobled man for by so doing He identified Himself with the very least among men — the poor, the powerless, and the outcast. He even gave His own life for everyone.

The Catholic Woman believes that every Christian, by and in baptism, takes upon himself the task of furthering the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Woman believes that man's redemptive task is unto life and not unto death. It is therefore inconceivable to destroy people in any way, to violate their dignity, to deny them life and the means of life in the pursuit of human fulfillment and redemption.

The Catholic Woman believes that God has given man the obligation of regarding his neighbor as another self, bearing in mind above all his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way. Her concern thus is not only for physical life but for life as human. And it is a concern that extends beyond the mere act of killing to all other acts of violence that degrade man as man, and looks to the protection of all rights we call human.

It is therefore clear why the Catholic Woman should feel more urgently as her call the duty to reverence life or propagate such reverence by her examples.

3. The Filipino Woman enjoys an enviable position in our society. And it is a position that is at once of privilege and influence. Nowhere in Asia can we find the woman placed on so high a pedestal or given so much importance as the Filipina. In almost all the countries of Asia for instance, a woman cannot get married until she is able to bring a suitable dowry into the marriage. In the Philippines, however, where a dowry is asked, it is the man who gives it because it is the feeling that the woman is doing the man a big favor by marrying him. (Jokingly aside, I am not sure whether there are many men who would agree with this.) The family of the groom shoulders the expenses for marriage while in other countries the father of the bride handles all of them. Add to this the fact that the Filipino Woman holds the purse of the household and therefore some power and control therein.

This privilege places the Filipino Woman in a high position of influence in the family. Her response thus could be in

this area where she can use her influence to answer the call to reverence life.

I am, therefore, happy that I am addressing this keynote speech before you, women and mothers of the Archdiocese of Caceres. I look up to you as prime movers in our crucial and urgent task to propagate reverence for the sacred gift of life.

My dear officers and members of the Catholic Women's League of Caceres, I wish to speak to you today about the apostolate of Truth, Love, and Action that should constitute your response as Catholic Filipino Women to this urgent and crucial call.

1. TRUTH — India's Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, has once said:

"I think that in a way all women are teachers. Whether they are actually in the teaching profession or not, whether they have any particular job or whether they are merely homemakers, they are first, foremost and to the last, teachers and guides of society. What sort of society we will have lies very much in the hands of the women of our country."

In the same vein, her uncle, Mahatma Gandhi, opined that while a man's education is the education of the individual himself, the woman's education is the education of the family. It is therefore important what women do, what they think, how much understanding they have of problems at home and in society, and how much involvement they feel with these problems.

The first area, and perhaps one where she has the greatest influence of propagating reverence for life is in the apostolate of truth. This can be done by teaching children in the family, in the schools, in the neighborhood, regarding the value that we attach to life which is a sacred and inviolable gift from God.

It is also necessary for the Catholic Filipino Woman today, in the face of so gross an irreverence for life in our society, to inculcate in the mind of our children the Christian traditions and teachings about the sacredness of life and the supreme duty that each one has to respect and protect it.

Human life is not meant to be ended by man. It is not meant to be cheap and disposable. It is not meant to be de-



graded by irresponsibility and lust. It is not meant to be wasted in suffering and deplorable living conditions.

Human life is sacred. It is a gift meant to be cherished and enjoyed. And, furthermore, it is meant for eternity, for a blissful union with God. Human life is for God. And life on earth should be a foretaste of that never-ending joy in heaven.

These truths should be known and upheld. I call on you Catholic Women of Caceres to take the leadership in propagating these truths about life and its sacredness, thereby fostering the requisite and proper reverence to it.

2. LOVE — One can teach best by examples. This is a truism that has the tenor of an inviolate law. "Values are not so much taught as caught". Children are extraordinarily perceptive and quick to detect any falsehood or pretense. If they trust and respect you, they will cooperate with you even at a young age.

The apostolate of love entails actual and concrete show of love that only a woman and a mother can give. This love should start, grow, and flourish at home only to reach out to the neighborhood and flow eventually into the larger society. Children learn what they live.

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn; but if he lives with loving encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight; but if he lives with loving praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy, but if he lives with loving approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with loving tolerance, he learns to be patient. If he lives with loving fairness, he learns justice. If he lives with loving security, he learns to have faith. And if the child lives with loving acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world. He learns to love his neighbor. And then he learns to love God.

You are all aware of how potent is the love of a woman and mother to dispel the gloom in your homes, to calm quarreling children, to give lightness to suffering, to comfort and lend ease to a tired and troubled husband. When you bring that same love out into our society then you can just imagine for yourself how much good it could do to counteract the per-

vading hatred, violence, suffering, brutality, and perversion. It is the most effective instrument to sow reverence for life.

3. The apostolate of truth and love should finally be complemented by the apostolate of action. One can do only so much but if we pool ourselves and our resources together then a lot of things could be accomplished.

I call on you therefore, Catholic Women of Caceres, to muster concerted efforts in taking a decisive stance to reverence life and to propagate such reverence. Your privilege and influence as a Catholic Filipino Woman is a great advantage in the task of furthering this goal.

While I do not necessarily envision you demonstrating before abortion clinics, picketing movie houses showing indecent films, rounding up wayward children, putting up charity homes, doling out assistance to the poor, stopping the killings; however, I certainly exhort that you translate your beliefs and your love into action. The lines which your action would take will depend upon the need as you perceive it and the resources at your disposal. What is clear is that it is necessary to act to put an end to such manifestations of irreverence for life.

If our Catholic Women in Caceres would be the leaders of a growing sense of reverence and protectiveness for the sacredness of life then this Biennial General Assembly shall not remain just a forum for social and religious gathering, although that too is important, but more than that, it shall be a springboard for a veritable social action.

Let me end this address by pointing to our Blessed Mother, the Model Woman, for help and guidance in the task that has been entrusted to you as Catholic Filipino Women. Let me say this prayer:

*Holy Mary, Mother of God, our patroness and mother too, be our companion and help in this most crucial and urgent undertaking to foster reverence for life which was given to us more abundantly by the coming of your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

You know, it was once said, that it is difficult to talk before women because for them to like what you say, it is first necessary that they like you. Whereas before men, it is only necessary that they like what you say. I just hope that I have been invited to this assembly for both reasons.

Thank you very much for your admirable patience.

## CANON LAW

# *Divorce and Question Marks*

### QUESTION 1:

*Would an absolute divorce legislation be pursuant to the text, context and spirit of the Constitution of the Republic and the Civil Code of the Philippines?*

Article II, section 4 of the Constitution, in its very Declaration of Principles, expressly and categorically states that the State shall strengthen the family as a basic social unit. Article 54 of the Civil Code provides that marriage is an inviolable social institution.

Would absolute divorce truly strengthen the Filipino family? Would absolute divorce really make the Filipino family an inviolable social institution? The answer in the affirmative would be pure sophism and unwarranted rationalization.

Or would the Constitution be amended and the Civil Code revised in order to accommodate absolute divorce? If so, is it only upon Filipino marriage and family life that amendment and revision should be made? May other equally vital amendments to the Constitution and revisions in the Civil Code be discussed and proposed here and now? If not, why? Assuming that something is wrong with the Constitutional provision and Codal articles on marriages and family life, is nothing else wrong therein?

### QUESTION 2:

*Would it stand true reason and logic to claim that civil absolute divorce is the same as ecclesiastical declarations of nullity, and that whereas the church grants nullity declarations, the state should grant absolute divorce?*

The present Civil Code has in fact provisions on Nullity, Annulment and Legal Separation. The Civil Code provisions on Nullity and Annulment are substantially the same as the Church or Canon Law provisions on Nullity, and the Civil Code

provisions on Legal Separation are also substantially the same as Church or Canon Law provisions on Canonical Separation.

If absolute divorce is really the same as nullity declarations, which are already provided for in the Civil Code, then why still propose it at all if really they are one and the same thing?

Is it really the same to declare a marriage null and void from the beginning when it is such, and to dissolve a marriage which is valid from the beginning? Is a void marriage (for nullity), a voidable marriage (for annulment) and a valid marriage (for divorce) all the same?

If it is argued that the effects are the same, this would be equivalent to saying that one who dies by old age, by sickness, by accident, by gas chamber, by firing squad, or by guillotine, is all the same: after all, he is dead! These different ways of dying and of administering death sentence, needless to say, have their respective profoundly different significance and implication.

The truth of the matter is that there is an attempt to dissolve and break marriage and family life by all possible means and at all costs: if you cannot obtain a nullity declaration before the State, try for annulment. If you cannot have an annulment, settle for legal separation. If you cannot accept legal separation, secure a divorce! With this posture, why have marriage at all! Why not just legalize plain cohabitations — and this way avoid all litigations, legal complications, court burden, and do away with all judicial hustles herein involved. If this is not right, at least it is consistent.

### QUESTION 3:

*Would it be consonant to the dictates of sound reason, the stipulations of justice and equity, to still reward someone for the commission of a crime?*

An absolute divorce plea — it is said — may be instituted on the ground of infidelity, attempted parricide and abandonment on the part of the Respondent. Once the plea is granted on any of the aforesaid grounds, the guilty party or spouse is in fact and in truth also awarded the bill of freedom, in fact and in truth also benefited by the legal freedom to remarry. Is this not in fact and in truth rewarding crime, awarding guilt?

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While it may do curtail said aberrant deeds as hopefully envisioned and entertained by its proponents, the same absolute divorce legislation may also readily inspire what it aims to deter and curtail — like a knife that may serve as an instrument to operate and cure, or a means to maim and kill.

It is definitely not impossible that when a husband and a wife are tired of one another, one or the other would on purpose commit infidelity, attempt at the life of the other, or simply abandon the no longer desirable spouse, precisely to have and enjoy the blessings of absolute divorce.

If the absolute divorce proponents really want to deter the said marriage maladies, why don't they instead propose very realistic and severe pertinent penalties for said crimes — and not still possibly encourage these in the pursuit of divorce causes?

### QUESTION 6:

*Would it be justified to accept the absolute divorce proposal on the premise that it is hard to obtain a divorce grant, or that it is difficult to establish and prove a divorce ground?*

Why, has the issue been relegated simply to what is hard or easy to obtain? What is wrong may be hard to obtain, but this does not make it right. And if what is right is easy to obtain, this does not make it wrong. On the contrary: What is wrong may not be obtained, much less offered. And what is right should be made easy to obtain, not denied.

If a given marriage is void, why make it hard to obtain a civil nullity declaration? If a given marriage is voidable, why make it difficult to have a civil annulment decision? And if a given marriage is valid, why make divorce even obtainable? Why propose even a single ground for its dissolution?

Instead of an absolutue divorce legislation, what the State needs is to be more realistic in the interpretation and application of given Civil Code provisions on marriage nullity and annulment suits.

There is no denying that some marriages are simply impossible right from the beginning, simply non-viable right from the start: there are some people who are not, by dint of nature, really meant for married life because their personality structure,

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One wonders how many marriages are bound to be doomed right from the start because they were held simply by strength of "We like to get married." "We are in love." "We must get married," and the like, without serious and objective reference to the cardinal implications of other factors such as age, liveliness and health.

### QUESTION 8:

*Would it be realistic to propose absolute divorce on the principle of the right to seek happiness in general, and of the right to pursue happiness in particular by dissolving a previous unhappy marriage and entering into another opted marriage?*

The right to happiness is universal and sacred: precisely, the pursuit of happiness is what ordinarily leads people to marriage. It is however altogether another thing to say that absolute divorce plus re-marriage equals necessarily happiness. Are those who remain single necessarily miserable? Are those who separated and stay separated necessarily unhappy? Are those who "divorced" and "remarried" necessarily happy?

If a given marriage becomes unhappy in time, are there guarantees that another subsequent marriage would be happy all throughout?

If the spouses have the right to seek happiness by dissolving their marriage which became unhappy in time, do not their children also have the right to happiness by having their parents stay together married, and thus be spared of the trauma and disorientation of seeing and living with their "divorced" parents "legally" linked with other spouses?

### QUESTION 9:

*Would it be right to have the absolute divorce legislation on the ground that the people — even majority of them — favor it?*

If the majority rule is the basis of all legislations, then a given country is in for a lot of trouble. There are matters which may not be legitimately submitted for majority rule alone because they are beyond man's personal desire and design.

CONCLUSION

a. Make more strict provisions on the legal requirements for the observance of those desiring to contract marriage as a preventive measure to marriage failures — not provisions for divorce no matter how strict.

b. Make the present civil legislation on nullity, annulment and legal separation more realistic and updated — not propose absolute divorce legislation no matter how modern and attractive it appears.

c. Make truly severe penal laws against infidelity, attempted parricide and abandonment to stabilized post factum marriages — not enact a law on absolute divorce that could instead promote or incite to these crimes.

How many marriages have survived and are surviving internal assaults and external onslaughts made thereupon precisely because there is no absolute divorce? How many families have managed to stay together, are actually still together, also precisely because there is no absolute divorce? How many children had the needed opportunity, are enjoying the advantage of having the care and attention of their parents still having one conjugal home and still living one conjugal life, again precisely because there is no absolute divorce?

And how many marriages would not last because of the possibility of absolute divorce? How many families would be decimated because of the availability of absolute divorce? How many children would be denied united parental love and supervision because of the chance of absolute divorce?

How many?

OSCAR V. CRUZ, J.C.D., D.D.

## CASES AND INQUIRIES

### I. IMPEDIMENT OF ADOPTION

*The matrimonial diriment impediment of legal adoption has been changed in the new Codex. Please explain its extension and compare it with the corresponding diriment impediment in the Civil Code so that we can see the difference between both legislations.*

*A Priest*

I am glad you have asked about the impediment of legal adoption. The previous legislation of the Church canonized the civil legislation concerning legal adoption. In regions where the Civil Code considered it as an impedient impediment, the Church accepted the same as such; however, in countries where the legislation regarded it as a diriment impediment, the Church accepted it also as a nullifying impediment. In other words, the Church accepted the impediment as it was established by the State.

The new Codex has formulated the matrimonial impediment of legal adoption in the following way: "Those who are legally related by reason of adoption cannot validly marry each other if their relationship is in the direct line or in the second degree of the collateral line." Legal adoption, therefore, constitutes in the present Codex a diriment impediment, independently of what is established in the Civil Code.

Mention of direct and collateral line is made here, not of consanguinity or natural paternity and filiation,<sup>1</sup> but of legal relationship or adoption. In order to establish the basis for both lines of adoption, direct and collateral, we have to bear in mind Canon 110 of the new Codex, which states: "Children who have been adopted according to the norm of civil law, are considered as being the children of the person or persons who have adopted them."

Considering Canon 1094 which constitutes the impediment and Canon 110 which gives the concept of adoption, we can establish the following bases:

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<sup>1</sup> The explanaton given in *Manual for Parish Priests* should be corrected therefore. We applied to adoption the explanation for lines of consanguinity which is not correct.

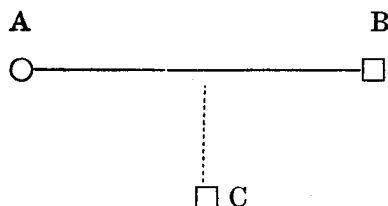


1o The direct line in adoption certainly exists between the adopting parent and the adopted child (Can. 110). Its extension, however, to the ascendants of the former and the descendants of the latter will depend on whatever is prescribed in the civil legislation. In the Philippines the legal relationship of adoption exists only between the adopted child and the adopting parent, but not with the relatives of either, according to A. Tolentino (*Civil Code of the Philippines*, Vol. I, Art. 333).

2o If the adopted children are considered as being the children of the adopting parent (Can. 110), the adopted children and the natural children are related in the second degree of the collateral line of adoption, in the same way as in consanguinity.

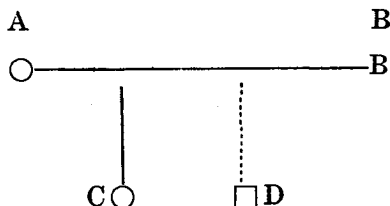
The logical consequence of the foregoing is that the diriment impediment of adoption here in the Philippines exists only between the adopting parent and the adopted child (direct line), and between the adopted child and the natural children of the adopting parent, graphically represented as follows:

**DIRECT LINE**



A and C cannot marry validly. They are related in the direct line of adoption.

**INDIRECT LINE**



C and D cannot marry validly. They are related in the second degree of collateral line of adoption.

Comparing the canonical impediment with the civil impediment in the Philippines, we can see that the canonical impediment in the direct line, as described above, is acknowledged in the Civil Code, namely, "between the adopting father or mother and the adopted" (Art. 82, (2)). The canonical impediment of the collateral line coincides only *partially* with the civil impediment, namely "between the *legitimate* children of the adopter and the adopted" (Art. 83 (3)). *Illegitimate* children are not bound by the impediment in the Civil Code, while in the law of the Church they are bound. The civil impediment exists besides:

a) between the adopted and the surviving spouse of the adopting father or mother, and;

b) between the adopting father or mother and the surviving spouse of the adopted.

The persons mentioned in a) and b) are not bound by the impediment according to Church law.

## 2. CAN THE MASS OF THE ASSUMPTION BE ANTICIPATED?

*Until the seventies, August 15, feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a holiday of obligation in the Philippines as in the universal Church, but now it is not obligatory to hear Mass and to abstain from servile work on such day in our country. Can the anticipated Mass of the Assumption still be held in the afternoon of its eve, August 14, in the Philippines?*

### *A Religious*

As the consultant says, the feast of the Assumption is not a holiday of obligation anymore in the Philippines. The law granting the anticipation of the fulfillment of the obligation to hear Mass on the previous day considers only all Sundays and holidays of obligation. The reason is clear. The Mass is anticipated in order to avoid an almost unavoidable violation of the law and to facilitate the fulfillment of the obligation by the faithful to hear Mass on such days.

Canon 1248, § 1 reads: "The obligation of assisting the Mass is satisfied wherever Mass is celebrated in a Catholic rite either on a holiday itself or *on the evening of the previous day.*"

When there is no obligation to fulfill, there is no reason for any faculty to anticipate the Mass of the next day. If the feast of the Assumption is no longer a day of obligation in the Philippines, there is no reason whatsoever to anticipate its Mass on the previous day. There is no obligation to fulfill, which is the only reason for the faculty to anticipate the Mass of Sundays and feast days of obligation. Such a faculty, therefore, has nothing to do with the feast of the Assumption in the Philippines. Consequently, not only is there no obligation of anticipating the Mass of the Assumption to the afternoon of August 14, but also there is no reason why it should be anticipated.

For the same reason, parish priests have no obligation to apply the Mass "pro populo" on the days suppressed, but only on Sundays and holidays not yet suppressed.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

## DOCUMENTATION

### I. APPOINTMENT OF MSGR. PATRICIO ALO AS THE FIRST BISHOP OF MATI

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS  
SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Venerabili Fratri PATRICIO ALO, hactenus Episcopo titulo Thibiucensi atque Auxiliari Archiepiscopi Davaensis, electo Episcopo Ecclesiae Matiensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum Nostrum sit aptos sacerdotalis ordinis viros ad dignitatem episcopalem evehere, qui suas quisque Ecclesias particulares docendo ac gubernando provehant et prosperare pro viribus conentur, Nobis proinde novae et adhuc vacantis dioecesanae Sedis Matiensis primus Episcopus iam nunc eligendus esse videtur. Quare de consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium, Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praepositorum, quod ratum habemus, deque plenitudine potestatis Nostrae Apostolicae per has Litteras Te, venerabilis Frater, simul atque a vinculo Thibiucensis Ecclesiae a tuoque Auxiliaris officio absolvimus, ad novam dioecesim Matiensem transferimus eique Episcopum patrem pastorem primum praeficimus. Ita efficitur ut, etsi a nova eximeris fidei professione, iubearis erga Nos Nostrosque Successores fidelitatem recte iurare, ante quidem quam et canonicam possessionem tui officii capias et ipsa tui electio clero et populo dehinc tuo publice a te patefiat; ex quibus paterne petimus ut libenter tua utentes opera, suam tecum consociare velint semperque tua sequantur patris consilia. Fac autem ut formulam ad iusiurandum adhibitam, more subsignatam sigilloque impressam Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis prompte mittas. Quod reliquum est, Nos Te, venerabilis Frater, amanter hortamur ut, pro dilecta Ecclesia Matiensi constitutus, tamquam bonus pastor Te geras missus a Patrefamilias ad gubernandum gregem suum, ita videlicet ut, pro animabus eorum rationem redditurus Deo, oratione, praedicatione omnibusque operibus caritatis curam habeat tum eorumdem, tum etiam illorum qui de uno grege nondum sunt — LG, 27. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri septimo.

JOANNES PAULUS II  
Josephus Delton *Prot. Apost.*

## 2. ERECTION OF THE NEW DIOCESE OF GUMACA

JOANNES PAULUS EPISCOPUS  
SERVUS SERVORUM DEI  
ad perpetuam rei memoriam

IURE MERITOQUE Sacrosancta Synodus, cuius quidem consilia participamus, de dioecesium circumscriptionibus decernit ut, quatenus animarum bonum id exigat, quamprimum ad congruam recognitionem prudenter deveniatur, eas dividendo vel dismembrando... — CD, 22. Oportet enim, quantum fieri potest, Ecclesiis particularibus ita prospiciatur, ut Episcopi munera sua pastoralia in iisdem efficaciter explere valeant ibi. Quare bonum visum est fieri, si venerabili assentiremur Fratri Ruben Profugo, Episcopo Lucenensi, que ob frequentiores suae dioecesis incolas, recte consultata Conferentia Episcoporum Insularum Philippinarum, nuper ab Apostolica Sede postulavit ut nova illic dioecesis constitueretur nonnullis ex locis adhuc ad Ecclesiam suam pertinentibus. Nos igitur, cum eidem rei ipse faveat venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, Archiepiscopus titulo Mallianensis et Nuntius Apostolicus in Insulis Philippinis, eorum suppleto consensu quorum interest aut id interesse censetur, de sententia Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praepositorum, quam ratam habemus, deque summa potestate Nostra Apostolica per has Litteras a diocesi Lucenensi distrahimus orientalem regionem civilis provinciae — Quezon — vulgo appellatae omniaque loca insulae cui nomen — Alabat —, ex quibus simul sumptis legeque civili in praesentia definitis novam dioecesim condimus GUMACANAM appellandam. Haec, ipsa nova dioecesis, cuius sedem episcopalem in urbe Gumaca esse iubemus cuiusque templum paroeciale in honorem Sancti Didaci Deo dicatum gradu Ecclesiae Cathedralis insignimus, una cum privilegiis et honoribus quae ceterorum eiusmodi templorum sunt propria, suffraganea erit archidiocesi Lipensi, cuius proinde Archiepiscopi metropolitano iuri episcopum pro tempore Gumacanum subicimus, qui non modo officiis oneribusque obstringitur sed iuribus etiam exornatur, quae munus Episcopi dioecesani prae se fert.

In nova etiam dioecesi collegium Consultorum quam primum instituatur oportet, quod novo Pastori praesenti sit auxilio. Quod praeterea ad episcopalem attinet mensam dioecesis hodie constitutae, statuimus ut consistat tum in Curiae emolumentis fideliumque stipibus tum etiam ad normam can. 122 C.J.C. in portione bonorum episcopalis mensae Lucenensis, quae posthac ad novam dioecesim pertinere iure debet. Tum iuris communis statutae normae tum regulae a Sacra Congregatione pro Institutione Catholica praescriptae servantur in seminarii dioecesani aedificatione et in apta sacrorum alumnorum formatione. Selecti vero alumni philosophicis et theologicis disciplinis instruendi, aut sacerdotes qui sua studia compleant, ad Pontificium Collegium Philippinum in Urbe situm mittantur. Simul decernimus ut de regimine novae dioecesis deque administratione bonorum eius, de Administratore dioecetano sede vacante eligendo, de fidelium oneribus iuribusque, necnon de aliis id genus, adamusim sacri servantur canones. Lege deinde sancimus ut, constitutione dioecesis Gumacanae ad effectum adducta, sacerdotes ei Ecclesiae, adscripti censeantur intra cuius fines ecclesiasticum habent officium, reliqui vero presbyteri et Seminarii tirones ei addicantur Ecclesiae, in qua legitimum habent domicilium. Omnia denique actorum documenta, quae aut ad novam Ecclesiam eiusve clerum aut ad fideles vel ad temporalia bona proprie attinent, a Curia Lucenensi ad Curiam Gumacanam suo tempore transmittantur ibique in condendo Archivio bene asservantur. Omnia quae hic praecipientes statuimus, exsequatur venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem memoravimus, a Nobis deputatus, debitis factis facultatibus una cum libertate id delegandi ad alium virum in ecclesiasticam dignitate constitutum, onere tamen imposito curandi ut certum verumque actae executionis litterarum exemplum Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis cito mittatur. Quas Apostolicas Litteras nunc et in posterum ratas esse volumus, contrariis quibuslibet haud obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Aprilis, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri sexto.

Augustinus Card. Casaroli  
a publicis Eccl. negotiis

Marcellus Rossetti, *Prot. Apost.*

Bernardinus Card. Cantus  
*Praefectus S. Congregationis pro Episcopis*

Laurus Governatori, *Prot. Apost.*

3. APPOINTMENT OF FR. PASTOR PALOMA, O.A.R.  
AS APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF CALBAYOG

SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO EPISCOPIS

CALBAYOGANAE

Administrationis Apostolicae

DECRETUM

Ad consulendum regimini vacantis dioecesis Calbayoganae, Summus Pontifex JOANNES PAULUS, Divina Providentia PP. II, praesenti Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Decreto nominat et constituit Administratorem Apostolicum ad nutum Sanctae Sedis memoratae Ecclesiae Rev. um P.D. Pastorem Paloma, ex Ordine Augustinianorum Recollectorum, hactenus Moderatorem seminarii et Magistrum Novitiorum eiusdem Ordinis in Insulis Philippinis, ei que jura et facultates tribuens quae Praesulibus Ordinariis locorum, ad normam sacrorum canonum, competunt.

Ad facultates quod attinet, excipiuntur quae caractere episcopali indigent.

Ante canonicam huius officii possessionem electus Administrator Apostolicus jus iurandum fidelitatis erga Sanctam Sedem edat atque professionem fidei emittat.

Contrariis quibusvis minime obstantibus.

Datum Romae ex Aedibus Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, die 11 octobris anno 1984.

Bernardin Card. Gantin  
*Pref.*

4. DECREE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
NEW PARISH OF L'ANUNZIATA

*Victoria Homes Subdivision  
Muntinlupa, Metro Manila*

WE, JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN

By the Grace of God and Favor of the Holy See  
ARCHBISHOP OF MANILA

Acting upon the pastoral needs of the People of God, and with the recommendation of the College of Consultors and an "Ad Hoc Committee". We hereby establish the New Parish of L'Anunziata, Victoria Homes Subdivision, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, having the following boundaries:

NORTH: Northern limits of Victoria Homes Subd.

SOUTH: Laguna-Muntinlupa boundary.

EAST: South Expressway, then southward through the  
Laguna-Muntinlupa boundary.

WEST: Muntinlupa-Cavite boundary.

The Patron of the New Parish is L'Anunziata.

The endowment of the new Church and of the benefice of the Parish consist of the voluntary offerings of the faithful and of the stole fees, according to diocesan regulations and lawful customs.

The Church has the privilege to keep habitually the Blessed Sacrament under the usual conditions, to possess a baptismal font, to administer all sacraments, and to enjoy all the rights that belong to a Parochial Church.

We therefore urge all the faithful of the New Parish to help and support the Parochial Church with their generous offerings and by having their baptisms and marriages celebrated in their Parish Church, and not elsewhere.

Given in Manila, the 27th day of December 1984.

† JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN  
Archbishop of Manila

By order of His Eminence

MSGR. JOSEFINO. RAMIREZ  
Vicar General & Chancellor

(administered by Oblates of St. Joseph)

Pastor, Fr. Napolaon Jinon, OSJ

## HISTORY

# *Dominican Towns in Pangasinan*

By

Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P.

### SANTA BARBARA DE TOLONG

We can write at greater length about Santa Barbara not so much because it was an important town in by-gone years but more so because we have found in the Dominican Archives informative sources which unfold before our eyes its history with a wealth of details.

The first is a *Diary* written in Pangasinan and recently translated into English by a former U.S.T. seminarian Renato López, to whom we owe much for this help. The second is a lengthy *Report* written in Spanish which was submitted to the Father Provincial by Father Casimiro Lafuente on May 1877; and the third is a *Diary* of the same Father which has been preserved in the Convent of Ocaña, Toledo, Spain. Added to these, we have the often quoted *Report* of Father Suárez, together with other sources, less informative perhaps but by no means less reliable.

### **Its location and description**

The most central town of mid-19th century Pangasinan was, without a shadow of doubt, *Santa Bárbara de Tolong* named so after Santa Bárbara, its patron saint and the Tolong River which flows right behind the court-house (*Tribunal*).

Its bordering towns at the close of the 19th century were: Mangaldan on the North; Calasiao on the West with a slight deflection to the North at a distance of two leagues; Malasiqui on the South; Urdaneta, quite far, on the East; and on the Southeast is Villasis which is separated from Santa Barbara by a considerable distance. To these towns we must add the more modern municipality of Mapandan to the Northeast, called



"interior" nowadays because of its being located away from the main provincial roads.<sup>1</sup>

"Considered as a town," Father Suárez remarked in 1869, "it was the least attractive in Pangasinan, in spite of being located on its very center". "And in fact," he adds, "its layout is the most disorderly and anomalous. The *Tribunal* faced one of the side walls of the Church, the facade of the Church faced one direction while that of the convent another. There are neither streets nor a plaza, unless by 'streets' we mean the roads that connect Santa Bárbara to its neighboring towns."

"Only two hundred tribute payers, out of one thousand four to five hundred, live in the town proper, within hearing distance of the bell. The others are scattered on the ricefields or partially hidden in the forest and their houses are not lined along the roads as is the common practice elsewhere in Pangasinan."

"This was Santa Bárbara defined and portrayed in rough strokes" — comments Father Suárez again — "and such is in reality and may perhaps forever be because it gives no hope of improvement in spite of its central location and of possessing advantages denied to other towns."<sup>2</sup>

However, the gloomy forebodings of Father Suárez did not materialize in this case. In about a decade, there appeared in the religious and social scene of Santa Bárbara two men destined to change its outlook: Father Casimiro Lafuente and Capitán Tomás García who worked hand in hand in restructuring the plan of the town (1879-1880). Later, in 1887, Capitán Tenoerio introduced new improvements in the plaza and had the *Tribunal* roofed in a more modern fashion.<sup>3</sup>

### The history of its church and convent

The founding of the town of Santa Bárbara as such goes back to the year 1742 but, as a barrio of Calasiao, it is undoubtedly much older. It was a fact by tradition and put into writing by Father Lafuente that the first inhabitants of Santa Bárbara<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Santa Bárbara" in *Libertas*, January 25, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Suárez, *Op. Cit.*, fol. 200.

<sup>3</sup> "Santa Bárbara-Aoran", MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán". Vol. VII, doc. 33. fo. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Santa Bárbara de Tolong was accepted by the Provincial Chapter of 1734 and given Father Benito Pereira as its first Vicar by the Chapter of 1745 (cf. *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, II, 279, 303). Its founding

originated from Calasiao, with some families from San Carlos that contributed also to its growth from the West. It so happened that some people from Calasiao, not having enough land in their place to eke out a living, began to clear the virgin forests that covered the area, replacing them with their humble dwellings and cultivated fields. In this fashion, little by little, they erected a barrio named Tolong, after the river that flows from the East of the town in a northerly direction. Its population continued to grow with new arrivals until, in the year 1742, as already stated, a new municipality was created under the name and advocacy of Santa Bárbara, yet, without dropping its original denomination of Tolong.

Even before the formation of the new town, the people dwelling there, due to their ever swelling number and the distance that separated them from Calasiao, put up a chapel with the approval and blessing of their ecclesiastical superiors. There they heard Mass on Sundays and feastdays and had their dead blessed and buried. At that time they were administered by a secular priest who visited them from Calasiao. This barrio chapel became the first church of Santa Bárbara and its first Vicar or "Doctrinero", as he was also called, was Father Manuel Arango, whose signature already appears on January 22, 1742 in a Parochial Book that was still extant in 1877, as Father Lafuente attests.<sup>5</sup>

Father Arango soon laid down the foundation of a new church which must have been constructed along simple architectural lines and was completed by his successors. This church, however, was not destined to last long because the men of Palaris put it to the torch during their uprising against Spain, together with eight more of the province, in 1763. Soon it was replaced by another church built along a plan similar to that of the first.<sup>6</sup>

In 1808, a third church was inaugurated. Father Felipe Hidalgo started it in 1799,<sup>7</sup> and the following Vicars slowly raised its walls, which were finished by Father Baltasar Calderón. He also covered them with roof, thereby preparing it

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was approved by the Government on time October 30, 1741 (cfr. Ocio, *Monumento*, p. 74). It was for some time under the charge of the Vicar of Calasiao until in 1745, Fr. Pereira took over.

<sup>5</sup> "Noticia histórico-estadística del pueblo de Santa Bárbara, provincia de Pangasinán, en mayo de 1877", MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán", Vol. VII, doc. 20, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium*, II, 435.

<sup>7</sup> Ocio, *Compendio*, p. 902.

for its solemn inauguration. But it was not complete for it lacked a facade. The construction of the facade became the responsibility of his immediate successors and one of them, Father Matías Cabezón, finished it in 1825. This church was to serve the needs of the townspeople until the disastrous fire of December 29, 1872.<sup>8</sup>

Without a church and lacking a decent place to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries, Father Miguel Limárquez, the incumbent Parish Priest, fitted out, on a provisional basis, the boys' school building. There he said Mass until he could put up with the help of his flock, a small barn-like structure (*camarín*) which was to serve as a church until a new one was inaugurated.<sup>9</sup>

On August 26, 1875, Father Lafuente took possession of Santa Bárbara Parish. After having introduced himself to the townspeople, with his characteristic drive and energetic will he began, in union with the "Principalía", to think of ways and means to reconstruct the buildings gutted by the fire of 1872.<sup>10</sup> And while he recounted the vicissitudes of the first three churches in his first *Report*, he wrote about the reconstruction of the fourth in his *Diary*. Without giving himself a moment of rest, he placed orders for lumber, had furnaces built for the baking of bricks, contracted masons and other working men. By November, when the dry season begins in the Philippines, he also began at the head of his men the rebuilding of the church. Since he was living in a small wooden house, without any comfort and far from the work that he was undertaking, he built, in the kitchen of the burned convent, two small rooms using third class wood and moved into them as soon as they were finished.<sup>11</sup>

At the beginning of 1876, the walls of the old church were partially torn down starting from the facade to the side altars, and entirely from here to the apse and the sacristy which was located behind the apse itself. The church was lengthened ten yards in such a way that the site of the old sacristy become part of the new sanctuary.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> From another source, we gather that it was begun from its very foundations in 1776 by Fr. Domingo Boada. (*Libertas*, loc. cit.)

<sup>9</sup> Casimiro Lafuente, O.P., "Libro de apuntes sobre las costumbres, carácter, rarezas, etc. in Santa Bárbara," 1877, MS in APSR, Section "Pangasinán", Vol. VII, doc. 22-a, p. 110.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 108ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

Unfortunately, one of the earthquakes, so common in the Philippines, struck on June 2, 1877, opening two vertical cracks in the still undried new walls of the sanctuary and it became imperative to fill them.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of this set-back, in December of the same year, Father Lafuente transported with the assistance of one hundred men and the use of two hundred carabaos the timber, extracted from the forests of Villasís, that was needed for the roofing of the church. Then, after it was painted, he blessed it on August 22, 1878.<sup>14</sup>

This however, is not the end of the history of the fourth church of Santa Bárbara for on the 16th of March of 1892, an earthquake destroyed some of the churches of Pangasinan. The *Diary*, written in the Pangasinan dialect, vividly describes this powerful earthquake in the following way:

*On March 16, 1892, Wednesday night, at 8:30, a big earthquake struck in this province, destroying many churches and convents and opening several fissures (on the ground) from which water and sand spurted. The earthquake lasted for over six seconds. The quakes continued intermittently for twenty-four hours and it was observed that they occurred at regular intervals almost every minute of the hour, till Sunday. The towns built makeshift chapels where they completed the Holy Week liturgical services. The church of this town sustained fissures on its western wall, where a portion of the wall fell in front of the altar of Our Blessed Mother. During the earthquake, a very small comet was seen for a short while, moving on the easternly direction.*<sup>15</sup>

Five years earlier, that is on September 25, 1887, a typhoon had blown away the roof of the dome of the church.

The present church measures 76-50 meters in length by 18 m. in width, and is enhanced by a beautiful facade topped by two small towers.<sup>16</sup> Both church and convent sustained considerable damage due to the bombings of the Japanese in 1941 and of the returning Americans in 1945.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>15</sup> "Santa Bárbara-Aoran", fol. 6v. and 7.

<sup>16</sup> González, *Labor evangelizadora*, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

The history of the convent of Santa Bárbara — and this is the case in almost all the towns in Pangasinan — goes side by side with that of the church, like two parallel lines, without mixing or separating.

It is stated that its foundations were probably laid down after the Palaris uprising by Father Lorenzo Sarroca between the years 1767-1770. His successors carried on his work through the years. It was only in 1804 that Father Calderón concluded it.

Some say that this convent was built behind the sacristy and, consequently behind the church itself because it was higher there and better protected from the floods which were so frequent in Santa Bárbara. It is further stated that one of the Parish Priests, the already mentioned Father Cabezón, having become lame when jumping down from the second floor during the fire of 1882, opened a door between the convent and the sacristy in order to spare himself the trouble — and the shame perhaps — of taking a longer walk by entering the church by a side door and proceeding up to the main altar along the nave, as his predecessors had done.<sup>18</sup>

The fire of December 29, 1872 turned the convent into a heap of ashes. Only the walls remained and these were greatly weakened under the action of the flames. Father Limárquez could not rescue anything from the flames save some sacred vestments along with one or two parochial books and some chairs. Even the instruments of the band that were kept in the convent were melted as well as all the glassware.

Losing his convent, Fr. Limárquez had to move into a small wooden house owned by Don Fructuoso Benito where he lived until he was replaced by Father Miguel del Val who also stayed there for one year and a half.

We have seen how Father Lafuente, his immediate successor rehabilitated a portion of the burned convent.

On April 5, 1878, the work on the new convent began. It was built by the southern side of the church facing north and blessed on April 12, 1886. Needless to say, Father Lafuente moved into it at once but he did not enjoy his stay there for long because the next year he was transferred to Salasa.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "Noticias . . .", pp. 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> "Libro de apuntes . . .", p. 114ff.

"Located on the southern side of the plaza, its present convent," comments *Libertas*, "is perhaps the most remarkable structure (as convent) in the province."<sup>20</sup>

Although bearing the scars of time, we may add that the convent of Santa Barbara still impressed us when we visited it some years ago for its spaciousness and for the high quality, length and width of its wooden boards.

### Improvement of Santa Bárbara's lay-out

We have already indicated that the lay-out of Santa Bárbara, specially of its plaza, was far from being good and pleasant to the eye. One of its flaws, as already stated was that the Municipal hall was oriented towards the West, or in other words, towards the Eastern side of the church. This, added to the irregular location of the ecclesiastical buildings and the humble huts of the natives, gave the plaza the look of a disorderly agglomerate of buildings. Yet some years after Father Lafuente had left the imprint of his activity in Santa Bárbara, the periodical *Libertas* could remark:

"The town presents a pleasant view, with its wide plaza surrounded by beautiful wooden houses."<sup>21</sup>

And another writer commented:

"Its lay-out and beautiful public square, as it appeared at the close of the 19th century, was the work of Father Casimiro Lafuente."<sup>22</sup>

In 1876, there was not in Santa Bárbara any other building, aside from the provisional church, worthy of mention, except the Municipal hall, whose walls were of mortar and stone, although the building itself was still in a dilapidated condition as a result of the 1822 fire.<sup>23</sup>

Yet, to these structures we must add a beautiful wooden school building, very spacious and fairly large, with a room for the teacher at its southern end.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Libertas*, Loc. Cit.

<sup>21</sup> *Libertas*, Loc. Cit.

<sup>22</sup> Marín y Morales, *Ensayo*, p. 659.

<sup>23</sup> *Noticia*, etc., p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

## Roads and Bridges

Due to the little elevation of the terrain, the roads connecting Santa Bárbara with its neighbouring towns became a deep bed of mud during the rainy season, and therefore, impassable. To alleviate the lot of their parishioners, several Pastors of Santa Bárbara tried to improve the condition of the existing roads or to build new ones.

Thus, the road leading to Mangaldan was opened in 1775 after the initiative and under the direction of Father Domingo Boada, then Parish Priest of Calasiao, who must have been in charge of Santa Barbara. This road was greatly improved about a century later by Father Lafuente with the construction of several culverts. This same Father, who did not seem to spare himself any effort or trouble when the material well-being of his flock was involved, also repaired several roads leading from Santa Bárbara to the bordering towns.<sup>25</sup>

Between the years 1810 and 1820, Father Antonio Suárez constructed in barrio Boñgalo a magnificent brick bridge, which, however, at the end of the century was threatening to collapse.<sup>26</sup>

## An Act of Divine Justice

Some towns in Pangasinan — and history often bears witness to the truth of this assertion — occasionally became involved in quarrels and litigations about landmarks and border lines. The parish priests not infrequently took the cudgels for their parishioners, and thus every now and then we read of Dominican litigating with a fellow Dominican. Santa Bárbara was not to be exempted from this rule.

About the year 1771 a law-suit was initiated between Calasiao and Santa Bárbara regarding the landmark (*mojón*) dividing the jurisdictional grounds of each of these two towns. The people of Calasiao, headed by their "doctrinero" Father Andres Sánchez Monroy, wanted to advance the landmark to a site named Payac — where the cemetery was located later on — thus leaving no ground on that side to Santa Bárbara. On the other hand, the townsfolk of Santa Bárbara, with the blessing and wholehearted approval of Father Cristóbal Ausina, resisted the ambition of the Calasiaos.

<sup>25</sup> Libertas, *loc. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Ocio, *Compendio*, 433.

Such was the end of Don Deogracias, and so the litigation came to an abrupt solution, for since then, nobody dared to raise it again ever mindful of what they believed to be a direct and clear divine intervention.

This incident filled with fright all those who witnessed it, inasmuch as they looked on it as a visible punishment from God, and its memory remained so deeply imprinted in their minds that eventually, it became a family-tale which was being passed from father to son until 1877, when Father Lafuente put it in writing for perpetual memory, after having heard it, as narrated above, from an old man who in his boyhood had been a servant of Father Calderón.<sup>27</sup>

### Population Statistics

In spite of the many calamities and social evils, whether from nature or from men, which afflicted the people of Santa Bárbara throughout its history, such as: earthquakes, typhoons, floods, droughts, famines, epidemics;<sup>28</sup> wars, uprisings,<sup>29</sup> banditry etc., its population that numbered 1,534 in 1751, steadily grew to 37,001 in 1980, as the following figures will show:

1751, small children excluded .....	1,534 <sup>30</sup>
1800 .....	1,839 <sup>31</sup>
1824 .....	3,509 <sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Lafuente, *Noticia*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>28</sup> Santa Bárbara was visited by epidemics in 1821 and 1831. Another broke out in 1882 which lasted for one month and a half. At one time thirty four (34) people died in a day, and the dead were no longer passed through the church for the final blessing. Its victims experienced stomach pains, cramps, loss of consciousness and, in some cases, instant death. As a result, many left their crops unharvested, since they were afraid to leave their homes.

<sup>29</sup> The news of the occupation of Manila by the British which indirectly provoked the Palaris uprising, brought untold misery on Pangasinan and caused a vertical decline of its population. Let what happened in Santa Barbara be an example. By December of 1762, its people fled to the nearby forests, leaving behind them their unharvested crops in the fields, where they stayed until 1765. During the intervening years many of them died from starvation.

<sup>30</sup> "Informe al Rey Nuestro Señor." Año 1751, MSS in APSR, Section "Miscelánea," Vol. III, Fol. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Cagayán", 1800, Vol. XVII, Doc. 26.

<sup>32</sup> "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, 500-5-4a).



1848	.....	6,480 <sup>33</sup>
1875	.....	6,650 <sup>34</sup>
1897	.....	7,578 <sup>35</sup>
1980	.....	37,001 <sup>36</sup>

The number of souls that integrated the population of Santa Bárbara in 1877, ascended, according to Father Lafuente, to 6,650, or its equivalent of 1,740 tax-payers. Father Lafuente adds that he took it from the official computation that was considered valid for civil and church purposes. "However, if it were possible to obtain the census of all those who live within the boundaries of Santa Bárbara, and who are not as yet accounted for due either to the moroseness or interested involvement of the "cabezas" de barangay, or also because the persons concerned hide themselves from the vigilance of the "cabezas" so as to escape the payment of the taxes prescribed, this town without doubt could count more than 8,000 souls and beyond 1,900 tributes, as I myself have been able to observe during the repeated and burdensome administration of the sacraments. Herein we have to include also the higher number of "tax-evaders" who live within the jurisdiction of Santa Bárbara, and whom I have been able to discover during the exercise of my parochial ministry."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Revista Católica*, loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup> *Estado General*, Manila, 1875.

<sup>35</sup> *Estado General*, Manila, 1897.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. Special Report, No. 3, Philippines, 1980, "Population, land area and density, 1980), Republic of the Philippines, National Census and Statistics Office, Manila.

<sup>37</sup> *Noticia*, etc., p. 1.

## SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

# Doña María Oray

by

Diego de Oña, S.J.\*

Lives of true saints need not be investigated. Their life speaks eloquently more than enough of who and what they are. And what is their life? At times their life challenges people around them, like a light that forces darkness to give in. Sometimes, their life-style becomes confusing to the point of defying logical principles. Yet we call them saints because they managed to be somewhat like Christ.

Mindful of the Spirit's exhortation of praising nobody until he dies, Fathers Francisco Combés in his *History of Mindanao and Jolo*, and Ignacio Alcina in his book about the Visayas, wrote zealously yet cautiously about a true saint, Dña. María Oray.<sup>1</sup> Her steadfast consistency in living the prominent virtues, assures many that she is now enjoying the reward in Heaven.

Doña María Oray was born in Bohol from a most prominent family of that island. In a way she can be called a "Lady of Vassals." Quite early in life, she married an equally prominent personality, Don Pedro Manuel Manooc, a man most outstanding for his virtues. Their love and faithfulness to the commands of God sustained them in their family life. These they not only held dear in their hearts but assiduously preached to others by the witness of their lives.

It is well worth mentioning that Don Pedro Manuel possessed an overwhelming zeal coupled with courage to spread

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\* Taken from: *Introducción y aumentos de la fe en las islas de Mindanao, Jolo and Marianas*, Chapter VI, Nos. 49-61, (written by Father Diego de Oña, of the Society of Jesus in the early years of the 18th century, and not yet published. The original is found in ARSI, in Rome, and a fairly elaborate copy in the Dominican archives of Manila. Translated from the 17th archaic Spanish into English by Sister María José Morón, Albert Bagood, O.P. and Johnny Zulueta, C.M. under the direction of Father Pablo Fernández, O.P.)

<sup>1</sup> And later, Father Pedro Murillo Velarde in his *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Manila, 1749), pp. 75-76.

the Christian faith. For the conquest of Manila and other provinces of this island, he brought his own army, without asking any assistance, not even monetary from his majesty.<sup>2</sup> He acted famous than any of his countrymen, and even the nobility of this archipelago. Nearing death, he expressed a wish that he be buried in Cebu among the Spaniards, a people whom he loved and served and from whom he never wished to be separated.

Don Pedro's demise left Doña Maria widow at a young age with two children to care for. One was Don Pedro Cabi-bing<sup>3</sup>, who later in his prime, followed the footsteps of his father. He exemplified this by his great deeds, his love for the faith and his dedication to the Spanish nation.

His extraordinary feats won for him the title "Maestro de Campo." An "encomienda" was granted him, a privilege rarely bestowed on a native. The reward was in recognition to the great merits he achieved, something unmatched among the Indios.

Little could be said about Doña María Piolo,<sup>4</sup> the second child of the couple. It is certain though, that like his brother, she married a member of a prominent family from Cebu.

Once that children found their places in society, Doña María dedicated herself totally to the service of God. And in order that nothing would be an obstacle to this, she gave away everything she had: gold, property, slaves. She even went to the extent of not allowing her children and relatives to provide her with food, much less to fix her small and simple house. Determined to live solely on alms, all she ate was a small portion of rice and some small fish given by good souls. Having accustomed herself to the practice of the virtue of holy indifference, Doña Maria learned to detach herself from her family in order that she could attach herself to the works of God. She deprived herself of the warm hugs of a daughter and a son, the gentle caresses of the grandchildren, the joy of seeing three generations in procession towards the Church's aisles. Surely it was a great sacrifice for a mother — a grandmother, to deprive

<sup>2</sup> Here, Father Oña seems to incur into a historical anachronism, since the conquest of Manila took place in 1571 and the death of Doña María de Oray happened about 1631, that is, sixty years later.

<sup>3</sup> It was customary in those days to attach the native name to one's baptismal name. Hence, even the names of the children in a family differed from those of their parents.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. footnote 3.

herself of such affections. But in all these, she was convinced that what she had was more than enough as one who had entrusted herself to the hands of Divine Providence. Such was her virtue that she gladly welcomed the poverty life had to offer rather than the riches the world had blessed her with.

Upon hearing of Doña María's widowhood, the king of Jolo sent ambassadors to propose marriage. Though still well within the marriageable age, Doña María dismissed the envoys saying that she would rather be a Christian slave than be a Muslim Queen. The King of Jolo, offended by the rejection, put together a fleet and came personally, determined to conquer the heart of the pious woman either by free will or by force. But when Doña María heard of the intentions of the king, she assembled all the members of her household and took refuge to a mountaintop. From there she resisted constantly the proddings of the king. After much effort and realizing the futility of his desires, the king gave up the idea and returned crestfallen to his place. This could be an unmistakable testimony of how Doña María was well-rooted already in God. She was truly a virtuous woman. For neither the urgings of the flesh, nor the grandeur as a queen of a kingdom, nor its privileges and comfort were enough to make her waver in her commitment.

I would mention that when he write about kings and kingdoms in this part of the world we should not equate it with the kingdoms of Europe, so great and majestic. But notwithstanding, Moslem kings and queens in the Philippines enjoy the same reputation like that of Europe. They likewise receive the proper respect from their vassals, enjoying sovereignty over their lands. Thus, if in Europe we admire members of the nobility who choose to renounce the world, it is no less worthy of admiration to behalf such a noble woman by birth, as Doña María who chose to be a "fool for Christ"; preferring to be identified with people who have no regard for charity nor for mercy; people who care less of others. For how could they, when they themselves do not care in ordering their lives, their needs, their ailments, not unless a priest oblige them so?

For her to be a perfect religious would be the crowning of every victory she had over external enemies and over hell itself. She had received information about the sanctity that was observed in the convent of Sta. Clara, founded by the Servant of God, Mother Gerónima de la Asunción. This convent was an offshoot of the convent of Sta. Isabel in Toledo, whose founder was no less than Queen Elizabeth herself. Doña María

was eager to live a life of rigor as professed by those religious. She tried to come to Manila to receive the habit but after so much prayer and queries she realized the impossibility of her well-praised ambition.<sup>5</sup> Instead the Spirit counselled her through the Fathers, that it would be for the greater glory of God to stay in that town and be a living example for the natives in the practice of virtues. In the midst of so many Muslims living in Mindanao, Jolo, and other islands it would truly be a blessing to have a bright light whose flames could devour the darkness of Islam. So the Fathers invited her to stay and persevere in the place where God had placed her.

Back in her town, Doña María spent every day with marked sanctity that undoubtedly had caused conversion for souls and emulation for the rest. She used to get up at dawn at the first peals of the church bells. She would dispose herself through prayers while waiting for the second pealing, the sign for the Holy Mass. In the Church, she always preferred to kneel down among the lowly people of the place rather than have a seat with the nobles. Wanting to take advantage of the spiritual benefits derived from the Holy Celebration, she heard all the Masses scheduled for the day. Afterwards, she remained in the Church perseveringly, praying for several hours. Mindful of the proper decorum in church, she refrained from talking to any person and when it was needed, she spoke so briefly counting her words.

When the Mass was over, as well as the prayers, she would return home where she used her time knitting beautiful "lampotes" (cotton-knit clothes). She never sold any of them but gave them all for the use of the Church. She would eat lunch with the simplicity we mentioned above. At two o'clock, she would go back to the Church where very slowly and with great attention she prayed the rosary to the most Holy Virgin and other special devotions. Afterwards, ending her moments of prayer she would return home to continue her manual work until supper time. After supper she would recollect herself and after a bloody session of penance she gave rest to her tired body, so afflicted with hard and continuous penances. Knowing how important these acts of piety and asceticism were to sanctification, she never diminished in these same practices all

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<sup>5</sup> Native women were not accepted then in the only existing nunnery in the Philippines, i.e., the monastery of Santa Clara, founded by Mother Gerónima de la Asunción in 1621.

along her life. God for His part used to gratify her by unveiling the future. In fact, not few among the Fathers asked her about things that had happened or will happen.

At a proper time during the day, she made her regular examination of conscience. She confessed and received Holy Communion punctually every eight days besides all the important feasts and those of Our Blessed Mother Mary and other feasts of her predilection. She did all these pious works with much affection, recollection and dignity that elated those watching her. Her life was such, in sum, that all the Fathers who dealt with her undoubtedly affirm that Doña María Oray was a saint. This aura of saintliness was also the reason why as much as possible, most parents wanted to entrust to her care their daughters. She answered this demand however, with great prudence, admitting only a handful after many requests. Otherwise, the whole of Dapitan would have come to live with her. This instance evidently showed how the people respected Doña María's decisions. In fact, she also used to admonish her neighbors in a gentle, loving but strong manner. At times she punished them too whenever they lagged in their Christian obligations. The townfolks for their part had always the ear and the heart to listen and accept her wise and holy advices, knowing that she never did anything except for love.

### *Conclusion*

The love of God is a special provoking gift from God that challenges man to a fuller realization of his humanity and offers him too the opportunity for divine supernatural union with God. Hence, by this love, man becomes more human and even more than human. Nevertheless, if man does not give worth to this gift, to this challenge, the love of God returns to the Giver unanswered and fruitless.

For Doña María Oray, the love of God was certainly productive. For day after day, she realized herself more fully as she perseveringly tried to do what pleases God. Her love for God made her intimately united with Him, a union of love that was overflowing, reaching out to others as well. This in the end, one has to nod and say, "she is indeed a true friend of God."

## HOMILETICS

# HOMILIES FOR MAY AND JUNE

by

**Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.**

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**May 5, 1985**

### **Readings:**

*Acts 9:26-31*

*I Jn 3:18-24*

*Jn 15:1-8*

### **APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING**

Those who keep bees are well aware that they work with marvellous industry and superb cooperation and unity, building up layer upon layer of beautiful honeycomb with its delicious content, as long as the Queen is in their midst. From the Queen the entire activity of the hive and its accomplishment is derived. Take away the Queen and in no time the entire hive disintegrates, the work of the bees comes to naught. Such is the importance of the central figure, the Queen.

Our Blessed Lord chose a remarkable image to illustrate the unique oneness of the believing community with himself, that of the vine and the branches. If the Master himself had not drawn this image for us, no disciple on his own would have been so daring, because it describes in a certain sense an identity, and that is just what Jesus intended. The great mystery or secret plan of this Father is to unite all men in the one Christ, sharing his divine sonship, his very personality, his holiness, his glory. What Jesus has by his own right, the Father wants his disciples to have by participation (grace). St. Paul does not hesitate to say: "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with him" (Gal. 3:27). And again: "All of you are one in Christ" (3:28).

But it is only by remaining one with the vine that the branches can continuously obtain nutritious sap so necessary for life as well as for increase in growth so that abundant fruit results. Apart from the vine no branch can accomplish anything. It withers and is doomed, being cast away to be used as fuel for the fire. It is so necessary to be convinced of the necessity of relying entirely on our union with Christ to reach our destined goal that Jesus simply states: "Apart from me you can accomplish nothing." "Remain in me and I in you", he pleads. What an intimate communion of life and thought is revealed in these words, marking a unique phenomenon, that of the Body-Person of Christ! In Baptism we have been immersed into his Paschal Mystery (Vat. II). It is imperative then to think as he thinks, to will as he wills, and to live as he lived. Remaining thus closely united to Christ, there will be no straying in the faith, no wavering in Christian morals, no withering away in stunted Christian growth or frustration.

The Father in heaven has the greatest personal interest in the growth of Christ, the vine and branches. The life-fulfillment of each member of Christ is most dear to him. In order that each one bear fruit to full capacity, he prunes and cleanses it from harmful or superficial growth, or whatever hinders it from bearing fruit in good measure. Such "pruning" may entail trials of body and spirit, personal suffering or sharing the misfortunes of others. But the end intended by God is glorious. As the Father was glorified in his Son's sufferings, so he is likewise glorified that the branches of the vine bring forth much fruit through trials and suffering. God is admirable in his saints. Their close union with Christ made their prayers so efficacious before God, that they obtained whatever they asked.

It is very profitable to reflect on this remarkable allegory. It not only spurs us on to remain in the closest union with Christ our Savior, but it is a powerful deterrent against jealousy, envy, vanity, self complacency. Apart from Christ no one can accomplish anything. Only from him and through him does one accomplish what is worth-while. And what one accomplishes accrues to the benefit of all the others. There is no room for envy. On the contrary, thanksgiving and praise swell the heart.



# SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 12, 1985

## Readings:

*Acts* 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48

*I Jn* 4:7-10

*Jn* 15:9-17

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

Today the world is torn by wars and threats of wars, by riots, and frequent strikes, by ambitious aggression and seething unrest in several quarters. The rich nations make little effort to help sufficiently the crying needs of the poor. A growing flood of resentment, hatred, spirit of reprisal or ambitious expansion makes itself manifest. This is the work of the powers of darkness. And yet, are not all these God's children whom the Father wanted united in the one family of Christ? How could the powers of darkness have wrought such havoc on the family of man?

The night before he died, the Savior of the world gave his followers an urgent command which he repeated over and over: "Love one another as I have loved you." Love was to characterize his followers the world over: "This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love for one another" (Jn. 13:35). Love of one another was to be the leaven that would pervade the whole of mankind and bring about the reign of God in its fullness by preparing it for the glorious Parousia of the Lord Jesus. Love was to cross the frontiers of the unknown, break down the barriers of nations, and spread the good news everywhere that God is love, and all men were called to union of love in his family.

But what has happened? How is it possible that even the Christian world experiences such jealousy and envy within its membership? How would one explain that instead of love leavening the world of man, hatred and cruelty have the upperhand, whereas suspicion, distrust and fear gain ground daily? Is it not because Christ's followers have not kept his commandment of love? He loved them to the extreme (Jn. 13:1). With the fullness of the Father's love, he loved them, not only

during a life of selfless, noble toil and labor at Nazareth, not only in his relentless journeying and preaching for their sake in his public life, but above all in laying down his life for them on the hard wood of the cross. He did that in order to obtain from the Father and pour out on them his own personal Spirit of Love, the first fruit of his passion and death. In that Spirit, men of all nations would form the family of God, permeated with love of God and love for one another. He sent out his disciples to preach this Good News to all the corners of the globe so that all mankind could come under the gentle sway of his Spirit of love. Have the messengers of Christ defaulted in their mission? Have the followers of the Crucified preferred selfish aims to the ideal of Christian love?

He does not call them slaves though they belong to him, God's own Son, with their entire being and all their possessions. He calls them his intimate friends to whom he has confided everything the Father confided to him. This is the mark of intimate friendship: to confide to another the deepest secrets of one's heart. As friends he puts them on equal footing with himself, he shares all he has with them, and chose them to be his doubles all over the globe. Because of their intimate friendship with him, the Father will grant all their requests, because they are made in his name, that is, in line with his express thought and intention. That intention is that they love one another as he loved them.

What has happened? Is the situation of today's world with its flood of hatred, war and cruelty a sign that Christ's commandment has been forgotten, laid aside and repudiated? What will shake the Christian world out of its lethargy so that once again love is on the move, and love conquers? What is needed is a new outpouring of the Spirit, that Spirit that conquered the ancient pagan world the first time, and transformed it into haven of love and peace in countless Christian quarters: A haven where joy and peace reigned, and the powers of darkness were kept at a distance. Perhaps God has let the world of man sink deeper and deeper into the present miserable mess to awaken it to an awareness of its great need of love, which only the Spirit of love can bestow. Then there is hope, when man turns to God and begs him once again for renewal of Pentecost.

Pentecost is approaching, and we ought not let the matter stand still, but do something about it. Renewed endeavor to love those in my immediate neighborhood, renewed periods of

earnest prayer begging God to grant a new outpouring of love, coupled with a deep conviction that we can and must do something about the situation will surely bring about good effects. A small fire can burn a whole forest, a single candle can start a chain reaction of good. Let us not wait for the great ones to do it. God has always saved the world through his "little ones".

## SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION

May 19, 1985

### Readings:

*Acts* 1:1-11

*Eph* 1:17-23

*Mk* 16:15-20

When anyone works for a definite end, there is genuine rejoicing when the goal is reached: the student at his graduation, the scientist in his new invention, the soldier in the end of battle, the laborer at the completion of a definite task, parents in the successful accomplishments of their children. Success crowns the long and arduous toil.

Today's feast celebrates the exaltation of Christ at the Father's side, sharing his dignity, power and glory, he the King and Heir of the universe. The entire Christian world has followed him from his taking human flesh of the Virgin Mother by the power of the Holy Spirit until he was crucified for our sakes on Golgotha. They have gazed on him as a tiny babe, listened to his preaching on the hillside, suffered with him in his passion, rejoiced with him the Risen Christ, and now are exultant that he is enthroned at the Father's side, in glory that he had with the Father before the world began (Jn. 17:5).

The Ascension is a feast of great rejoicing. Everyone who loves the Savior will rejoice with him, for his life of toil and sacrifice now receives a magnificent and divine reward. The limitations which he had imposed upon himself during his earthly life have come to an end, and the glory of Jesus, Son of Mary, shines in the fullness of the God-head. From the meek and humble Savior riding into Jerusalem on a beast of burden,

he is the mighty Lord of the universe, in whom everything holds together and all things continue in existence (Col. 1:17). Yes, "all things in the heavens and on earth are being brought together into one under his leadership" (Eph. 1:10), making him the Center and attracting Force of all creation. No wonder that the entire court of heaven breaks out with exultant praise: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and praise" (Rev. 5:12).

As Head of the Body, the Church, he has gone on ahead to prepare a place for us in the mansion of the Father, that where he is we also may be (Jn. 14:13). Our hope is bolstered up at the thought of what awaits those who remain faithful to him during his earthly pilgrimage, and endeavor to carry out the one command he so earnestly impressed on his followers: to love one another as he has loved them. In the great priestly prayer Jesus invisioned the glory of his faithful followers: "Father, all those you gave me I would have in my company where I am, to see this glory of mine which is your gift to me" (Jn. 17:24). And the words of St. Paul in their fullest sense also apply here: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who loved him." When the boy-saint Dominic Savio appeared after death to his religious Father Don Bosco, the latter was filled with awe at the resplendent beauty of his spiritual son, refulgent with brilliance of light. Faltering, he asked Dominic whether this was the light of God. "Oh, no!", responded Dominic, "This is merely created light. Wait till you see the vision of the Infinite God."

Little does the heart of man realize what great things await him. Let the Christian lift up his heart. St. Paul assures us: "We are the very heirs of God, heirs together with Christ, if only we suffer with him so as to be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17). Every endeavor to live our Christian commitment within the bounds of our own individual calling, be it ever so insignificant in the eyes of men, will receive ample reward from the King of kings and Lord of lords. For God will never be outdone in generosity.

Faith alone opens up to us these grand vistas of the glory to come. But faith needs to be treasured, to be fostered, to be increased day by day, lest we lose the savor of Christian

endeavor, and our hope gradually dims. Rejoicing with our Blessed Savior in the glory of the Father is a true stimulus to follow him faithfully now, so as to be with him forever in the eternal abode.

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 26, 1985

### Readings:

*Acts* 2:1-11

*I Cor* 12:3-7. 12-13.

*Jn* 20:19-23

### IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the dry season, the river beds barely contain a trickle of water, the land is parched, life is dormant and seemingly non-existent. Everything appears scorched and barren, and in some places food and water are at a great scarcity. But let the rains come again, that life-giving flood of water, and the entire picture changes. Now life appears again in abundance, growths spring up everywhere. Grass, grain, flowers and leaves all flourish. Man is given new hope. What a marvel is water! But it symbolizes a still greater marvel: the living water: the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had promised the rivers of Living Water to those who would accept him and he meant the Spirit that gives life, refreshes, animates (*Jn*. 7:38f). What a change the Spirit wrought in the Apostles at his coming! They who were once so timid and cowardly are now filled with new life and vigor. No more hiding behind doors for fear of what others would do to them as followers of Jesus, or what men would say about them. They forget all about themselves, their energy is now directed to a new goal. Now they have a mighty job to do, a stupendous project: endowed with the Spirit, they set out to conquer the world for Christ!

Now they are no longer hesitant, inactive, but up and doing. Transformed by the Spirit to men of action, they fearlessly bear witness to Christ's resurrection. Impelled by the Spirit as Christ was before them, they preach the Christian Way of

life in season and out of season, although it means telling their very leaders that they did wrong in crucifying the Messiah-King. Filled with the Spirit, their life and example are now like that of Christ, pointing the way to true values for life and eternity.

Now they do not shirk from pain but willingly suffer even the torture of scourging for Christ's sake, for the joy of the Spirit buoys them up. Reproach and shame, even prison itself they gladly endure, for the Spirit gives them to understand the value of suffering for Christ. Now, united in the one bond of love of the Spirit, they are no longer quarrelling among themselves in envious striving to be first. There is cooperation, sharing of goods and ideas, unity in diversity. With one mind and heart all that they have they put at the service of the community. United in prayer, by same spirit they raise their hearts in the filial cry of "Abba Father!". With Mary in their midst, the Spirit is drawn powerfully to the believing community, and showers on them his charisms in abundance.

In Baptism, we have all received the same Spirit of Jesus, and a fuller portion of the Water of Life in the sacrament of Confirmation. Now it is our turn to be more fully aware of his biding presence within us, to be open to his suggestions, to work with him for the upbuilding of our fellowmen be it in the family, the community, the parish. With the Spirit we will not lack vigor and drive, for he is the promised Gift of Living Water.

Since each member of Christ has received from the Spirit a charism or special gift for the common good, one ought to foster it and utilize it to the utmost, so that greater benefit come to those we serve. The gifts of the Spirit ought not lie dormant, but be put to use. Even natural gifts can be heightened by the Spirit and constitute a valuable charism for the community. Each charism has as its chief aim the common good.

### TRINITY SUNDAY June 2, 1985

#### Readings:

*Deut* 4:32-34, 39-40

*Rom* 8:14-17

*Mt* 28:16-20

## IMMERSED IN THE TRINITY

Initiation rites for student groups have a definite meaning for those initiated. Through these rites a person becomes a full-pledged member, and belongs in a particular way to that group, taking upon himself its aims and plans. There are obligations and also privileges. The spirit of the group channels much of his energy and thought for the common purpose of the group.

Baptism is the initiation rite for the Christian. It immerses him into a new atmosphere, the Christian atmosphere of the Blessed Trinity. One now belongs to a community of believers whose final goal is God Holy and Triune. To Israel of old God revealed himself as the One True God, all-powerful, adorable, the God who cared for his People and was leading them to a destined goal. To the Christian he reveals himself still more: he is a Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, one God in a community of love of three Persons. God is community and every community especially the Christian community finds its perfect archetype in that community of love.

The Blessed Trinity is not only the profound mystery of our Christian faith which we accept whole-heartedly, but it is also that Supreme Reality that enters into our daily lives and gives Christian meaning to them. Truly, we often begin our prayers and our works in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but it is even more necessary that the Christian become more aware of the personal relation in which he stands to the individual persons of the Trinity. When he ponders on the love of the Father who so loved us that he did not even spare his beloved Son, in order that we come to share his divine sonship, the Christian cries out "Abba-Father!" in the full realization that he truly stands in relation to the Father as Christ his Son, whose member he is. He is overwhelmed at the depth of God's love, a love which Israel never came to realize for it had not as yet known the excruciating pains and death to which the Father gave up his Son in order to reveal his infinite love for man.

When we come to realize that the Divine Son could so easily have redeemed us by a mere act of his will, and delivered us from Satan's slavery by a legal external act of some kind, but entered instead into our very race, took our flesh

from the Virgin, underwent all the inconveniences and hardships of the common man, and then was rejected by his own people, we begin to understand somewhat the immense love he has for us his brothers, whom he also calls his friends (Jn. 15:15). And our relation to our Divine *Kuya* becomes an intimate friendship of love and a blood-relationship of brothers, so great is God's love for little man. So much did Christ love us that he gave himself as our sacrifice to the Father, and now gives himself continually as our food to sustain us for the battle of life.

Furthermore, we have become the very Temples of the Spirit, the first-fruit and primary gift of the passion and death of Jesus. It is the Spirit with us who is constantly encouraging, inspiring, impelling us to live our baptismal commitment, which is the life of Christ re-lived on earth once more. He is the Paraclete, our Advocate, pleading for us at the Tribunal of God. Many are hardly aware that they carry this Treasure within them, and so easily desecrate the Temple of God by serious sin. But we glorify him the more we cooperate with the calling he has given us and the special charism he has imparted. So close is the Christian knit to the Spirit that St. Paul dares to say that he has the very imprint or seal of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

Those who endeavor to enter into the great mystery of the Trinity realize more and more the great concern of the Three Persons in God for each one of us, and their individual activity at work for man's happiness here below and for all eternity. Not only ought the Christian know, love and adore the One God as Israel did of old, but his awareness of the supreme mystery of our Christian faith ought to manifest itself in the prayers he utters; for this purpose the liturgy is an excellent guide. It always prays to the Father through the Son in the Spirit, recalling again and again the individual Persons of the Trinity. The "Glory be" and the "Glory to God in the highest" are also expressions of our Christian faith in the Trinity, the mystery of community-love that one wishes to carry out in his own life with those one lives with.

If God has revealed himself as triune in person, let everyone pray not merely to God in general, but to the Father of all, as Paul so often begins his prayers, and with the Beloved Son who is in our midst praying to the Father with us, and in that Spirit of the Father and Son whose precise function



is to unite us to God Father and Son in love, as well as unite all men together in the community of his Church. Awareness of the Trinity quickens the life of the believer, and he prays with renewed understanding the "Glory be" as the prayer of our Christian commitment, for the glory of the New Covenant was manifested in the Incarnate Son (Jn. 1:14) and through our Christian liturgy, that glory permeates also every member of Christ's Body-Person, until it engulf the universe, and God is "all in all" (I Cor. 15:28).

## CORPUS CHRISTI

June 9, 1985

### Readings:

*Heb 9:11-15*

*Heb 9:11-15*

*Mk 14:12-16. 22-26*

## THIS IS MY BODY

A birthday or wedding ceremony always calls for a celebration with all the members of the family especially gathered together for a festive meal. It is a joyful gathering, an expression of happiness of the entire family, commemorating a special event. The Eucharist is also a joyful family gathering, a sacred meal, for it is Christ's love feast. But it is more: it is a sacrificial meal, and it is not only a memorial of something past, but in a special manner it makes the event present again.

When Jesus reclined at table with his disciples the night before he died, he took bread into his sacred hands and said: "Take and eat, this is my Body, which is given up for you" (I Cor. 11:24). This tells us very much, both that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (which we call transubstantiation), and also why he is present, namely he is given up in sacrifice for our sake (which is now called transfinalization, for it tells the purpose of it all). Furthermore, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as our Food and Drink, to signify that in order to sustain us in the divine life we received in Baptism, he is the True Bread and the True Wine (which is now called transignification, for it gives the signification of the choice of the bread and wine).

But the original wording in the Greek tells us still more. For first of all, there is no verb "given us" in the Greek. This is supplied in thought. The wording is simply: This is my Body which is for you. Moreover, "body" in the Semitic mind is not only the physical body as we would express it to-day, but includes the entire animated and corporal person, whose thoughts and desires are contained and revealed under the sensible aspect of the body. One could express it very briefly and clearly: This is me who is all for you. This brings out very strikingly that Jesus in the Eucharist sums up his entire life of living for others in the service of love. The sacrificial angle of the Eucharist is emphasized to the utmost in the simple words of the Greek original. Jesus crystallized in one marvelous mystery his entire life of oblation to the Father which manifested so vividly the love that God bears towards man. God wills to give himself totally to little man through his Beloved Son, vividly portrayed in the sacrament of the altar.

What can the sincere Christian do in the face of such love and such total commitment to the service of love? He ought to make a return of love. He will esteem highly the Eucharist, and this estimation will manifest itself by his fidelity to his participation in the Eucharistic celebrations above all on Sundays and holy days, whenever possible; also by a certain attraction toward the tabernacle that finds him before the Hidden God in odd moments of the day or evening. Many businessmen find it extremely helpful for their own peace of mind and living to put some time now and then before the tabernacle. Many others join the Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament for a nightly vigil. If God has gone so far to manifest his love for us to be present in this great Sacrament always in our midst, ought we not show deep appreciation for this mystery of Christ's love and come to partake of his sacred meal as often as we can? The Eucharist is the center of the life of a true Christian.

If we have dependents under us either in the home or in our business, we ought to give them ample time to participate in the Eucharistic celebrations on given days. Parents will offer the best example to their children by going themselves frequently to the holy table of the Lord. Above all, we ourselves will benefit by the Eucharist if we realize it is the Bond of union between God and man, and between man and his fellowmen. Those who continue on with family quarrels, or per-

could the pagans believe in the doctrine of humility, the love of pardon of the enemies, the return of good for evil, the detachment from earthly goods... ?

Christ picked up twelve apostles as teachers to propagate the Christian Doctrine all over the earth. They were mostly rude and unschooled men, fishermen, common men without learning, power and influence. "The foolish things of the world God chose to confound the wise; and the weak things to confound the strong."

On the eve of the Pentecost, the followers of Christ were about hundred twenty real christians. All of them could be included in one room, the Cenacle, as they awaited fearfully and doubtfully the coming of the promised Spirit.

Humanly speaking, the Church Christ founded had no chance of success. Its agents had little to recommend. No favour or backing of any rich or influential classes helped it. It was opposition all the way. The good tidings they brought seemed to the world a piece of madness.

In its beginning the Catholic Church was a mustard seed — tiny, unimportant. But that tiny seed grew into a mighty tree that spreads out in every direction, spreads its branches over the entire earth. Under the guidance and constant protection of the Holy Spirit, it grows and eventually becomes the greatest of all kingdoms and empires. Pliny, in his report to Emperor Trajan, would say that "Christianity had taken foothold not only in cities but in villages and villas, leaving the temples for their gods forsaken and empty". Tertullian, in the second century, assured the Gentiles: "We are only of yesterday and yet we fill all places... we leave you nothing but your temples."

Hardly had that seed sprouted when the wicked enemies tried to clamp it down, crush it, kill it with a wave of persecutions. They drove the infant Church underground, into the catacombs. During the first three hundred years of its life some thirty million members of the Catholic Church gave their lives for the cause of Christ.

But the Church survived and prospered. Today the influence of that Church reaches into every country, every walk of life, every worthwhile endeavor. In its branches, as birds in the branches of the mustard tree, rest over four hundred

million Catholics throughout the world. They find in that tree, that was once a tiny church, safety and security, warmth and consolation.

Only one thing can explain this growth, the constant assistance of the Holy Spirit fulfilling the pledge to be with His Church all days until the end of the world. (T I)

## TWELFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR June 23, 1985

### Readings:

*Job* 38:1. 8-11

*II Cor* 5:14-17

*Mk* 4:35-41

### “AND THERE WAS A GREAT CALMNESS”

Our modern picture of nature is different from that of the ancients. Science is much advanced and we can predict the weather quite well. And each time somebody was taken by surprise by a storm and drowned or suffered some great damage, it was only — so we think — because somewhere along the line, something went wrong, which next time we can eliminate.

Thus some of us will smile if Jesus acts as if nature is to an extent under the control of demons whom he exorcises with a word of power. We may assume that it was more the understanding of the disciples, the way they saw the Lord behave than what he really said. After all, according to a myth, shared at one time by the Jews, when God created the universe it involved a contest with the forces of chaos and evil, which were identified with, or located in the waters of the sea. God was victorious. And ever since the ability to control the sea and subdue tempests was regarded as one of the characteristics of divine power (Ps. 89:10-11; 93:3-4; 106:7-9; Is. 51:9-10).

But are we really all that superior to such a world picture of the Jews? Do not some modern people believe in horoscopes and talismen! So, whatever may belong to the literary form and whatever may be the exact historical reality in this miracle story: Mark wants to picture Jesus as Lord over nature.

Jesus has delivered a long sermon of parables. It was the first time that he taught at length. He was sowing the seed, the word of God. There were many different kinds of hearers and Jesus could only wonder how many listeners would be like rocky ground, thorns and thistles or busy paths, or finally deep fertile soil that produces hundredfold fruit. He had spoken about the seed that grows quietly overnight, so that the farmer does not have to do anything but wait. And he had spoken about the dynamic power of that word. It is small like a mustard seed, but it will grow into a big majestic tree, called the kingdom of God. And now Jesus was tired, dead-tired. With a good conscience he could sleep well, entrusting his listeners, especially his disciples to the Father. Soon he would speak about confidence in God the Father in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not worry. Nobody can add a moment to his life span by worrying. Pagans worry. You have a power in heaven. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things you need will be given you besides" (Cf. Mt. 6:25-33). This he practiced now himself and his sound body slept and did not notice that a storm was brewing, that the cold currents, passing from the west were sucked down in vortices of air, or by the narrow gorges that breaks down upon the Lake of Genesareth. And suddenly the storm fell, the waves were breaking over the boat and it began to ship water badly.

The disciples are expert fishermen and thus have crossed the Lake of Genesareth many times. But this storm is different. With the water coming over the ship and filling it more and more they got frightened. And the sight of the Lord solidly asleep on the cushion, where the steersman usually has his place and position, makes them even more horrified. If the man in charge does not care, how shall things go well! And thus they wake Jesus up rather roughly: "Teacher, doesn't it matter to you that we are going to drown?" The powers to which they have been exposed overpower their faith. They do not have the trust and the Faith in the Father, Jesus has. And they do not have trust and faith in Jesus either.

Jesus gets up and addresses first the sea and the wind: "Quiet! Be still." And the wind falls off and everything grows calm. That long-drawn "Calm" in English imitates a little the Greek description of the great calmness: "and there was a galene megale." It is a word of power and authority as only Christ can speak, being God himself. As in the beginning heaven

and earth were created by a powerful word of God (cf. Gen. 1) and this in the last analysis was the word of the Word of God, the Logos (cf. Jn. 1:3) so now order is restored by another powerful word of the Word of God. What a picture of contrast: Here the frightened disciples and here the calm Jesus restoring calmness to the sea with a word of power.

Then Jesus addresses the disciples: "Why are you so terrified? Why are you lacking in faith?" Formulated like this we find it in the RSV, NAB, in the old edition of the Greek New Testament by Nestle the Catholic edition of the Greek New Testament by Merk, it refers to the lacking faith in the Father. And it is certainly true the disciples did not have that faith in the Father, Christ has shown, sleeping in the boat. But the new edition of the Greek New Testament by Nestle-Aland-Martini (thus edited by Catholics and Protestants) indicates as best reading: "Do you not yet (oupo) have faith?" So we find it in the New Testament English Bible: "Have you no faith even now?" Putting it this way, Christ blames disciples for not having faith in him. After all, he has been with them for such a long time. By now they should know him. They should know that nothing can happen to a person who is with Jesus.

The evangelist did not place the miracle story into the gospel just to show Christ as master over the elements, as master of creation. The crossing of the sea in a boat with a storm coming up has become the picture for the life of the Church. Fact is, Christ is in the boat of the Church, in the midst of persecutions and hardships. Often enough it looks as if Christ would not care, as if he were sleeping. But he cares, he is interested. Often enough we realize his help only when the storm is over. This is especially true with all the persecutions of the Church, when the enemies of the Church are triumphant and it looks as if the faithful do not get anywhere. "Do not be afraid. I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33), Christ tells his disciples before he himself goes to die. And thus we will overcome all hardships.

Our personal life is also like a crossing of the sea in a boat. Often enough it seems to us that the Lord does not care, as Job was tempted to think. How can he, a good person, suffers! We have to believe that the Lord is there and that nothing can happen to a person close to Jesus. Close he is,

even if we do not feel it, closer to us than we are ourselves. His presence will give us peace in our anxieties and worries.

St. Therese of Avila once had great temptations against purity. And all her prayers seemed to be unreal to her, so powerless and the Lord seemed to be far away. The next morning when all temptations had passed, she complained to the Lord: "Where were you in all my temptations?". "In your heart", was the reply.

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

June 30, 1985

#### Readings:

*Wis* 1:13-15. 2:23-24

2 *Cor* 8:7-9. 13-15

*Mk* 5:21-43

#### JESUS OUR RESURRECTION AND OUR LIFE

Some who have been on the brink of death and then have been given a new lease on life are wont to state that when death seemed inevitable, they experienced deep regret for not having spent their lives more profitably, and were determined to change their ways radically should life be extended for them. It can also happen that a person comes to the very depth of his misery turned back to his father.

Two persons in today's gospel seek healing from Christ. Jairus represents the realm of men and the woman her own realm. Both come to Jesus in extreme need, one for his child so dear to his heart, the other for herself. Jairus knows that his child has not long to live, and indeed the messenger reveals to him the sad news. The woman was at her wits end what to do next for she had used up all her resources to obtain a cure but in vain. In these last extremes, both came to Jesus, the source of health and new life. They came with genuine confidence and humble prayerful petition.

All mankind needs Christ. His Sacred Heart is the refuge of every man in need, young and old, rich and poor. Like the woman in distress, so man is often subject to lingering bad

habits, to evil ways he finds impossible to conquer. He longs for health of spirit, but of himself he is unable to obtain it. Like Jairus he must seek the help of the all-powerful Savior, whose Sacred Heart is the foundation of life and holiness. Even when the life of the spirit has almost been extinguished, and sin holds him in its deathly clutches, man can always find new strength, new life in the heart of Christ. From him alone comes the spiritual resurrection from an evil way of life that even the greatest sinners sometimes long for.

The heart of the Savior understands the heart of man for he became man to experience all the ups and downs of our human existence. Nothing pleases him more in the repentant sinner than a change of heart, and the sinner's confidence in him, the Savior, to heal him. He will take him by the hand and raise him up to new life as he did the child lying dead in the home of Jairus. He will infuse new ideals and new vigor into despondent and discouraged hearts. He will give his Spirit in new abundance to start life anew and its battle for good. Do not fear, he says, I am with you, to help you conquer the works of death and perform the works of the Spirit.

To overcome evil habits it will be necessary to strike out in a more positive direction, finding ways of doing good to others in need. Evil habits are overcome by opposing them with good ones. The energy once spent in sinful ways will then be channeled to positive projects and profitable undertakings, so that evil is overcome by good. Yet, alone man cannot accomplish this. It is only with the help of the Sacred Heart of the Savior of each, that good can be carried out.



## PASTORAL SECTION

# ROSAS For The Apostolate

A big group of co-workers with the parish priest in the parish is the religious organizations. Sadly, however, with the advent of the small or basic christian communities (BCC), these organizations are usually neglected by parish priests. Moreover, we believe that the basic christian communities and the religious organizations should not be polarized. A parish can have both. It just takes a little ingenuity on the part of the parish priest to make them compliment each other.

The spirituality proper to each religious organization imparted to its members is reason enough to preserve them. The new Code of Canon Law itself still recognizes the existence of religious organizations. It says, "In the Church there are associations which are distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations, Christ's faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public worship or christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the christian spirit (c. 298,1)." This "christian spirit" is observed to be precisely what the basic christian communities lack. Hence, this may be what the religious organizations can contribute to the basic christian communities.

The religious organizations can also be made an instrument for the establishment of basic christian communities in a parish.

**PROBLEMS** — But, taking the religious organizations in themselves, we shall find that parish priests can encounter several problems with them. Among these problems is the fact that one parishioner can be a member of several associations. We know that there are parish priests who have expressly prohibited their parishioners from enrolling in more than one organization. However, the new Code of Canon Law has also explicitly permitted this practice. It states: "The same person can be enrolled in several associations (c. 307, 2)."

Another problem is the existence of so many organizations in one parish that it becomes impossible for a parish priest to attend all meetings. The different praesidia alone of the Legion of Mary in a big parish is more than enough for a parish priest. On this, we have suggested that, aside from the parochial vicar, the religious in a parish can be asked for help (cf. cc. 677 — 8; 680 — 1). Otherwise, we have to content ourselves with laypersons whom we can trust and whom we should train.

Aside from organizations who just meet and eat — thus reducing their total activity into mere socialization — still another problem is the overlapping of activities by the different religious organizations in a parish. Sometimes, indeed, several organizations have activities all at the same time that the parish priest does not know which to join. And, sometimes, there are no activities at all.

With this background, therefore, we suggest that the different religious associations be distributed to the twelve months of the year. They will do their activities in their assigned months. For example, the Charismatic Movement may be assigned to the month of January. February can have another organization. March, still another. And so on. An organization can continue its usual routine activities in other months of the year. The Charismatic Movement, for example, can have its weekly prayer meetings and other such activities from February to December. By so doing, we are assured that there are activities in the parish throughout the year. And that there is no overlapping of said activities.

**ROSAS** — Furthermore, we venture to suggest some specific actions in their assigned months. We suggest recollection, outing, service, apostolate and study. We get their first letter and we have the acronym **ROSAS**. R, therefore, stands for recollection; O, for outing; S, for services; A, for apostolate; and S, for study.

In the beginning, this may be found taxing by some organizations. However, later, they will come to appreciate it. The parish priest will just have to ask his secretary to write a letter of reminder to the president of each organization before their assigned month comes so that they can prepare for their activities.

**RECOLLECTION** — It is during the recollections that the spiritual energy of the faithful for the apostolate can be activated. A recollection for each religious organiza-

tion in the parish once a year will not be too much. This will be more effective than have all the religious organizations gathered together for a recollection at the same time once a year. These recollections by association can also emphasize the kind of spirituality or devotion which are proper to each organization. For example, the Apostleship of Prayer will naturally prefer to hear about the Sacred Heart. And so forth.

The parish priest does not always have to be the recollection master. With his consent, the organization concerned can invite other priests from other places. Through this, mutual help among the priests in the diocese can be fostered. Sometimes, it can happen, specially in remote dioceses, that no priest is available for a recollection. In such cases, the religious sisters can take over. We already have many religious sisters who can give excellent recollections. Some of them actually serve as retreat directresses even to priests. In extreme cases, when sisters are not available, capable laypersons can do the job of a recollection master or mistress. In the beginning, of course, there may be some aversion to this as regards the faithful. But with a little explanation, they will also be used to it. By doing these, we can see how subsidiarity can really work in the Church. In all cases, moreover, the hearing of confessions must be done by a priest.

OUTING — There is an old saying that we used to hear even during our kindergarten days which goes something like: "All work and no play makes Rosa a dull girl." The same is true with the parish apostolate. We also need some relaxation. And we mean relaxation together as a group, that is, the group which does the apostolate.

And one form of relaxation is to go outing.

Some organization can afford to go far out. Others can just content themselves with the local resort, riverside or public swimming pool. This will depend upon their finances and other factors. But, far or near, as long as the group goes out together already serves our purposes.

We suggest that the parish priest go with the organization. This way he can develop a more intimate relationship with his parishioners. He can personally know them better. And this is one way of doing his obligation to do house visitations (c 529, 1).

The feed-back which he can get through conversations with the members of the group during this occasion is invaluable to know the pulse of the parish. He will realize how the people accept his parochial policies and projects. And like Jesus Himself, he can ask them what people say about him (Mt. 16; 13).

Thus, through these monthly outings, the parish priest can know how to make adjustments in the parish.

**SERVICE** — The church is where God is on earth. It is to the church where we usually go to have an encounter with the Lord. It is here where we talk to Him in prayers of petition, thanksgiving or praise. It is here where we receive the graces of the sacraments. It is here where we gather as one people of God.

The Church, therefore, symbolizes the unity of the parish. And, more, it stands for the parish itself. Show me the kind of church that you have, and I will tell you the kind of parish that you have!

Hence, it is a must that we keep our churches clean and beautiful. We cannot be proud of an ugly and dirty church. But, even as a people, we can be proud of a clean and beautiful church. We can talk about it to other people. It encourages more church goers to come. And we can show it off to visitors and friends.

However, to keep a church clean and beautiful, we need the cooperation of everyone. All must feel that the church is theirs. And one way of making people feel that the church is theirs is to make them take their part in its cleaning. Hence, this is what we mean by service — the cleaning of the church and its surroundings.

It is true that there may be janitors who clean the church everyday. But it is also true that the church will be more clean and more beautiful if there are people who will give it a general cleaning at least once a month. And this experience of cleaning the church will surely teach these people to help maintain its cleanliness.

Also, when people clean the church, they will see those parts of the church which need repair. The priest, therefore, will not need to tell them that this or that needs repair. The people will repair it themselves or raise funds for the repair

work to be done. Or, even if the priest have to point this out to them, he will not have a hard time to convince them to make the necessary repairs.

**APOSTOLATE** — The different barangays of the parish may be divided among the religious organizations. The one or two barangays assigned to each organization will be their area of apostolate. Although each group may recruit members from all the barangays of the parish, yet it must be made clear that the main target of their apostolic responsibility is the barangays assigned to them. In this way, we can avoid overlapping. We are sure that there are people who do house visitations in every corner of the parish territory. There are people who will bring the unbaptized to the sacrament. There are people who work for marriage validations in the whole parish.

It can also be pointed out that each organization, during their apostolate, must be on the look out for possible leaders in the barangays.

The organizations can also invite the barangay people assigned to them to join them in their *ROSAS*.

**STUDY** — Advancement in the understanding of every tenet of our religion is also the main task of religious organizations in general. Hence, study is one of the important features of our *ROSAS*. This, because we believe that the more we know God, the more we love Him. And the more we love Him, the more we serve Him. Which are the given reasons why we live here on earth.

Again, these study sessions need not always be given by the parish priest. The organizations may invite other priests who may have something new to say for the parish in general or for each member of a religious organization in particular. Needless to say, the religious sisters and laypersons may also be invited for these sessions.

A series of seminars may be of greater help to a parish.

In general, we can say that the *ROSAS* can also give each member of an organization that feeling of belonging to a group and to the parish. We suggest that the parish priest call a meeting of the presidents of all the religious organizations in the parish at least once a month. Here, problems may be threshed out. And reports must be made.

FR. WILFREDO C. PAGUIO

## MEDITATIONS FOR PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

### 3. "THIS IS MY BODY!" (Availability)

*Who could believe what we have heard, and to whom has the power of Yahweh been revealed? Like a sapling he grew up in front of us, like a root in arid ground. Without beauty, without majesty (we saw him), no looks to attract our eyes; a thing despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, a man to make people screen their faces; he was despised and we took no account of him.*

*And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. But we, we thought of him as someone punished, struck by God, and brought low. Yet he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed.*

*We had all gone astray like sheep, each taking his own way, and Yahweh burdened him with the sins of all of us. Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, never opening its mouth.*

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*He shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life and through him what Yahweh wishes will be done.*

(Is. 53:1-7, 10b)

The *Pésaj* (=Passover) is the great national feast of the Jews, for it marks the birth of the Jewish people as a nation. The celebration of the feast of the Passover, combined with the feast of the *Matzá* (=Unleavened Bread) is ordered in the Book of Exodus 12:1-28.

The *Hagada* of the *Pésaj* (=the story and ritual of the *Pésaj*) extremely rich in details and symbols, looks like an illustrated book on the history and meaning of the Passover. Amidst a long series of blessings, psalms and prayers of thanksgiving, the Jews eat the bread of *misery*, that is, the mass that, for lack of yeast, never rose to become real bread (Ex. 12:34, 39) and the bitter herbs, and all these remind them of the slavery

of Egypt. At the same time, they eat the Paschal Lamb and drink the cup of blessings, both promises of liberation.

A small child, accustomed to the routine of daily life and unable to understand what is going on in the house, expresses his surprise and wonder in the 'four questions' which he puts to the president (usually the paterfamilias) of the celebration. The four questions are preceded by a previous question, of a general nature, which sets the pace for the succeeding questions. The child asks: "Why is this night so unlike other nights?" And then he goes to specify the reasons why he finds it to be so:

1. Every night we eat *Jamétz* (= leavened bread) or *Matzá* (= unleavened bread). Why is it that tonight we can only eat *Matzá*?
2. Every night we eat different kinds of vegetables. Why tonight's vegetables are all bitter?
3. On other nights we do not have to season (with salty water or sour sauce) nor dip (into thick sauce) our food not even once, and tonight we are required to do it twice?
4. Normally, we eat either seated or reclining. Why are we all reclining tonight?

Then in accordance with Dt. 6:21, the president of the celebration answers the child's questions: "Once we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt by his mighty hand"... And he goes on to give all kinds of details and to sing the praises of the Lord who, through Moses, brought Israel out of Egypt and into the freedom of the Promised Land.

To the Jews the Passover means the power of God (the mighty hand of the Lord) passing over the land of Egypt and bringing about two things: death to the first-born of the Egyptians and freedom to the Israelites.

The Jews celebrate the Passover, not merely as a memorial to the past, but as a memorial that is actualized. Each generation of Jews considers it their duty to think of themselves as having been freed from the slavery of Egypt, according to the words: "And on that day you will explain to your son, 'This is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt'" (Ex. 13:8). As the *Hagada* of the *Pesáj* says, "Not only our ancestors were freed by the Holy One — praised he

be! — but all of us together with them, as it is written: 'And he brought us out from there to lead us into the land he swore to our fathers he would give us (Dt. 6:23)'".

They also celebrate the Passover in joy. Except for the bitter herbs, the rest of the meal, as well as the four cups of wine, is taken in a reclining position, the eating-fashion of free men of ancient times.

Finally they celebrate it in hope. The Jews still expecting the Messiah to come and bring them the second liberation promised by the prophets. Thinking that Elijah will appear as the Messiah's precursor, in accordance with Malachi's words, "Know that I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before my day comes, that great and terrible day" (Ml. 3:23) there are Jews who leave the door open and a chair empty, just in case Elijah should suddenly appear with the news of the Messiah's coming. Others pour an extra cup of wine, called 'Elijah's Cup', for the same purpose. This hope is further strengthened by the wish expressed before the four questions are asked: "This year we are here; next year we shall be in the Land of Israel. This year we are servants, next year we shall be free." As a matter of fact, the Passover is also called *Zemán Jeruténu* or *Jag-Hejerut* = The Liberation Date, the Feast of Freedom. The four cups of wine drunk during the celebration recall the four different expressions used by the Lord to promise freedom to his people: "I will free you," "I will release you," "I will deliver you," and "I will adopt you" (Ex. 6:6-7).

We know that the Messiah has already come. His coming was a re-enactment of the old Passover, but in a new way. Isaiah spoke of him as The Suffering Servant; but he was a powerful Servant, a Servant who also was a Liberator. Christ took upon himself all the bitter herbs of humanity (sin, despair, hatred, death...) and carried them to the cross, where they were nailed to the wood with him. As in olden times in the land of Egypt, God's power (the 'mighty hand of the Lord') passed over the cross bringing death (Jesus was surrendered to the powers of darkness and evil) and life (Jesus was raised from the dead). The old Passover was realized in Jesus in a personal way. He became the Lamb of Sacrifice (gentle, unblemished, brought to the slaughter without any complaint) and the mighty Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. "Ideo victor quia victima," said St. Augustine. Christ the victim, was made victorious, and thus became our Saviour.



However, the new Passover means more than just the cross. The Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, instituted by Christ as a memorial to his passion and death, is another passover, the pass-over we celebrate today. The Eucharist speaks of death and resurrection. The unleavened bread reminds us of the bread mixed with tears, eaten by the Jews in Egypt and by the poor and the oppressed everywhere. It is the unwanted and sinful things of life, the bitter herbs. At Mass the Spirit of God passes over the altar, bringing, as in Egypt and on the cross, death and resurrection: death to the bread and the wine, which cease to be bread and wine; and resurrection, by which the bread and the wine become the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation: Christ, risen and glorious, a source of eternal life.

"Do this in memory of me!" said Jesus. And we do, every day. And whenever we do it in his memory, we should experience death and resurrection: death to our selfishness, pride..., and resurrection (an increase in faith, in love, in service...) Does this really happen in our lives, every time we offer the Sacrifice in memory of the Lord?

"This is my body"... "This is my blood"... A priest should be able to say these words, not only in the name of Jesus, but also, to the extent possible, in his own name.

"This is my body": my time, my work, my thoughts, my ideas, my life, everything I have... offered to the Lord, given in service to his people...

"This is my blood": this is my readiness to suffer, to be misunderstood, to be criticized, to die, if needs be, for the cause of Christ and the salvation of mankind...

The religious, who are not priests, should echo the truth of these words, for if consecration means anything at all, it means this.

Victimhood, availability, service, surrender: Such is our vocation!

Christ was victim and priest. We are expected to be victims and priests. We assume upon ourselves the sins of people, the bitter herbs of a sinful world, the hopes, the desires, the thirst for justice, the death and resurrection of mankind, and we offer them to the Father in the name of Christ.

Sometimes people think that we, priests and religious, have no worries and concerns in life. After all — they say — you

are not married, you don't have to raise a family, the diocese or the community provides for all your needs!...

They are right, but only to some extent. Is it really true that a priest, a religious, has no worries, no concerns? It is not true at all! Which are the worries, the concerns of a priest, of a religious? His consecration and how to live it to the full, the people of God, the Word that has to be proclaimed and how to do it, those who suffer, the sick and the poor, the unbelieving world, the confused and the ignorant, the oppressed... The fact that we talk about these things all the time among ourselves and in endless seminars and retreats is a proof that we are seriously concerned about them. A further proof is the fact that we remember them in our prayers.

A priest or a religious who is totally satisfied, who is not bothered by any questions, who does not search for further horizons in his consecration and in his apostolate, should call for a time-out to have a good look at his conscience. Has it hardened, has it become insensitive or perhaps even obdurate? Is this priest or religious living in a make-believe world, far from the realities of life? Has he turned his vocation into a life of ease and comfort? Whatever the case, he certainly is in need of fulfilment in himself of Ezekiel's prophecy: "I will give them a new heart and a new mind. I will take away their stubborn heart of stone and will give them an obedient heart" (Ezk. 11:19). And he should heed without any delay the advice given in the Book of Revelation 3:2: "So wake up, and strengthen what you still have before it dies completely."

We are victims, not only when we are at the altar, or when we make or renew our religious profession. We are victims every day of our lives. Our commitment is total surrender, and this for life.

Aaron was ordered to wear on his turban a diadem with the inscription *Consecrated to Yahweh* "and so take on himself any shortcomings there may be in what the sons of Israel consecrate in any of their sacred offerings... to draw down on them the goodwill of Yahweh" (Ex. 28:36-38). And Samuel made it very clear what his duty in this respect was:

*For my part, far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to plead for you or to instruct you in the good and right way.*

(1S 12:23)

Everything in Christ was done in relation to us, keeping us in mind. He was born as a man so that we may be born again; he died on the cross so that we may die to sin; he rose from the death so that we may rise with him to a new life. Without us, sinners, there would be no Christ, no cross, no resurrection, no Eucharist.

Likewise everything in our lives must somehow relate to the people of God. Like Christ we too have to become victims, victorious and saviours. For truly, we cannot save anything or anybody, or be victorious over our sins and the sins of others, unless we are real victims, unless we take up the cross and follow in the footsteps of Jesus, up the *Via Dolorosa* and further up to Calvary — with all the consequences!... As St. Augustine reminds us in a homily on St. Laurence:

*The blessed apostle John clearly expounded the mystery of the Lord's Supper when he said: "Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so should we lay down our lives for our brothers."*

All this has to be done, not as a matter of routine, but in full awareness of its value. We have to inject real sense and meaning into it. The real sense and meaning that must accompany every celebration of the Christian Passover, the Eucharist: that it is a memorial to the offering of Calvary, but a memorial that becomes actualized in our own celebration and in our own daily life; a celebration that fills us with joy now and gives hope for the future, both for us and for the beneficiaries of our apostolate. The Passover celebration "in which Christ is our food; his passion is recalled, grace fills our hearts; and we receive a pledge of the glory to come."

While trying to share in Christ's victimhood we have to be aware of two possible temptations, and firmly resist them.

The first temptation is the temptation of the 'half-hearted surrender' to Christ and to the idea of victimhood, the temptation of being engaged in all this only part-time, of becoming secularized, of trying to strike a middle way between our vocation of consecrated people and the world. To give in to this temptation would amount to falling into the temptation of history, of which mention was made in the first reflection.

The second temptation is the inclination to identify total surrender with unceasing action. This is a common enough temptation, into which we often fall.

We have to be victims *for*, not *of* the people of God. We also have to be victims for ourselves. We must keep in mind the "How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Gospel!" for "I am under orders to do so" (1Co 9:16); but on no account should we allow ourselves to run the risk of being disqualified after having announced the Gospel to others (1Co 9:27).

We need time for ourselves, and we must find this time, as Jesus found time to be alone with the Father. When this is not done, the results are not happy; and sometimes they are downright tragic.

All too often priests and religious become victims of their own popularity. Sometimes their greatest 'enemies' are the very good people of God for whom and among whom they work. These very good people love us very much and, eager to get as many others, as possible to benefit from our ministry, they simply expect us to work twenty-four hours a day, day in and day out, week after week, month after month, year after year. In their enthusiasm they forget that we need time for ourselves, that a priest, a religious is a very human person, with imperfections and sins, and always in need of conversion and salvation. How else can the fact be explained that on occasion a famous preacher, known all over the world and always in demand, all of a sudden gives up everything?

When necessary, a preacher must learn to say *no*. Actually, this is not saying *no*: this is making sure that he can continue to say *yes*, to serve with more conviction, with more sincerity, with more surrender.

But how can he continue to do all this unless he receives what he needs from the Lord; and how can he receive it unless he is with the Lord?

*Victims* — not victimized by over-action, popularity, etc.

*Victims of God*, chosen by him, accepted as such by him — not chosen by anybody else, accepted for any other reason nor used for any other purpose.