

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN

CHRISTMAS AND ANGELS

Editorial

POINTERS ON MASS STIPENDS  
OR OFFERINGS

Florencio Testera, O.P.

POPE'S LETTER TO THE BISHOPS  
OF THE PHILIPPINES: MINISTRY  
OF TEACHING AND GUIDANCE AT THE  
SERVICE OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE

John Paul II

RIGHT TO THE SACRAMENTS

Wilfredo Paguio

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## THE PHILIPPINE ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW

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## CHRISTMAS and angels

In this age of intense materialism, people have become so insensate that they could hardly distinguish any more the things that count in life from those that do not. They have been assailed on all sides with the crash commercialism of practically all aspects of life. Their sense of values has been distorted so much so that there is hardly any spirituality that can be attributed to them. This deplorable state of things has been compounded by the subtle and the not-so-subtle lures of commerce.

During these days before Christmas time, once again people will be looking forward to the celebration of the birthday of Jesus. And once again their attention will be focused on the Child, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Then, again, they will ignore or forget the other dramatic personae on the Christmas tableau, the angels. For in setting the *belen*, they will insist on having some angels to decorate the tableau; that is it: the angels are more often than thought of as mere decorations. But these angels that we fancy to be winged disembodied beings with white fluffy feathers, are definitely not mere heavenly decorations.

The angels, which we have taken so much for granted, have a very special role in the whole plan of salvation. They have been messengers of good news that come from God. From the bible we read that they have been able protectors and guardians. They are also able intercessors. And they are friends in all kinds of weather upon whom we can depend all the time.

We are one with the Holy Father in re-affirming our faith in the existence of angels, not only during this Christmas season but also throughout our lifetime.

May the holy angels intensify their intercession for humanity as we all hope and clamour for peace.

FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

# Creator of the Angels who are Free Beings\*

1. Today we continue our catechesis on the angels whose existence, willed by an act of God's eternal love, we profess in the words of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen".

In the perfection of their spiritual nature the angels are called from the beginning, by virtue of their intelligence, to know the truth and to love the good which they know in the truth in a more full and perfect way than is possible to man. This love is an act of a free will, and therefore for the angels also freedom implies a possibility of choice for or against the Good which they know, that is, God himself. It must be repeated here what we already mentioned earlier in regard to man: by creating free beings, God willed that there should be realized in the world *true love which is possible only on the basis of freedom*. He willed therefore that the creature, constituted in the image and likeness of his Creator, should be able in the greatest degree possible to render himself similar to God who "is love" (I Jn. 4:16). By creating the pure spirits as free beings, God in his Providence could not but foresee also the *possibility of the angels' sin*. But precisely because Providence is eternal wisdom which loves, God would have been able to draw from the history of this sin, incomparably more radical inasmuch as it was the sin of a pure spirit, *the definitive good of the whole created cosmos*.

2. In fact, as Revelation clearly states, *the world of the pure spirits appears divided into good angels and bad ones*. This division is not the work of God's creation, but is based on the freedom proper to the spiritual nature of each one of them. It is the *result of choice* which for purely spiritual beings possesses an incomparably *more radical* character than that of man, and it is *irreversible* given the degree of intuitiveness and

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\* On Wednesday, 23 July, the weekly general audience was held in the Paul VI Hall. The Holy Father continued his catechesis on the angels. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 30 (947), 28 July 1986.

penetration of the good wherewith their intelligence is endowed. In this regard it must also be said that the pure spirits *were subjected to a test of a moral character*. It was a decisive test regarding first of all God himself, a God known in a more essential and direct way than is possible to man, a God who granted to these spiritual beings the gift of participating in his divine nature, before doing so to man.

### A radical and irreversible choice

3. In the case of the pure spirits, the decisive *choice* regarded first of all *God himself*, the first and supreme *Good*, accepted or rejected in a more essential and direct way, than could happen within the scope of action of human free will. The pure spirits have a *knowledge of God incomparably more perfect* than that of man, because by the power of their intellect, not conditioned nor limited by the mediation of sense knowledge, they see to the depths the greatness of infinite Being, of the first Truth, of the supreme Good. To this sublime capacity of knowledge of the pure spirits God offered the mystery of his divinity, making them thus *partakers*, through grace, of his infinite glory. Precisely as beings of a spiritual nature they had in their intellect the capacity, the desire of this supernatural elevation to which God had called them, to make of them, long before man, "partakers of the divine nature" (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4), partakers of the intimate life of him who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of him who in the communion of the three Divine Persons, "is Love" (1 Jn. 4:16). God had admitted all the pure spirits, before and to a greater extent than man, to the eternal communion of love.

4. The choice made on the basis of the truth about God, known in a higher way because of the clarity of their intellects, has divided also the world of pure spirits into the good and the bad. *The good chose God* as the supreme and definitive Good, known to the intellect enlightened by Revelation. To have chosen God means that they turned to him with all the interior force of their freedom, a force which is love. God became the total and definitive scope of their spiritual existence. *The others* instead *turned their backs on God* contrary to the truth of the knowledge which indicated him as the total and definitive good. Their choice ran counter to the revelation of the mystery of God, to his grace which made them partakers of the Trinity and of the eternal friendship with God in communion with him through

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# Creator of Things Unseen:

## *The Angels\**

In the previous catechesis we dwelt on the article of the Creed in which we proclaim and confess God as creator not only of the whole visible world, but also of the "things unseen," and we treated of the question of the existence of the angels who were called upon to make a decision for God or against God by a radical and irreversible act of acceptance or rejection of his salvific will.

According to Sacred Scripture the angels, inasmuch as they are purely spiritual creatures, are presented for our reflection as a special realization of the "image of God," the most perfect Spirit, as Jesus himself reminds the Samaritan woman in the words: "God is spirit" (Jn. 4:24). From this point of view the angels are the creatures closest to the divine exemplar. The *name* given to them by Sacred Scripture indicates that what counts most in Revelation is the truth concerning the *tasks of the angels in regard to man*: angel (*angelus*) in fact means "messenger". The Hebrew *malak*, used in the Old Testament, signifies more precisely "delegate" or "ambassador". The angels, spiritual creatures, have a function of mediation and of ministry in the relationships between God and man. Under this aspect the Letter to the Hebrews says that Christ has been given a "name," and therefore a ministry of mediation, far superior to that of the angels (cf. Heb. 1:4).

### Care and solicitude

2. The Old Testament emphasizes especially *the special participation of the angels* in the celebration of the *glory* which the creator receives as a tribute of praise on the part of the created world. The Psalms are in a special way the interpreters of this voice, when, for example, they proclaim: "Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights! Praise him all his angels..." (Ps. 148:1-2). Similarly in Psalm 102 (103): "Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word!" (Ps. 102 [103]:20).

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\* The general audience of 30 July was held in the Paul VI Hall, and during it the Holy Father continued his catechesis on the angels. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 31 (948), 4 August 1986.

This last verse of Psalm 102 indicates that the angels *take part*, in a way proper to themselves, in God's government of creation, as "the mighty ones who do his word" according to the plan established by Divine Providence. To the angels in particular is entrusted a special care and solicitude for people, whose requests and prayers they present to God, as mentioned, for example, in the Book of Tobit (cf. especially Tob. 3:17 and 12:12). Psalm 90 proclaims: "For to his angels he has given command about you... upon their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone" (cf. Ps. 90 [91]:11-12). Following the Book of Daniel it can be said that the tasks of angels as ambassadors of the living God extend not only to individual human beings and to those who have special duties, but also to entire nations (Dan. 10:13-21).

3. The New Testament highlights the role of the angels in *Christ's Messianic mission*, and first of all in the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, as we observe in the account of the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist (cf. Lk. 1:11), of Christ himself (cf. Lk. 1:26), in the explanations and orders given to Mary and Joseph (cf. Lk. 1:30-37; Mt. 1:20-21), in the indications given to the shepherds on the night of the Lord's birth (Lk. 2:9-15), in the protection of the newborn child from the danger of persecution by Herod (cf. Mt. 2:13).

Further on the Gospels speak of the presence of the angels during Jesus' forty days of fast in the desert (cf. Mt. 4:11) and during the prayer in Gethsemani. After Christ's resurrection there will also be an angel, appearing under the form of a young man, who will say to the women who had hastened to the tomb and were surprised to find it empty: "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here... go, tell his disciples..." (Mt. 16:5-7). Two angels were seen also by Mary Magdalene, who was privileged with a personal apparition of Jesus (Jn. 20:12-17; cf. also Lk. 24:4). The angels appear to the Apostles after Christ's ascension, to say to them: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11). They are the angels of him who, as St. Peter writes, "has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him" (I Pet. 3:22).

4. If we pass to the *Second Coming of Christ*, in the *Parousia*, we find that all the Synoptic Gospels note that "the Son

of man... will come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels" (thus Mk. 8:38; as also Mt. 16:27; and Mt. 25:31 in the description of the Last Judgment; and Lk. 9:26; cf. also St. Paul in 2 Thess. 1:7). It can therefore be said that the angels, as pure spirits, not only participate in the holiness of God himself, in the manner proper to them, but *in the key moments they surround Christ and accompany him in the fulfilment of his salvific mission* in regard to mankind. In the same way also the whole of Tradition and the ordinary Magisterium of the Church down the centuries has attributed to the angels this particular character and this function of Messianic ministry.

### CREATOR OF THE ANGELS...

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love. On the basis of their created freedom they made a radical and irreversible *choice* on a parity with that of the good angels, but *diametrically opposed*. Instead of accepting a God full of love they rejected him, inspired by a false sense of self-sufficiency, of aversion and even of hatred which is changed into rebellion.

5. How are we to understand such opposition and rebellion against God in beings endowed with such profound and enlightened intelligence? *What can be the motive for such a radical and irreversible choice* against God? Of a hatred so profound as to appear solely the fruit of folly? The Fathers of the Church and theologians do not hesitate to speak of a "blindness" produced by the overrating of the perfection of their own being, driven to the point of ignoring God's supremacy, which requires instead an act of docile and obedient subjection. All this is summed up concisely in the words: "I will not serve" (Jer. 2:20), which manifest the radical and irreversible refusal to take part in the building up of the kingdom of God in the created world. Satan, the rebellious spirit, wishes to have his own kingdom, not that of God, and he rises up as the first "adversary" of the Creator, the opponent of Providence, and antagonist of God's loving wisdom. From Satan's rebellion and sin, and likewise from that of man, we must conclude by accepting the wise experience of Scripture which states: "In pride there is ruin" (Tob. 4:13).

JOHN PAUL II

# Angels Participate in History of Salvation\*

1. In the recent catecheses we have seen how the Church, illuminated by the light that comes from Sacred Scripture, has professed throughout the centuries the truth about the existence of the angels as purely spiritual beings, with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and has confirmed this in the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), whose formulation was repeated by the First Vatican Council in the context of the doctrine on creation: "God at the beginning of time created from nothing *both creatures* together, the *spiritual* and the *corporeal*, that is, the angelic and the earthly, and thus he created human nature as having both, since it is made up of spirit and of body" (Constitution *De Fide Catholica*, DS 3002). In other words, God created both realities from the very beginning: the spiritual reality and the corporeal, the earthly world and the angelic world. He created all this at one and the same time (*simul*) with a view to the creation of man, constituted of spirit and matter and set, according to the biblical narrative, in the framework of a world already established according to his laws and already measured by time (*deinde*).

2. Together with their existence, the faith of the Church recognizes certain distinctive characteristics of the nature of the angels. Their purely spiritual being implies first of all their *non-materiality* and their *immortality*. The angels have no "body" (even if, in particular circumstances, they reveal themselves under visible forms because of their mission for the good of men), and therefore they are not subject to the laws of corruptibility which are common to all the material world. Jesus himself, referring to the condition of the angels, will say that in the future life, those who are risen "cannot die any more, because they are equal to the angels" (Lk. 20:36).

3. As creatures of a spiritual nature, the angels are *endowed with intellect and free will*, like man, but *in a degree superior* to him, even if this is always finite because of the limit which is inherent in every creature. The angels are therefore *per-*

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\* The general audience of 6 August was held in the Paul VI Hall, and during it the Holy Father continued his catechesis on the angels. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 32 (949), 11 August 1986.

*sonal beings* and, as such, are also "in the image and likeness" of God. Sacred Scripture refers to the angels also by using *terms* that are not only *personal* (like the proper names of Raphael, Gabriel, Michael) but also "*collective*" (like the titles: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Powers, Dominions, Principalities), just as it distinguishes between Angels and Archangels. While bearing in mind the analogous and representative character of the language of the sacred text, we can deduce that these beings and persons, *as it were grouped together in society*, are divided into orders and grades, corresponding to the measure of their perfection and to the tasks entrusted to them. The ancient authors and the liturgy itself speak also of the angelic choirs (nine, according to Dionysius the Areopagite). Theology, especially in the patristic and medieval periods, has not rejected these representations, seeking to explain them in doctrinal and mystical terms without however attributing an absolute value to them. St. Thomas preferred to deepen his researches into the ontological condition, the epistemological activity and will and into the loftiness of these purely spiritual creatures, both because of their dignity in the scale of beings and also because he could investigate more deeply in them *the capacities and the activities* that are proper to the spirit in the pure state, deducing no little light to illuminate the basic problems that have always agitated and stimulated human thought; knowledge, love, liberty, docility to God, how to reach his kingdom.

4. The theme which we have touched on may seem "far away" or "less vital" to the mentality of modern man. But the Church believes that she *renders a great service to man* when she proposes sincerely the totality of the truth about God the Creator and also about the angels. Man nurtures the conviction that it is he (and not the angels) who is at the centre of the Divine Revelation in Christ, Man and God. It is precisely *the religious encounter with the world of the purely spiritual beings* that becomes valuable as a revelation of his own being not only as body but also as spirit, and of his belonging to a design of salvation that is truly great and efficacious within a community of personal beings who serve the providential design of God for man and with man.

5. Let us note that Sacred Scripture and Tradition give the proper name of *angels* to those pure spirits who chose God, his

glory and his kingdom in the fundamental test of their liberty. They are *united to God* by the consummate love which flows from the beatific vision, face to face, of the Most Holy Trinity. Jesus himself tells us this: "The angels in heaven *always see the face of my Father* who is in heaven" (Mt. 18:10). "To see the face of the Father always" in this way is *the highest manifestation of the adoration of God*. One can say that this constitutes the "heavenly liturgy," carried out in the name of all the universe, with which the earthly liturgy of the Church is incessantly joined, especially in its culmination moments. Let it suffice here to record the act with which the Church, every day and every hour, in all the world, before beginning the Eucharistic Prayer *in the centre of the Mass*, makes appeal "to the angels and the archangels" to sing the glory of the thrice-holy God, uniting herself thus to those first adorers of God, in the worship and the loving knowledge of the unspeakable mystery of his holiness.

6. According to Revelation, the angels who participate in the life of the Trinity in the light of glory are also called to play *their part in the history of the salvation of man*, in the moments established by Divine Providence. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to possess salvation?", asks the author of the Letter to the Hebrews (1:14). This is believed and taught by the Church, on the basis of Sacred Scripture, from which we learn that the task of the good angels is the protection of people and solicitude for their salvation.

We find these expression *in various passages of Sacred Scripture*, like for example Ps. 90(91) which has already been quoted several times: "He will give his angels charge of you, to keep you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone" (Ps. 90[91]: 11-12). Jesus himself, speaking of children and warning against giving them scandal, refers to "their angels" (Mt. 18:10). Besides this, he attributes to the angels the function of witnesses in the last divine judgment about the fate of those who have acknowledged or denied Christ: "Whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man likewise will acknowledge him *before the angels of God*; but whoever denies me before men will be denied *before the angels of God*" (Lk. 12:8-9); cf. Rev. 3:5).

These words are significant because, if the angels take part in the judgment of God, then they are interested in the life of man. This interest and participation seem to be accentuated in the eschatological discourse, in which Jesus has the angels appear in the Parousia, that is, in the definitive coming of Christ at the end of history (cf. Mt. 24:31; 25:31-41).

7. Among the books of the New Testament, it is especially the Acts of the Apostles that show us some facts that bear witness to the solicitude of the angels for man and for his salvation. Thus the angel of God liberates the Apostles from the prison (cf. Acts 5:18-20) and first of all *Peter*, when he was threatened with death at the hand of Herod (cf. Acts 12:5-10). Or he guides the activity of Peter with regard to the centurion Cornelius, the first pagan to be converted (Acts 10:3-8; 11:1-12), and analogously the activity of the deacon *Philip* along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26-29).

From these few facts which we have cited as examples, we understand how the Church could come to the conviction that God has entrusted to the angels a ministry in favour of people. Therefore the Church *confesses her faith in the guardian angels*, venerating them in the liturgy with an appropriate feast and recommending recourse to their protection by frequent prayer, as in the invocation "Angel of God". This prayer seems to draw on the treasure of the beautiful words of St. Basil: "Every one of the faithful has beside him an angel as tutor and pastor, to lead him to life" (cf. St. Basil, *Adv. Eunomium*, III, 1; cf. also St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* I, q. 11, a. 3).

8. Finally, it is appropriate to note that the Church honours the *figures of three angels* with a liturgical cult: these are called by name in Sacred Scripture. The first is *Michael the Archangel* (cf. Dan 10:13-20; Rev. 12:7; Jude 9). His name is a synthesis that expresses the essential attitude of the good spirits. "*Mica-El*" in fact means: "*Who is like God?*". In this name, therefore, we find expressed the salvific choice thanks to which the angels "see the face of the Father" who is in heaven. The second is *Gabriel*: a figure bound especially to the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God (cf. Lk. 1:19-26). His name means: "my power is God" or "*power of God*", as if to say that at the culmination of creation, the incarnation is the supreme

(Continued on page 620).

# *The Fall of the Rebellious Angels\**

1. Continuing the theme of the previous catecheses, which were dedicated to the article of the faith that concerns the angels, God's creatures, we shall begin today to explore *the mystery of the freedom* which some of them have turned against God and his plan of salvation for mankind.

As the evangelist Luke testifies, when the disciples returned to the Master full of joy at the fruits they had gathered in their first missionary attempt, Jesus utters a sentence that is highly evocative: "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Lk. 10:18). With these words, the Lord affirms that the proclamation of the Kingdom of God is always a victory over the devil, but at the same time he also reveals that the building up of the Kingdom is continuously exposed to the attacks of the spirit of evil. When we consider this, as we propose to do with today's catechesis, it means that *we prepare ourselves for the condition of struggle* which characterizes the life of the Church in this final time of the history of salvation (as the Book of Revelation asserts: cf. 12:7). Besides this, it will permit us to clarify *the true faith of the Church* against those who pervert it by exaggerating the importance of the devil, or by denying or minimizing his malevolent power.

The preceding catecheses on the angels have prepared us to understand the truth which Sacred Scripture has revealed and which the Tradition of the Church has handed on about Satan, that is, the fallen angel, the wicked spirit, who is also called devil or demon.

2. This "fall", which has the character of the rejection of God with the consequent state of "damnation", consists in the free choice of those created spirits who have radically and irrevocably rejected God and his kingdom, usurping his sovereign rights and attempting to subvert the economy of salvation and

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\* At the general audience of 13 August, the Holy Father continued his catechesis on the angels. Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 33 (950), 18 August 1986.

the very order of the entire creation. We find a reflection of this attitude in the words addressed by the tempter to our first parents: "You will become like God" or "like gods" (cf. Gen. 3:5). Thus the evil spirit tries to transplant into man the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God, which has, as it were, become the motivation of all his existence.

3. In the Old Testament, the narrative of the fall of man as related in the Book of Genesis, contains a reference to the attitude of antagonism which Satan wishes to communicate to man in order to lead him to sin (Gen. 3:5). In the Book of Job too, we read that Satan seeks to generate rebellion in the person who is suffering (cf. Job 1:11:2:5-7). In the Book of Wisdom (cf. Wis. 2:24), Satan is presented as the artisan of death, which has entered man's history along with sin.

4. In the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Church teaches that the devil (or Satan) and the other demons "*were created good by God but have become evil by their own will.*" In fact, we read in the Letter of St. Jude: "... the angels who did not keep their own dignity, but left their own dwelling, are kept by the Lord in eternal chains in the darkness, for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). Similarly, *in the second Letter of St. Peter*, we hear of "angels who have sinned" and whom God "did not spare, but ... cast in the gloomy abysses of hell, reserving them for the judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). It is clear that if God "does not forgive" the sin of the angels, this is because they remain in their sin, because *they are eternally "in the chains" of the choice that they made at the beginning*, rejecting God, against the truth of the supreme and definitive Good that is God himself. It is in this sense that St. John writes that "*the devil has been a sinner from the beginning ...*" (1 Jn. 3:8). And he has been a *murderer* "from the beginning," and "has not persevered in the truth, because *there is no truth in him*" (Jn. 8:44).

### **Satan: cosmic liar and murderer**

5. These texts help us to understand the nature and the dimension of the sin of Satan, which consists in the denial of truth about God, as he is known by the light of the intellect and revelation as infinite Good, *subsistent Love and Holiness*. The sin was all the greater, in that the spiritual perfection and the epistemological acuteness of the angelic intellect, with his freedom and closeness to God, were greater. When, by an act of

his own free will, *he rejected the truth* that he knew about God, Satan became the cosmic "liar and the father of lies" (Jn. 8:44). For this reason, he lives in radical and irreversible denial of God, and *seeks to impose* on creation — on the other beings created in the image of God, and in particular on people — his own tragic "lie about the good" that is God. In the Book of Genesis, we find a precise description of this lie and falsification of the truth about God, which Satan (under the form of a serpent) tries to transmit to the first representatives of the human race: God is jealous of his own prerogatives and therefore wants to impose limitations on man (cf. Gen. 3:5). Satan invites the man to free himself from the impositions of this yoke, by making himself "like God".

6. In this condition of existential falsehood, Satan — according to St. John — also becomes a "murderer", that is *one who destroys the supernatural life* which God had made to dwell from the beginning in him and in the creatures made "in the likeness of God": the other pure spirits and men; Satan *wishes to destroy life lived in accordance with the truth*, life in the fullness of good, the supernatural life of grace and love. The author of the Book of Wisdom writes: "... death has entered the world through the envy of the devil, and those who belong to him experience it" (Wis. 2:24). And Jesus Christ warns in the Gospel: "... *fear rather him who has the power to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna*" (Mt. 10:28).

7. As the result of the sin of our first parents, this fallen angel has acquired *dominion over man to a certain extent*. This is the doctrine that has been constantly professed and proclaimed by the Church, and which the *Council of Trent* confirmed in its treatise on original sin (cf. DS 1511): it finds a dramatic expression in the liturgy of baptism, when the catechumen is asked to renounce the devil and all his empty promises.

In Sacred Scripture we find various indications of this influence on man and on the dispositions of his spirit (and of his body.) In the Bible, Satan is called "*the prince of this world*" (cf. Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and even "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). We find *many other names* that describe his nefarious relationship with man: "Beelzebul" or "Be-lial", "*unclean spirit*", "tempter", "evil one" and even "Anti-christ" (1 Jn. 4:3). He is compared to a "lion" (1 Pet. 5:8), to a "dragon" (in Revelation) and to a "serpent" (Gen. 3). Very frequently, he is designated by the name "*devil*", from the

Greek *diaballein* (hence *diabolos*), which means: to "cause destruction, to divide, to calumniate, to deceive". In truth, all this takes place from the beginning through the working of the evil spirit who is presented by Sacred Scripture as a *person* while it is declared that *he is not alone*: "there are many of us", as the devils cry out to Jesus in the region of the Gerasenes (Mk. 5:9); and Jesus, speaking of the future judgment, speaks of "the devil and his angels" (cf. Mt. 25:41).

8. According to Sacred Scripture, and especially the New Testament, the dominion and the influence of Satan and of the other evil spirits embraces *all the world*. We may think of Christ's parable about the field (the world), about the good seed and the bad seed that the devil sows in the midst of the wheat, seeking to snatch away from hearts the good that has been "sown" in them (cf. Mt. 13:38-39). We may think of the numerous exhortations to vigilance (cf. Mt. 26:41; 1 Pet. 5:8), to prayer and fasting (cf. Mt. 17:21). We may think of the strong statement made by the Lord: "This kind of demon cannot be cast out by any other means than prayer" (Mk. 9:29). The action of Satan consists primarily in *tempting men to evil*, by influencing their imaginations and higher faculties, to turn them away from the law of God. Satan *even tempts Jesus* (cf. Lk. 4:3-13), in the extreme attempt to thwart what is demanded by the economy of salvation, as this has been pre-ordained by God.

It is possible that in certain cases the evil spirit goes so far as to exercise his influence not only on material things, but even *on man's body*, so that one can speak of "diabolical possession" (cf. Mk. 5:2-9). It is not always easy to discern the preternatural factor operative in these cases, and the Church does not lightly support the tendency to attribute many things to the direct action of the devil; but in principle it cannot be denied that Satan can go to this extreme manifestation of his superiority, in his will to harm and lead to evil.

9. To conclude, we must add that the impressive words of the Apostle John, "The whole world lies under the power of the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19), allude also to *the presence of Satan in the history of humanity*, a presence which becomes all the more acute when man and society depart from God. The influence of the evil spirit can *conceal itself* in a more profound and effective way: it is in his "interests" to make himself unknown. Satan has the skill in the world to induce people to deny his existence in the name of rationalism and of every other system

of thought which seeks all possible means to avoid recognizing his activity. This, however, *does not signify the elimination of man's free will and responsibility*, and even less the frustration of the saving action of Christ. It is, rather, a case of a conflict between the dark powers of evil and the powers of redemption. The words that Jesus addressed to Peter at the beginning of the Passion are eloquent in this context: "... Simon, behold, Satan has sought to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Lk. 22:31).

This helps us understand how Jesus, in the prayer that he taught us, the "Our Father", that is, the prayer of the Kingdom of God, terminates almost brusquely, unlike so many other prayers of his era, by reminding us of our condition as people *exposed to the snares of evil and of the evil one*. The Christian, appealing to the Father with the Spirit of Jesus and invoking his Kingdom, cries with the power of faith: let us not succumb to temptation, free us from evil, from the evil one. O Lord, let us not fall into the infidelity to which we are seduced by the one who has been unfaithful from the beginning.

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## ANGELS PARTICIPATE IN HISTORY OF SALVATION

(Continued from page 615).

sign of the omnipotent Father. Finally, the third archangel is called *Raphael*, "Rafa-El" means: "*God heals*". He is made known to us by the story of Tobias in the Old Testament (cf. Tob. 12:15-20, etc.), which is so significant for what it says about entrusting to the angels the little children of God, who are always in need of custody, care and protection.

If we reflect well, we see that each one of these three figures, Mica-El, Gabri-El and Rafa-El reflects in a particular way the truth contained in the *question* posed by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to possess salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

JOHN PAUL II

# Our Patient Guardian Angels

BY FR. BENITO VARGAS, O.P.

The Bible mentions different kinds or groups — choirs is the technical term — of created spirits, to wit, in descending order or from the highest to the lowest: Seraphim (Is. 6:2), Cherubim (Gen. 3:24, Ezech. 10), Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Principalities (Col. 1:16), Virtues (Ephes. 1:20), Archangels (I Thess. 4:15) and Angels (I Petr. 3:22).

At present we shall limit ourselves to the patient good spirits who are our guardian angels, disregarding for lack of space the other spirits, either good or bad.

The guardian angels are the lowest in the echelon of spirits, and so whatever prerogatives they may have are also shared and even in greater measure by the higher angels. Such prerogatives are mainly: spiritual personality, superhuman intelligence and superhuman power.

*Spiritual personality.* — An angel is a spiritual person, that is, a spirit that subsists by itself and is different from any other angel or any other person. It is different from the human soul in that this, while also a spiritual being, is naturally united with the human body to form the human person.

We are hard put to visualize what a spirit is, because it cannot be perceived by our senses both external and internal. Having no amount of matter, a spirit is smaller, so to say, than an atom, so much so that the Scholastics of the Middle Ages expressly taught that a legion of angels can stay together in the point of a needle. Being a spirit, it has no integral parts, no weight, no height, no shape, no sex, no figure, no posture or gesture, and no clothing. Of course, it cannot get sick or die.

The Bible tells us that angels are in heaven (Mc. 13:32) but the guardian angels and archangels are often sent on missions to any place on earth or within the universe. For instance, we read in Matthew (4:11): "Then the devil left him (Jesus); and behold, angels came and ministered to him." When Jesus was born, according to Luke (2:9-15), an angel appeared to

some shepherds to invite them to visit the Divine Babe, and other angels joined him and together they praised the Lord, and later departed. The angel who appeared to Tobias (Tob. chapters 5 to 12) in the form of a young man moved at the pace of Tobias as if he were a real man.

A corporeal object is in a place, and any corporeal object cannot be in the place of another, without dislodging it. Thus when I move from place to place I dislodge at least the space and air occupying previously the places I now occupy. An angel does not dislodge a material object but merely exerts its influence or activity in one place and not in another. How big a place where one angel can exert its activity, we do not know; but probably just one angel can take care of many things to be done in the whole length and breadth of the Philippines. And while busy in the Philippines, it is here and not in another place, at least for the moment.

An angel moves from place to place in the sense that it acts first in one place, and then in another. Its speed depends on its will. So it can stop wherever it chooses. But it naturally can beat the speed of light, which is 300,000 kilometers per second. It moves without any effort, that is, without any need of vehicle or any expense of energy. And thus it does not get tired with work and neither does it need to rest.

### **The knowledge of an angel.**

The lowest angel beats all the wise men that ever stalked the earth together. Thus it outwits all the universities of the world put together. This sounds exaggerated, but it is but the simple truth.

When Jesus spoke of the exact time of the end of the earth or of the final judgment, He said (Mc. 13:32): "But of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." This text implies that the angels should know most things that God has not kept for himself. Thus all the secrets of nature are an open book to the lowest angel. So he knows natural science — physics, chemistry and all — about everything in this world and in the universe, and he masters all the branches of mathematics to beat the best computers that will ever be built, and he is conversant with all the secrets of philosophy and theology. The lowest angel knows and can use all the languages of the earth.

**What the angels do not know?**

So wise as they are, they do not know the following: (1) future acts springing from the free will of God, another angel or of man; but they are very good guessers even in such matters; (2) the secrets of the heart, that is, free immanent acts of the intellect and will of any other angel or of man, but again they are very good guessers and may be right most of the time; (3) supernatural mysteries, except if such were revealed to them: one such mystery is the exact time of the final judgment of the human race (cf. Mc. 13:32).

**Illustrations of the angelic knowledge and power.**

An angel is a spirit and has no body, but it can appear in the form of any human person — it makes a perfect statue of that person and endows it with human features and functions. To do so it brings together whatever it needs to form the human body, and this supposes a perfect knowledge of physics, chemistry, sculpture and other sciences and plastic arts. Then the body is dressed and acts entirely as it were of real bone, blood and flesh. For all this more knowledge and ability is required than that of a mimer, actor, puppeteer, groomer, and the like. Then the angel can talk in any tongue. All this happened with Gabriel when it appeared to Daniel (Dan. 9:21; 10:5), or when the same appeared to Mary to announce that she was to become the Mother of the Messiah, and that her cousin Elizabeth "has conceived a son in her old age" (Luke 1:36). Incidentally, Gabriel is called an archangel, either because he was one of the higher angels, or because he belonged to the next higher choir of angels that the lowest angels; as it is probable that real archangels are sent for missions of greater importance.

Raphael who was also an archangel as Gabriel appeared to Tobias in the form of a beautiful young man, standing girded, and as ready to walk (Tob. 5:5). About him Tobias said (Tob. 12:3-4): "He conducted me and brought me safe again, he received the money of Gabelus; he caused me to have my wife, and he chased from her the evil spirit; he gave joy to her parents; myself he delivered from being devoured by the fish; thee also he hath made to see the light of heaven; and we are filled with all the good things through him." The heavenly guide said (Tob. 12:17-19): "I am Raphael.... Peace be to you, fear not. For when I was with you, I was there by the will of God. Bless ye him, and sing praises to him. I seemed

indeed to eat and to drink with you, but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men." And he disappeared mysteriously, just like the angel who appeared to Gideon (Judges 6:21-22).

An angel appeared twice to St. Joseph, first to tell him (Matt. 1:20-21): "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus." In the second apparition the angel told him (Matt. 2:13): "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell thee. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him." In the third apparition the angel said to Joseph (Matt. 2:20). "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."

Two angels in human form played a very important role in the punishment and destruction of Sodom and Gomorra (Gen. 19:1-29). Just one "angel of the Lord came, and slew in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand" (4 Kings 19:35). Again we read (I Mach. 7:41): "O Lord, when they that were sent by King Sennacherib blasphemed thee, an angel went out, and slew of them a hundred and eighty-five thousand." Just one angel saved Daniel and his companions (Dan. 3:47-50): "The flames rose forty-nine cubits above the furnace.... But the angel of the Lord went down into the furnace with Azaria and his companions, drove the fiery flames out of the furnace, and made the inside of the furnace as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it. The fire in no way touched them or caused them pain or harm." An angel was the instrument of God to punish David due to a sin of pride by killing 70,000 of his subjects (2 Kings 24:16).

Angels are thus also instruments of the vengeance of God, but more so of his kindness and mercy, for God, as David says (Ps. 77: 38-39), "being merciful, forgave their sin and destroyed them not; often he turned back his anger and let none of his wrath be roused. He remembered that they were flesh, a passing breath that returns not." Joseph of Egypt said of his guardian angel that (Gen. 48:16) "he delivered me from all evil."

According to St. Augustine, "the angels manage natural things, and the natural order requires" (De Genesi ad litteram VIII, 24, 45). Elsewhere he adds: "Every visible thing is put

under the charge of an angel" (De diversis questionibus 83). Thus he implies that every star, planet or body of the universe is moved and governed by an angel, which acts in Lieu both of the fuel and of the driver. In other words, the natural law of gravitation is carried out by the angels. Johannes Kepler, the eminent German astronomer and mathematician of the 16th century, could not explain the perfect traffic in the universe except by the agency of the angels (cf. Valentine Long, in *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, Aug.-Sept., 1976, pp. 76-77). And Cardinal Newman chimes in (*Apologia*, Chapter 1).

An angel, by merely touching Jacob's thigh, dislocated it (Gen. 32:25). An angel saved the shipwrecked St. Paul and his heathen companions from drowning (Acts 27:18-24). An angel caused an earthquake and then rolled back the boulder that covered the entrance of Christ's tomb (Matth. 28:2).

### Our guardian angels

Speaking of the guardian angels, St. Paul says (Heb. 1:14): "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service...?" And David (Psalm 90:11): "To his angels he has given command about you, that they guard you in all your ways."

It may be asked whether only good people do have guardian angels. In answer, it may be said that everybody here on earth is capable of salvation, and the Bible says (Ephes. 6:9, cf. Col. 3:25): "with him (the Lord in heaven) there is no respect of persons." Besides the angels are too numerous as the Bible says (Dan. 7:10): "Thousands upon thousands were ministering to him, and myriads upon myriads attended him." So each and every human being has a particular guardian angel, irrespective of race, religion and other circumstances. If human parents provide their children with nurses or guardians, if they can, with greater reason does God do so with every human being born into this world. For "neither will God have a soul to perish, but recallesh, meaning that he that is cast off should not perish" (II Kings, 14:14). And the guardian angel is committed to help its charge to save himself, for "the Lord does not delay in his promises, but for your sake is long-suffering, not wishing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:9). God provides everybody with a guardian angel especially as an effective aid for his eternal salvation.

### What the guardian angel does?

It may be said that the guardianship of a man is just a partial assignment of an angel, for it is always contemplating the face of God in heaven: "Their (guardian) angels always behold the face of my Father in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

The main duties or functions of the guardian angel according to Catholic theologians (cf. Van Noort, *De Deo Creatore*, Bussum in Hollandia, 1958, p. 88), are: (1) to defend us from dangers of body and soul without any fuss or even without our knowledge; (2) to counteract the influences of the devil; (3) to lead us to good even by imposing medicinal penalties for our sins; (4) to offer our prayers to God; and (5) to assist us especially at the moment of our death. However, our guardian angel ever respects our free will, even when it is used to sin.

There is a running controversy among theologians or spiritual philosophers whether more men will be saved than condemned. While St. Augustine said that this is a mystery to our understanding, perhaps the guardian angels are the deciding factor: their assistance, especially at the point of our agony or transit from this life to the other is the key to the answer to this problem.

### Our duties to our angels

We are accustomed to "go through channels." Thus we do not go to the President in order to ask for something that the town Mayor can give. Or we do not bother our father with requests for things that our mother or cook or laundress can do. Thus in most of our difficulties we shall be doing well if we just go and pray to our guardian angel for help. Thus everyone should often invoke his guardian angel in these or similar words:

*Angel of God, my guardian dear,  
To whom his love commits me here:  
Ever this day (night) be at my side  
To help and guard, to keep and guide.*

## Pointers on Mass Stipends or Offerings

During the drafting stages of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the discussion on Mass stipends or offerings raised a veritable storm of opposition. Noteworthy is the fact that the opposition to the inclusion of a treatise on Mass stipends in the new Code came mostly from local churches with abundant material resources and from groups of persons who would rather view the priest as a mere representative of the community at Mass.

The grounds for their opposition, briefly, were these: — the stipend system is based on a theology of merit and the ministerial fruit of the Mass which is unsupported by dogmatic sources and as such unacceptable. The distribution of the ministerial fruit is accomplished by the priest's naming of recipients through his Mass intentions. He is bound in justice to assign the ministerial fruit to the stipend-donor by his *first* intention;

- the main reason for maintaining the stipend is financial. Other means should be found to support the clergy and meet the needs of church;
- the fact that Mass stipends are a long-standing custom is not an adequate basis for a practice wide open to abuse and scandal;
- the system, as is presently understood, engenders a good deal of confusion about Mass intentions. The Mass is offered to God not merely by the priest acting in the name of the congregation, but by the priest and the congregation acting together. Mass intentions are thus to be understood as petitions which the whole congregation may unite with the church's offering of Christ to the Father. The giving of a stipend is not necessarily a better and more meritorious way of participating in the offering of the Mass than actual attendance to the Mass.

Undaunted by strong representations calling for the total abolition of the practice or, at least, a radical change of the

stipend system, the church still maintains that it is licit for a priest to accept an offering for the celebration and application of the Mass (c. 945).

This assurance of the law notwithstanding, there still exists in many quarters a considerable uneasiness about the rationale and practice of Mass stipends. This article is just an attempt to bring forth a few of the questions, nay problems, which are frequently raised or encountered in matters related to Mass stipends or offerings.

1. *Is it still an acceptable practice in the Church to receive Mass stipends?*

"A priest may apply Mass for anyone, living or dead" (c. 901). This is the legal source of the stipend system, a practice which is sanctioned by tradition, papal authority and church law.

Historically, stipends can be traced back to the early church custom of making offerings in kind for the eucharistic celebration, especially bread, wine and other natural products.

Vestiges of such practice remained later in the custom of making offerings of money to replace those made in kind and to aid the priest for the remembrance of one's particular intention in the Mass. Thus the type of stipend we are familiar with today emerged, namely, an offering—usually in money—made before hand to the priest for the application of the Mass according to the special intention of the donor (*Communicationes*, 4, 1972, pp. 57-59).

The practice has been in usage since the eight century and has contributed to the good of the church through the support of its personnel and undertakings.

The church's magisterium has constantly upheld the legitimacy of the stipend against puritan thinkers—like Wiclif and his followers—who opposed the system as something simoniacal (DENZINGER, 2654). Abuses did creep in through the centuries that prompted the church to enact severe norms regulating the stipend system as something "which is certainly serious and demands great prudence" (*Firma in traditione*, 13 June 1974, AAS, 66,308).

This long standing tradition and approved custom has once more been embodied in the new Code (cc. 945-959) not with-

standing the criticisms and disappointments of some contemporary theologians who would have preferred that the custom of Mass stipends dies out as an antiquated and holdover practice from the middle ages devoid of theological justification.

2. *How does the church justify the perpetuation of the stipend system?*

The rationale behind the system is to be found mainly in the legal texts placed and interpreted in their historical and theological contexts. This, however, is a difficult task, for in principle the law avoids giving reasons and aims primarily at providing straight forward norms to regulate the people's external activities and the operation of juridic persons. But, still, a careful study of the latest legal documents dealing with Mass offerings —especially the M.P. "*Firma in traditione* of 13 June, 1974, and the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*— reveal a certain rationale backing up the existence and continuance of the stipend system.

The analysis of these documents shows, first of all, that tradition is, in no way, the only rationale behind the system, nor financial considerations the exclusive motive for the perpetuation of the practice.

Over and above common usage and material considerations, *Firma in traditione* offers in its preamble several theological and pastoral reasons in justification of Mass offerings, to wit:

a) the offering is a kind of sacrifice made by the faithful, so that they may more actively participate in the eucharistic sacrifice by "associating themselves more closely with Christ offering himself as victim and thereby reap a more abundant supply of fruits":

b) it is a sign of the union of the baptized with Christ and of the donor with the celebrant:

c) the faithful in making the offering are "guided by an ecclesial and religious sense", thus giving a manifestation of their faith in the ecclesial mediation.

The 1983 Code on its part, not only decrees it lawful for any priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass to receive an offering to apply Mass according to a definite intention (c. 945,1), but also strongly recommends "that priests, even if no

offering has been received, celebrates Mass for the intention of the faithful especially the needed" (c. 945, 2). Such normative implies that there is some benefit to be gained for the celebrant's praying for a specific intention at Mass over and above the financial benefit that accrues to the church and the priest from the offerings.

In fine, it is on the basis of rich, theological perspectives that the church still approves of and promotes the Mass offerings practice.

3. *Has the 1983 Code made any significant changes in its treatment of Mass Offerings?*

While the actual content of the chapter of the Code on Mass stipends remains practically unchanged, positive reforms have been made in the new text ordained mostly to avoid the appearance of commercialism and to prevent shameless abuse.

A change in terminology from *stipendium* —stipend— to *stips* —offering— runs all through the text. Seemingly the term *stipendium* does not adequately convey an acceptable meaning as it connotes a commercial transaction in which a remuneration is offered for a given service.

By contrast, the word *stips* seems more appropriate for it signifies a donation, an offering made for the honor of God, for the support of the church, for the poor, and thus the term is more in harmony with the eucharistic celebration itself (*Schema CIC*, 1975, p. 9).

Though the application of Mass for the donor's intention is still binding on the priest who accepts the offering (cc. 948, 949), the revised law avoids contractual overtones as well as commercial connotations.

In one of the initial canons of the treatise a clear attempt is made to justify the stipendiary system by stating that, through the offering, the faithful is afforded an opportunity to share in the church's work and, indirectly, in the support of the clergy.

Lastly, though the document is juridical in nature, still most of its norms remain open to broad theological interpretation.

4. *Which are the main objectives behind the system?*

The system of Mass offerings is not devoid of reason or purpose. Stipends are offered and accepted not for exclusive purpose of supporting the minister —“the laborer deserves his wages”— but to contribute to the good of the church by helping in meeting its needs and activities (c. 946, 1). After all the faithful have the right and correlative duty to contribute whatever is necessary in order to achieve the proper objectives of the church (cc. 1260, 1261), something that could appropriately be done through Mass stipends or offerings.

Of course, the legitimacy of such objectives should not preclude serious reflection on other means and ways of supporting ecclesiastical undertakings and personnel perhaps more acceptable to contemporary thinking and thus less open to criticism.

5. *Is it compulsory on individual priests to adopt the stipend system?*

Church law does not impose the stipend system but only seeks to regulate it where the practice exists. The law tersely states that “it is *lawful* for a priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass to receive an offering to apply the Mass according to a definite intention” (c. 945, 1). But no obligation is imposed on individual priests or groups of priests, such as those of a diocese or religious institute, to strictly adhere to such practice. In fact, the church earnestly recommends the priests to celebrate Mass for the intention of the faithful, especially those in need, even without an offering (c. 945, 2).

Local churches and/or customs which ought to determine the amount of the offering could, likewise, discard the practice altogether if voluntarily accepted by priests in the territory or ecclesiastical province (c. 952). Such pioneering move would surely be a most welcome initiative in paving the way for the elimination of misunderstandings and even abuses in connection with the practice of stipends or Mass offerings. What is of the greatest importance in this matter is that uniformity of action be strictly observed at the level of the local church or ecclesiastical territory.

6. *Is it still a matter of justice to apply Mass for the intention for which a stipend was offered and accepted?*

Church law views stipends as wholly gratuitous donations given out of concern for the support of church needs and personnel, not as payment for services rendered (c. 946).

Likewise, the priest is free to refuse the offering for the celebration and application of a given Mass (c. 945, 2). But once the gratuitous donation is freely accepted an agreement is forged between the prospective celebrant and the donor. The obligation arising from the deal binds the priest not only to the application of the Mass for the particular intention for which the stipend was given (c. 948), but also to compliance with all other conditions or stipulations attached thereto, such as day, time and place for the celebration (c. 954).

It is a fact that attempts have been made in the new Code to strip the stipend system of contractual connotations. This, however, is not a valid reason to affirm that "the offering is not payment that can require in justice the application of the Mass for the donor's intention". It is equally inaccurate to state that "canon law does not specify that the priest must actually pray for that intention, and in practice the priest often does not know the precise intention the Mass is supposed to be applied for, as in the case with Masses said for the intention of the donor.

In effect, church law views Mass offerings much as any other donation or bequest, this is, as something "sacred". Hence, "once lawfully accepted, the intentions of donors are to be most carefully observed" (c. 1300). This is not just a question of honesty, but an obligation of justice as well. The law requires that the Mass "be said and applied". Saying Mass, therefore, does not justify a stipend. Its application for the donor's intention is a part of the deal.

That such is the mind of the church in matters of stipends is further corroborated by the obligation imposed on the celebrant to apply Mass even if the offering received is lost through no fault of his (c. 949), and by the prohibition of securing more than one stipend per Mass, no matter how small (c. 948).

Similarly, contemporary theology still holds that there is a need to satisfy any obligations arising from Masses celebrated with invalid matter.

7. *What is the kind of commercialism forbidden by law?*

The law is crystal clear on this matter: "even the appearance of trafficking or trade is to be entirely excluded from Mass offerings" (c. 947).

Thus, the canon sums up the various disciplinary norms enacted through the centuries to protect the stipendiary system from shame abuse and to avoid even the mere semblance of commercialism.

The terms *negotatio* —trafficking— and *mercatura* —trade or commerce— are nearly synonymous in their meaning. Both terms include the notion of profit or gain. And it is on account of such profit or gain that the law forbids (c. 947) and even penalizes (c. 1385) any commercial transactions with Mass stipends.

But which are those transactions that smack of commercialism? The following cases, among others, do involve illegal profiteering and as such are forbidden by law:

- to ask, not to receive, a stipend higher than the one set in the diocesan arancel (c. 952);
- to retain for oneself more than one stipend a day, with the exception of Christmas Day (c. 951);
- to receive a stipend for a Mass applied for a title of justice, (c. 951);
- to apply one Mass for several stipends, unless otherwise agreed by the donors (cc. 948; 949);
- to ask one stipend for the celebration and another for the application of the Mass (c. 952);
- to keep for oneself —instead of turning it over to the diocesan or parish fund— the proceeds from investments and currency exchange derived from Mass stipends. A reasonable amount, however, may be retained for an extrinsic title, vgr., cost of postage, telegraphic services, transportation, labor... (c. 948);
- to transmit a part of the stipend to another priest instead of the entire sum received. It is lawful, though, to retain a reasonable amount to cover transmittal costs, vgr., mail, telegraph.... (c. 955, 1);

- to pool small stipends till they reach the legal amount determined in the arancel and apply one Mass for all the intentions (c. 948) ;
- to transmit to another priest the stipend in kind retaining the profit resulting from the transaction (c. 955, 1) ;
- to make payments through stipends, vgr., for books purchased, board and lodging, commissions, taxes due to superiors, *if* the payer profits from the transaction (c. 947) ;
- to pay a guest-priest the legal stipend with the balance being retained by the pastor instead of accruing to the parish fund (c. 947) ;
- to receive another stipend for a binated concelebrated Mass (c. 951, 2).

Whoever profits from trafficking in Mass stipends in violation of existing laws is to be penalized accordingly with a censure or another just penalty (c. 1385).

#### 8. *Can a priest keep binated stipends for himself?*

The faculty to say more than one Mass a day may be granted by the local Ordinary by way of exception in cases of unavailability of priests or for pastoral reasons (c. 905).

The priest then is allowed to receive one stipend for the application of each Mass, but, with the exception of Christmas Day, he may retain for himself only one. The others, with the exclusion of a reasonable amount as compensation for an extrinsic title, such as late hour, transportation . . , he is to transmit to the Ordinary who shall determine the use to be made of the offerings (c. 951).

The fact that a parish or institution engages in charity work does not justify the retention or distribution of the binated stipends among the priests assigned thereto. Still, the stipends should go to the Ordinary even if he has failed to make a decision as to their use.

Though it is not permitted to retain the stipend for a binated Mass, the celebrant may apply said Mass to fulfill an obligation of charity, gratitude or even one due "*titulo iustitiae*".

9. *May a priest receive a stipend for a binated concelebrated Mass?*

The law is quite specific on this issue: "a priest who on the same day concelebrates a second Mass may not under any title accept an offering for that Mass" (c. 951, 2). And this holds true even if the first Mass was celebrated for the pastoral good of the faithful, vgr. a funeral, wedding Mass... (S.C. Cult. Div., 7 Aug., 1972; *Canon Law Digest* (CLD), VII, 614).

The prohibition is absolute and admits of no exception. The priest can receive and retain a stipend for the first Mass, either concelebrated or ordinary, but he is prohibited to accept any stipend whatever—even one on behalf of his Ordinary—for the second concelebrated Mass.

The rationale behind this severe ruling is the following: "the faculty to concelebrate a second Mass in the same day has been given *solely* for spiritual reasons, in order that the priests may be able to participate in the Mass more fully... in the way proper to them. These spiritual reasons must be insisted upon so that only these reasons may invite to concelebrating and by no means the reception of a stipend for a concelebration that takes place by binating" (*Notitiae*, 11 (1975); 288; CLD., VIII, 516).

But can the priest receive some compensation by reason of an extrinsic title, vgr. for transportation, as a token by gratitude for joining the concelebrated Mass on the occasion of the town fiesta, a funeral, a wedding?

Most authors will not even admit the possibility. However, a second look at the letter of the law seems to favor a more generous interpretation. In effect, c. 950 establishes a clear distinction between the *stipend* offered for the application of the Mass and the *compensation* given for an extrinsic title. While the law expressly and unconditionally forbids the reception of a stipend for a second concelebrated Mass, it remains silent as to whatever remuneration a priest may be offered by virtue of an extrinsic title, something which is indeed alien to the very nature of the Mass offering. Of course, it is to be understood that any compensation the priest receives "*titulo extrinseco*" should never be taken as a stipend. The reason behind the concelebration of a second Mass must be spiritual, to the exclusion of any financial or material motives. This is true and valid in all cases.

10. *Can a pastor who applies the Mass for the people retain a stipend for himself for the binated Mass?*

The old rule on the matter was: "a stipend or a title of justice excludes another stipend" (1917 CIC., c. 824, 2). The new law amends it by omitting the reference to the title of justice (c. 951, 2). The rule now may be restated thus: "One stipend excludes another stipend" (c. 951, 1). Therefore, pastors who are obliged to say the *Missa pro populo* on Sundays and holidays of obligation may lawfully take an offering for a binated Mass (PIÑERO CARRION, Jose Ma., *Nuevo Derecho Canónico*, Madrid, 1983; p. 878; *Roman Replies and Advisory Opinions*, CLSA, 1984, p. 50).

The rationale behind this change is not reported even in the 1975 schema CIC when reference to the title of justice was first omitted (*Communicationes*, 1972, pp. 57-59; 1975, pp. 33-34). The change, however, seems to make sense. It permits the pastor to comply with his duty toward the people and to receive something for his support.

It is quite understandable that the pastor who applies the *Missa pro populo* can not accept a stipend for that Mass which is due *titulo iustitiae*. But can he be compensated by virtue of an extrinsic title, vgr. late hour, remote place . . . or by drawing a certain amount from the Sunday collection?

The law permits the priest to accept a remuneration for an extrinsic title, i.e., something extrinsic to the nature of the Mass stipend as such (c. 951, 1). However, priests who are to celebrate Mass more than once a day to provide for the pastoral needs of their faithful may not receive additional remuneration *titulo extrinseco* for this is a service they ought to the faithful in virtue of their office.

The practice of retaining a part of the Sunday collection for the support of the pastor who applies the *Missa pro populo* does not seem to be contrary to law. The understanding is that the amount drawn from the collection is not meant to be a stipend but a sort of compensation for the support of the priest or for an extrinsic title. The practice, of course, must be one sanctioned by local custom and law (c. 531).

11. *May intentions for Mass stipends be pooled?*

The obligation arising from the acceptance of several stipends, no matter how small, can not be satisfied with the

application of one Mass. The key rule is: "one stipend, one Mass" (c. 948).

Rightfully, then, when a sum of money is offered for the application of Masses, without indicating the number of Masses to be celebrated, their number is to be determined on the basis of the arancel in force in the place where the donor resides, unless it could be lawfully presumed that the intention of the donor was other, vgr., to favor the priest or the parish by making a more generous offering (c. 950).

In the same vein, there is nothing offensive to existing legislation in the practice of placing a *box* somewhere in the church for the collection of stipends, provided the number of Masses celebrated with the offerings thus collected is determined in consonance with the arancel (c. 950).

Other, of course, would be the case of *voluntary offerings* made by donors fully aware of the grouping of the various intentions into one or several Masses, vgr., free offerings made at the altar at the beginning of the Mass or during the offertory, the so-called *Mass-cards* whereby the donor accepts the promise made in behalf of a community to be remembered in the prayers and or Masses to be said by its members...

Such practices can at least be tolerated for, in theory, there is no limit to the number of intentions for which a Mass can be offered. But it does smack a bit of that brand of commercialism prohibited by law.

The Code does not touch specifically on cases or situations of this type. However, aware of the fact that this widely accepted custom of pooling Mass intentions is often open to abuses, particular law should regulate the practice. The following pointers could serve as guidelines in drafting the appropriate norms for the local church or region:

- the faithful should be made aware of the meaning and fact of grouping Mass intentions;
- the offerings ought to be wholly voluntary on the part of the donor;
- the celebrant can not retain for himself more than the amount fixed in the arancel, the balance to accrue to the parish or diocesan fund and should be used for pastoral or charity works;
- those who abuse the practice should be subject to the penalties on forbidden negotiation or trade (c. 1385).

If the donors are unaware of the grouping of intentions, then, the practice aside being a clear violation of the law —one stipend-one Mass, becomes a source of deception and even of scandal on the part of the faithful to the discredit of the whole stipendiary system.

12. *Is it a grave obligation to comply with church law in matters of stipends?*

The law does not say so and in fact it is not needed, for a law should be complied with whether its violation calls for a grave sin or not.

Anyway, there are a number of ways whereby a priest can determine by himself the degree of obligation of a given law, such as its wording, its objective and importance, the sanctions imposed for its non-observance . . .

In the case under discussion, the norms regulating Mass offerings clearly state that "this is a matter which is certainly serious and demands great prudence" (*Firma in traditione*). Indeed the system is open to clergy abuse and possible scandal on the part of the faithful especially when the practice is tainted with dishonesty and even deception.

On the other hand, we find that the non-observance of the law carries an external sanction or penalty. The law now in effect imposes a just penalty or censure on those who consciously profit from Mass stipends through means prohibited by law (c. 1385).

From the aforesaid, it seems quite obvious that the obligation of complying with existing laws is objectively grave. This does not mean, however, that any violation of the law is necessarily sinful. This is something that depends on the person's motivations and intentions, factors which lie well beyond the scope of a human, ecclesiastical law as the one regulating Mass stipends.

FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

## CASES AND INQUIRIES

### 1. LAY PERSONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY

*Should lay persons be given an active and direct participation in the management of church finances?*

In the primitive church deacons were placed in charge of the temporalities to allow priests and bishops more time and opportunities to use their spiritual skills and training in spiritual matters. Through the centuries, especially trained laymen have attended to these matters under the supervision of ecclesiastical administrators.

The 1917 CIC, while placing the administrative responsibilities mostly on clerics, did not exclude lay persons from an active and at times even direct participation in the management of the church finances. As a matter of fact, laymen were found sitting in administrative boards (1917 CIC, c. 1520), or running the financial affairs of lay associations (cc. 684-689), pious foundations (cc. 1515, 1544), and other institutions which were under the control or supervision of the Church (cc. 1521, 2; 1525).

Vatican II laid down no new laws on this matter. However, its directives seem to be geared towards a greater participation of the laity in the management of temporalities in accordance with that greater degree of co-responsibility required by ecclesiological principles. Laymen together with bishops, priests and religious are co-responsible for the mission of the Church because they are the Church. This mission is expected to be carried out by the laity in the exercise of their apostolate in the temporal as well as in the spiritual order. And it is particularly in the areas of finance and management that laymen can make their most significant contribution to the Church. It is in this field that lay people are often better trained than priests.

The Council, taking cognizance of this fact, highly recommends though it does not impose, the cooperation or assistance of the laity in the management of the ecclesiastical patrimony:

"Priests are to manage ecclesiastical property with the help, as far as possible, of laymen." (*Presb. Ord.*, n. 17)  
 "By their expert assistance, they (the laymen) increase the efficiency of the care of souls as well as the administration of the goods of the Church." (*Apost. Actuositatem*, n. 10)

In unmistakable terms the Council shows that, unless otherwise provided for in law or particular statutes, while the role of the lay people is carefully limited to the task of providing help or assistance. The Council hastens to add the reason for the retention of the priest at the manager's desk:

"They, the priests, are to apply this property always to those purposes for the achievement of which the Church is allowed to own temporal goods. These are: the organization of divine worship, the provision of better support for the clergy and the exercise of the work of the apostolate, especially for the benefit of those in need.

Laymen could perhaps be more skilled than priests in the fields of finance and management. But a priest will surely be more conversant with the finality of the ecclesiastical patrimony and the needs to be met. Besides, the knowledge of law, economics and finance is not sufficient for the handling of the Church's temporal affairs. There are theological, historical and pastoral problems that must be dealt with by persons familiar with and sensitive to the ethical problems that are very much a part of modern economy.

The new Code sets the responsibility of ecclesiastical management on the immediate superior — ecclesiastical or lay person — of the juridic person to which the patrimony belongs (c. 1279, 1). Furthermore, all administrators — clerics and lay persons alike — who by legitimate title take part in the management of ecclesiastical property, are bound to discharge their duties in the name of the Church and in accordance with its laws (c. 1282).

FR. FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

## FACULTY TO HEAR CONFESSIONS

*I am a young religious priest. Every year I spend vacation with my family in Mindanao, helping the parish priest of my hometown. Upon his own request I was given by the local Ordinary faculty to hear confessions.*

*Last month I accompanied my sick mother to the United States. The Pastor of the locality asked me to help him in hearing confessions. When I told him that I had no faculty to hear confession in USA, he said I had since the one granted to me in the Philippines is also valid for the United States, according to the new Code of Canon Law. May I know whether this is correct or not?*

*A Religious Priest*

Undoubtedly the Pastor, mentioned by our consultant, referred to canon 967, § 2, which reads: "Whoever enjoys the faculty of habitually hearing the confessions of the Christian faithful, whether by virtue of office or concession by the Ordinary of the place of incardination or domicile, can exercise the same faculty everywhere, unless the Ordinary of the place refuses it in a particular case, keeping the prescription of canon 947, § 2-3."

It seems that the norm of canon 967, § 2 does not apply in our case. The young priest did not enjoy the faculties to hear confessions in the Philippines by virtue of an office but by virtue of concession of a local Ordinary, who unfortunately was not the Ordinary of his ordination nor of his domicile. The local Ordinary mentioned in the canon is the *Ordinary of the place of incardination* or the *Ordinary of the place of domicile*. Other Ordinaries of the place are not included.

With regards to the incardination, canon 266, § 2 says: "A person who is a member of a religious institute with perpetual vows will be incardinated as a cleric to said institute by the reception of diaconate." Incardination cannot be involved in the case as the source of faculties to hear confessions in the Uni-

ted States. The religious priest is not incardinated to the diocese of the local Ordinary of Mindanao who gave him the faculties.

Likewise, the local Ordinary who gave our consultant the faculties to hear confessions was the local Ordinary where his family has domicile. This domicile is not the domicile of the religious priest concerned. He says that he used to take his vacation with his family in Mindanao, implying that such place is different from the place of the religious house where he is assigned as religious. The domicile of a religious is not the domicile of his family, but the place of the religious house where he is assigned. Canon 103 states: "The members of religious institutes or societies of apostolic life acquire domicile in the place where the house where they are assigned is located." Since the domicile of the young priest is not within the diocese of the local Ordinary who gave him the faculty to hear confessions, this domicile cannot also be invoked as the source of faculty necessary to hear confession in USA.

It is obvious, therefore, that the young religious priest had no faculty to hear confessions in the United States by virtue of canon 967, § 2.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

## DOCUMENTATION

### POPE'S LETTER TO BISHOPS OF PHILIPPINES\*

#### Ministry of Teaching and Guidance at Service of Truth and Justice

To my Venerable Brothers, the Bishops of the Philippines:

The forthcoming Plenary Assembly offers me the welcome opportunity to address you once more, dear Brothers in the Episcopate, in order to manifest to you my most lively affection for yourselves and for the communities entrusted to your pastoral ministry, and in order to share some reflections with you, thus accepting the hope expressed to me by Cardinal Riccardo Vidal. To him I offer a special greeting, as he has been called to assume the task of President of the Episcopal Conference at a difficult moment for the history of the country and for the Church which fully shares the joy and hopes, the sorrows and difficulties of its inhabitants.

At this moment of transition, marked by serious and complex problems of different kinds, I wish to send a word of encouragement to all of you, and in the exercise of the mission entrusted by the Lord Jesus to Peter and his Successors to confirm his brethren in the faith, I invite you to place all your trust in Christ, who is our strength and salvation.

The political events which in the recent months have profoundly modified the public life of the Philippines have been the object of my attention and indeed apprehension, as I have had the occasion to express publicly in this regard, inviting our brethren in the faith in other countries to be united in prayer with the Filipino people.

It is thanks to the divine protection and the deep Christian spirit of your people — well known for their cordial, welcoming and peaceful openness to all — that during the grave tensions there was no recourse to violence, as had been feared.

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\* Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, N. 28 (945).

Only a short time has since passed, and there are numerous and impelling social, economic and political problems that await a concrete and effective response. I therefore understand your anxiety and desire as Pastors to express more explicitly your communion with the people entrusted to you, and to offer them serious and attentive moral guidance.

The Church in the Philippines cannot forget that a large portion of the population finds itself living in economic and social conditions that are extremely difficult and at times unbearable, and they demand a more human life, one more in harmony with the dignity of children of God.

Preferential love for the poor, which already in the past has not failed to inspire your pastoral ministry, must become one of the principal lines of action of that ministry, in the context of solidarity with all human beings and their history.

This service of love and fidelity to man must however be in conformity with the nature of the mission of the Church, which is not of the temporal but of the spiritual order, not of the social, political or economic order but of the religious one (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 42). This means, then, that the Church is called not to take positions of a political character, or to take part in partisan conflicts, but to give society the expert contribution which is proper to her, as the spiritual light and strength that can contribute to building and consolidating the human community. This service to man will demand an intense evangelical effort, which is the proclamation of God's salvation, in every context where people live and work. It will thus be faithful to an integral proclamation of the Gospel that must spread its light upon earthly realities, in such a way that man may be helped to free himself from everything that oppresses him and alienates him, so that he may be enabled to travel the path to his full self-realization, both earthly and transcendental.

At the present time, when the country seems to require more than ever the contribution of a disinterested service of the common good, and to demand an example of great moral integrity and social virtues, your efforts must seek to ensure the necessary formation of the consciences of the faithful at all levels of responsibility in society.

In this way it will be possible for you to stimulate the preparation of the laity to assume their responsibilities, as Christians and citizens, in the political construction and organ-

ization of social life. The Second Vatican Council itself has clearly stated that "the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which a person lives, is so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be properly exercised by others" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 13). There is no doubt that it is a question of a task that calls for the support of the spiritual guidance of the Bishops and priests.

In this ministry of teaching and guidance, at the service of truth and justice, no pastor can forget that he is also called to be an instrument of reconciliation and communion.

To you who are consecrated to have the care of the whole flock, without exclusions of any sort, there is entrusted the promotion of effective and concrete national reconciliation. You have the mission not to provoke or to deepen divisions, but to help in overcoming urgently and with decisiveness those that have been created or that at least have emerged among the population during recent events. This peacemaking activity too will, however, produce the desired results only to the extent that it is based upon an intense evangelizing activity.

The proclamation of the Good News must be carried out—of course in the concrete context of the life of the people and as a response to their most serious problems — will produce a profound unity that is not affected by the different political or socio-economic options.

Every Filipino will then, in a rediscovered sense of solidarity — the concrete consequence of human and supernatural fraternity — feel involved with the brethren in the faith and with all people of good will in the solution of the difficulties of the country.

The expectation of unity and increased solidarity includes solicitude for the present drawing up of the new Constitution.

I trust that all those who have been given this task will make their expert contribution and be vividly aware of the dignity of man and of his profoundest aspirations.

Aware of the sensitivity of the Filipino people to everything that concerns religious life and of your care in this particular sector, I am sure that the new Magna Charta will re-

state in an adequate manner the right of all citizens to religious freedom and will ensure the Church's liberty to carry out her mission, also in the sphere of teaching and assistance.

At the end of this letter, I wish to repeat to you that I am following with constant attention and deep affection your difficult ministry. I am accompanying the work of your Plenary Assembly with my prayer, and I send my special Apostolic Blessing, which I would like to extend to every diocesan community.

I cordially entrust you to the maternal protection of Mary, Mother of the Church.

From the Vatican, 28 June 1986.

JOANNES PAULUS P.P. II

## HISTORY

By Fr. Edilberto V. Santos

# *Dominican Towns in Pangasinan*

## URBIZTONDO

### *Origin and Boundaries*

"This town owes its foundation to Fr. Ramón Dalmau, O.P., who, in 1853, worked for its definitive separation from San Carlos, of which he was then the vicar, obtaining it that same year through a decree issued by Governor General Antonio de Urbiztondo. The latter, wanting to perpetuate his memory, gave his own surname to the new town."<sup>1</sup> The provincial chapter of the Dominicans accepted it as a vicariate in 1855.

The immediate neighbors of Urbiztondo in 1869 were San Carlos in the north, Bayambang in the east, and Mangatarem in the southwest.<sup>2</sup> The same was true in 1877.<sup>3</sup> And the same is true today.

### *Land, Plants and Animals*

Writing in 1869, Fr. Ramón Suárez gives us the following report:

"Urbiztondo has 2,000 tax payers, all of them Pangasinans. They all come from the town of San Carlos... They plant rice when the land allows them. The fields are not irrigated, but when the harvest gets spoiled, it is not due to lack of water, but due to an excess of it. The land gets flooded very easily because it has a low level. I don't know if this is the reason why there is still a lot of uncultivated land here.

<sup>1</sup> *Libertas*, año I, núm. 136, martes, 19 de diciembre de 1899. Manila (unsigned, unpaginated). See also Hilario Maria Ocio, O.P., MS in APSR, section "Ministerios," vol. I p. 1097.

<sup>2</sup> Ramón Suarez, O.P., *Apuntes curiosos sobre los pueblos de Pangasinán*, MS in APSR, section "Pangasinán," vol. 7, doc. 15a, fol. 192.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous, MS in APSR, section "Pangasinán," vol. 7, doc. 19 (unpaginated, one sheet).

"They also plant a little indigo. They raise cows and horses. But their forte is bananas, of which their plantations produce an abundance. They bring boatloads of it to as far as Lingayen for wholesale. Also they have gardens where they plant vegetables.

"Their brooks are teeming with fish, including flying fishes (*volateria acuática*). They bring big baskets (*canastas y tancales*) containing live ducks to the market of Calasiao. Both in San Carlos and in Urbiztondo, one often finds *tapa*, that is, cured meat of wild ducks and similar birds (*cecina de pato silvestre y de otras aves análogas*).

"In the forests — if I may be allowed to use the word to mean the groves which abound there — one can find turtle doves and ring-doves moving around freely whenever their season comes. As everyone knows, the ring-dove is a transient bird in the island of Luzon, because it appears only at a definite season of the year.<sup>4</sup> What at first I referred to as the "forests" (*bosques*) of the Urbiztondo and San Carlos, I should, on second thought, just call "groves" (*matorrales*), because they have no timber for construction purposes except small *bisales* and *bula-laos*. Even if one finds there some wood (*algunos arboletes*), they are of poor kind and serve no purpose.

"Between Agno River and the town square, there is a bridge over a *sapa*. I don't know what Spanish word to use to refer to a kind of shallow canal (*cauce*) which on rainy days is filled with water that does not flow and, during summer, becomes dry. I don't know where it begins or where it ends. All that I know is that it follows the road of San Carlos, quite far from Urbiztondo, and then reappears in the west and takes the same direction as the road. Over the Agno, on the road going to Mangatarem, there is a bridge connecting the two towns, which is passable only during the dry season. This bridge dates back to three or four years ago, that is, from the time that Mangatarem directed its road to Urbiztondo. Before that, travelers passed by Quetequet."<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the accuracy of the above quoted report, Fr. Suárez himself admits frankly that there is a limitation to it. He

<sup>4</sup> "En sus bosques, si bosques se pueden llamar los matorrales de que abunda, hay también bastante caza de tórtolas y boabuos(?) con sus respectivos tiempos; pues nadie ignora que el boabuo o paloma torcaz se puede en la isla de Luzon contar como ave de tránsito, puesto que no aparece mas que en cierto tiempo del año." (Suárez, *ibid.*, fol. 192-192v).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

writes: "I am not very familiar with the place because I passed by there only once and that was many years ago."<sup>6</sup>

*The Plaza, Buildings and People (1877)*

An unsigned document, which must have been written eight months after October 1876, says the following about this town:

"Urbiztondo does not have buildings that would attract one's attention. The church is made of brick and has no definite style. It is still under construction. The convent is also made of brick and was constructed, like the church, by Fr. Francisco Treserra who was the first pastor (*cura*) of the town and who worked actively during the few years he administered this parish. Most of the houses are made of *nipa* and bamboo.

"At the middle of the town, there is a square (*plaza cuadrada*). It looks beautiful with the twelve wooden posts<sup>7</sup> standing there. On top of each of them was a cross made of molave wood.

"Urbiztondo is situated on an esplanade and is surrounded by thick forests. Here, some natives dedicate themselves to clearing parts of it to plant corn and sugar cane. Here, there is no special industry. Everybody dedicates himself to the cultivation of rice. A few are engaged in planting cacao and coffee.

"The main language is Pangasinan. Also spoken is Ilocano. Their customs, dress, games and recreations do not differ at all from those of the rest of the Indios.

"Urbiztondo, being a new town, does not have historical events to talk about."<sup>8</sup>

*Pastors (1854-1877)*

The anonymous chronicler who has just been quoted above enumerates eight priests who, he says, took charge of the new town, starting from the above-mentioned Fr. Treserra and ending with the incumbent at the time of the writing. Be-

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., fol. 192.

<sup>7</sup> *Pilaritos?* or *Pilarettes?* Not clear in the MS.

<sup>8</sup> Anonymous, *ibid.*

fore making the enumeration, he first remarks that the names he was about to list here had been lifted from the official records of the parish (the *libros canónicos*), and that, in Urbiztondo, "there had been no famous priest." The roster is as follows: (1) Francisco Treserra (February 1854-November 1861); (2) Félix S. Cantador (up to July 1866); (3) Miguel Adán (up to April 1868); (4) José Caniel (up to September 1869); (5) Francisco Claudio, *ad interim* (up to April 1870); (6) Miguel Limárquez (up to February 1872); (7) Joaquín Manés Casademont (up to October 1876); and (8) Juan T. Núñez, "the present pastor, who has been in charge for the past eight months."<sup>9</sup>

*The Plaza, Buildings and Roads (1899)*

Additional informations are given in an 1899 issue of the *Libertas*. It says:

"Urbiztondo has a big, beautiful square surrounded by houses. It has wide streets, all stretching from the square and laid out with the help of ropes extended from one end to the other (*tiradas a cordel*). The plan was traced by the first vicar, Fr. Francisco Treserra, O.P., who was also the one who remodelled the church, using bricks for material. Fr. Treserra was furthermore responsible for the construction of the convent and of the town hall, the latter also made of bricks. The convent and the church, dedicated to St. Pius V (feast: May 5) are on the eastern side of the square, while the town hall is on the northern side, that is, in front.

"The roads connecting Urbiztondo with the nearby towns are quite bad, especially during rainy season. They get easily flooded because their level is very low. To go to Mangatarem, one has to cross the Agno River either by boat (*balsa*) during the months of rain or by the bamboo bridge placed there by the people of Mangatarem.

"East of the town is a cemetery built by Fr. Miguel G. Adán. An ever increasing number of girls and boys frequent the schools. The climate is humid and uncomfortably hot. The language is Pangasinan."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Libertas, ibid.*

URDANETA<sup>11</sup>*Its location, founding and boundaries*

The town of Urdaneta, so called after the famous Augustinian navigator and cosmographer Father Andrés de Urdaneta, is located on a flat and very fertile terrain, almost the center of Pangasinan, and destined, as Father Suárez remarked in 1869, to grow with the passing of time into a large population center.<sup>12</sup> This prediction came true, for today, more than a century later, Urdaneta has become not only a large commercial town but also the head of the diocese.

Its founding as a civil municipality goes back to the year 1858, and the Dominicans received it officially as a ministry of the Order in the Provincial Chapter of 1863, under the advocacy and patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

According to Fr. Suárez, its bordering towns at the time of its erection into a municipality were: Asingan in the east with a slight deflection to the north, at about two leagues' distance; in the northeast, Binalonan at about a league and a half; in the north with some deflection to the west, Manaoag; on the northwest, Mangaldan, at a distance of three to four leagues; in the west, with a little deflection to the south, Santa Bárbara, at two leagues; and finally, in the south with a bit of deflection to the east, Villasis, at one league and a half.<sup>13</sup>

It was formed from the following barrios: Bactad, taken from Asingan; Nancamaliran, from Santa Bárbara; Cayambanan, Mitura and others, from Mangaldan; and a portion of Suneg, from Malasiqui. Before its formation it was administered, as a "visita" from Binalonan.<sup>14</sup>

*First Pastors*

The first "Vicar" or Parish Priest of Urdaneta was Father Félix Sánchez Cantador, who attended to it from his usual

<sup>11</sup> What follows, up to the end of the article, has been lifted by me — almost completely — from an essay written in May 1985 by the Very Rev. Fr. Pablo Fernández, O.P., for the first bishop of Urdaneta, the Most Reverend Pedro G. Magugat, M.S.C., D.D., who had requested him to write one.

<sup>12</sup> Suárez, *ibid.*, fol. 199v.

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

<sup>14</sup> Jose Ma. González, *Labor Evangélica y Civilizadora de los Religiosos Dominicos en Pangasinán*, 1587-1898 (Manila: U.S.T. Press, 1956) p. 111.

residence of Binalonan. The second was Father Nicolás Manrique Alonso, who, according to Father Ocio, worked actively and fast in the construction of the first church buildings.<sup>15</sup> However, the most salient figure among the Dominicans who administered Urdaneta throughout a lapse of forty brief years, was Father Rafael Cano, as we shall see now.<sup>16</sup>

### *Church Buildings*

The construction of the church that has come down to our times was started by Father Cano on March 4, 1884. Until then, and even after a *camarin* or barn-like structure, constructed of wooden walls which stood on a brick basement and were covered by a galvanized iron roofing, served as a provisional church.<sup>17</sup>

Father Cano raised the walls of the Church up to one meter high, and one meter high they remained for so many years as far as the solid work was concerned. The rest consisted of Pampangan walls (*tabique pampango*) roofed with corrugated iron sheets.<sup>18</sup>

The convent was built for the most part by Father Manrique and further improved by Father Cano.<sup>20</sup>

### *Roads and culverts*

The often mentioned Father Manrique opened the roads connecting Urdaneta with its neighbouring towns. About the eighties, other priests constructed culverts in them in order to facilitate the flow of the water to the other side of the fields.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Hilario Ma. Ocio, *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Real Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1895), p. 916.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 986.

<sup>17</sup> Valentín Marín y Morales, O.P., *Ensayo de una Síntesis de los Trabajos Realizados por las corporaciones religiosas de Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de Santo Tomás, 1901), vol. 2, p. 661.

<sup>18</sup> González, *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Marín y Morales, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> González, *ibid.*

## **SANCTITY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

by Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P.

### **THE VENERABLE MADRE PAULA DE LA SANTISIMA TRINIDAD, V.O.T.**

Foundress of the Beaterio de Santa Rosa

*By Father Francisco Gaínza, O.P.*

Over a century ago (1750) there arrived in Manila a truly great woman, enthusiastic and full of initiative, of a lively and burning faith, of a magnanimous heart, of grandiose plans, of a heroic abnegation, of a blind obedience to the Lord's designs; rigid in the practice of poverty, amazing for her penance and endowed with a sterling charity, who chose to renounce a rich inheritance and, relinquishing her fatherland and defying the risks of travelling across stormy seas, went through the Americas (México) and finally arrived in this City (Manila) in order to accomplish a mission that Heaven had planned for her in the Philippine Islands.

This manly woman, strong and wonderful, was none other than the celebrated Madre Paula, foundress of the Beaterio of Santa Rosa and honor of the Dominican order.

This virtuous tertiary was born in the town of Esplugacalva, diocese of Tarragona, on 16 October, 1713, from parents rich in temporal goods but still richer in virtue, who provided her with an education fitting her social condition. Yet, they had little to do about this matter for, it seems, she drew from the womb of her mother that inclination to virtue in which she excelled from her tenderest age, but with such conviction and discretion that before her tenth year she was well versed not only in the skills of her sex but also well prepared for the frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and Communion with a fervor and purity superior to her age yet equal to her virtue.

When she had reached that age, her mother died and, before her passing she called for her, thus speaking to her: "Daughter, there remains for you as mother the Virgin of the Rosary; try to be a good Christian for she shall not fail you." And soon after she died.

Giving full credence to the words of her mother, Paula went to church together with her little sister and, prostrating herself before an altar of the Virgin, she requested her to receive her for her daughter. And the joy she felt was so overflowing that it was enough — as we read in her *Life*, written by her Confessor — to wipe out her tears and to console her bereft father, while openly proclaiming that she had greatly benefitted from this exchange.

Although, due to the passing of her mother, she had to take the responsibilities of the house, she procured to reconcile her domestic duties with her fervent desires to perfect herself more and more. Hence, in the midst of a very busy life, she tried to frequent the sacraments, intensify her prayer, practice rigorous penances and advance in virtue at the same time that she was growing in age.

She was already twenty two years old, when she was inspired by God to relinquish her home and, ever-willing on her part to carry out the thought she had been entertaining since her childhood of embracing the Religious life, she resolutely spoke to her father thus: "My sister is old enough and possesses sufficient ability to govern the household. She, in due time, will get married for your consolation. I relinquish in her favour my inheritance (*mayorazgo*) and with your blessing I will go to the city of Lérida to be a domestic servant so that in this way I may subdue my strong temperament and have access to His Lordship [the bishop] who shall facilitate for me the way of entering the convent...

Not without deep regret and with a painful feeling her father consented to the departure of his daughter. In fact, Paula settled down as a housemaid, and after some time her employers formed such a high concept of her that they placed her in a farm, trusting her fully and passing on to her their responsibility. Very soon a great improvement was noticed in the farm, and even in the town where she was. She devoted herself to the instruction of the tenants and of the town's girls. The parish priest entrusted to her the teaching of the Doctrine, and the bishop granted indulgences to those who attended her instructions. The spiritual harvest that she gathered through her untiring labors seemed incredible.

On the other hand, she was so greatly esteemed that the bishop himself, her director, awaited for her daily going from the farm to the city — which was an hour's travel — heard

her confession and administered to her Holy Communion during his Mass. However, he did not allow her to become a nun, aware as he was that she would bear more fruit by being outside of the cloister. Yet, he allowed her to don the habit of the Third Order [of St. Dominic].

For two years and a half Paula lived this kind of life, after which and having first visited her home-town, she proceeded to Manresa, alone, on foot, without means, letter, companion, guide nor knowledge of the way, only with a lively faith and trust in God, who was her guide along the journey. The kind of life that she led in this city was amazing. She rose at four o'clock in the morning and kept herself busy until eight, by hearing Masses, praying and practising other acts of piety. From eight until eleven in the evening she occupied herself in spinning, crocheting and other manual labours with which she earned her living and gave many alms. She taught many the way of virtue; wore hair-shirts (*cilicios*), barely took any food and, in addition, recited fifteen, twenty and even twenty five parts of the Rosary daily, in such a way that, although she kept her hands busy, her spirit was always immersed in God.

After having been for three years in Manresa, God inspired her to transfer to Barcelona, where she went in the same poverty and with her unlimited confidence in God. There she took for her director the celebrated Father Casas, whom the Master of the order himself, Revmo. Boxadors appointed [later on] as her perpetual confessor, strictly forbidding that he would be removed from Manila.

The life that she led in Barcelona was even more rigorous. She reached the point of not taking more than three ounces of bread and water every forty eight hours, and this throughout the whole Lent. During the Holy Week she took a soup of bread, water and salt on Holy Tuesday and Thursday, and absolutely nothing on the other days, to the wonderment of the doctors that were consulted, for it seemed impossible to keep herself agile and robust with such scanty food. The same proportion she kept in the other penances, prayer, and spiritual exercises. Wrote her confessor at that time: "Her heart is burning in love for sinners and she ardently prays to God for the salvation of souls, bearing also in mind the common needs."

The tangible result of this burning charity, of this zeal for the salvation of the souls of her fellowbeings was her heroic

resolution of coming to these Islands in order to found an establishment where she could carry out her pious apostolate. For a long time she had been feeling the call for this undertaking, as great as it was difficult for a young woman without means, protection or influence.

She persistently had referred the matter to her confessor, foretelling him that he himself would come to the Philippines, even long before he ever gave a thought to the idea of enlisting for this holy province (i.e. the Religious province of Our Lady of the Rosary). For quite a time she could not obtain his permission due to the great difficulties that her project entailed. She had to bear not a few contradictions, calumnies and mortifications from men but, feeling impelled by the Spirit of God, she was not discouraged by the obstacles that crossed her path and, facing everything squarely, she made a firm resolution to carry to a conclusion this far-reaching plan, whose origin and importance was justified afterwards by time and by its results.

On January 7th, 1747 Paula went aboard a small uncomfortable ship, without provisions for the journey, alone and with no other travelling companion than Our Lord, Who had promised her to protect her from all the dangers that she might run into among the sailors that usually are not people of a delicate conscience, as in effect it came to pass because the ship-master having permitted himself one night impure advances on her, suddenly fell at the feet of Paula a prey of acute pains in which he saw a severe punishment [from above]. Since then, he and the others formed a high idea about the sanctity of Paula.

Her voyage was an interrupted mission. She instructed and prepared for a general Confession those people of loose morals; she encouraged them not to yield to four English men of war which had surrounded them, promising them the Lord's protection and a favorable wind with whose help they could disentangle themselves from such a perilous situation. She bore all the privations inherent to a trip full of adversities... for it lasted three months when it could have been done in eight days; she was always on deck under a burning sun or bearing the brunt of the winds or rains, God so willing it for her greater purification and the edification of those men who, grateful and full of wonderment, published in Cádiz the virtues Paula and the extraordinary happenings of their journey...

A journey undertaken under such visible protection from God, could not but be crowned with a happy ending, for they

successfully reached Veracruz, but not without having run the serious risk of being captured by fourteen English warships which were infesting those waters and blockading that harbour.

It is not easy to describe what Paula did all along this journey. Enough to say that many, through her instruction, made a general Confession; she taught the cabin-boys and other service personnel the Christian doctrine; she was always ready to pray the Rosary, which was her constant occupation, thus giving the whole crew a rare example; and, if there arose a quarrel, all shut their mouths and became silent at the very moment that she opened her lips...

It is not my purpose to report the predigious incidents that happened to her from Veracruz to Mexico. In that city she cured a gentleman of the Third Order [of St. Dominic], named Don Juan de la Escalera, so that he might be able to accompany her during her journey; in Córdoba she restored to health a lady by enjoining her to meditate with a lively faith and for short while on the Passion of Our Lord; in Orizala she foretold the death, and prepared him to receive it in a holy manner, of Domingo Bueno, who had welcomed her into his house when she passed through that town; on her way to Puebla she converted a sailor of loose morals by revealing to him the state of his soul and his approaching death, as it actually happened on their arrival in the city [of Mexico]...

As she had foretold, she found in Mexico forty five Religious who, besides her confessor Father Casas, had been kept waiting there for want of an opportunity to cross over to the Philippines. On July 15, 1750 she boarded their same ship, and safely reached the shores of Manila.

Having arrived, after three years and a half, to the place of her inspirations and desires, she began at once the great work which had constantly preoccupied her during so many and long journeys. And she could accomplish so much by means of her virtue and modesty that she collected alms, rented some houses, gathered together the poorest native, mulatto and slave girls, and in a short time saw herself surrounded by two hundred of them, whom she provided with food and an education.

It is not easy to express in a few words how much she did and what kind of life she led in the thirty two years that she headed the Institution, and how considerable was her influence with the Archbishop, Governor, *Audiencia* and Authorities, who

backed her up against false imputations and calumnies; with the Master General who ordered from Rome that her Confessor be not removed from Manila; with Charles III himself whom she wrote requesting him to confirm the Beaterio and to take it under his Royal protection which in fact he did.

His Lordship, Basilio Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina, who always esteemed her very much, visited her in her last illness and with affectionate words comforted her in the Lord. Finally, having received the last sacraments of the Church, surrounded by many of our Religious that commended her to God, with arms outstretched in the form of the cross, she joyfully passed away at the age of sixty nine on the 16th of the month of June of the year 1782.

So far Father Gaínza. However, we shall not bring to a close this biographical sketch of Madre Paula without describing the miracle of the saber of the British soldier, which took place at the Beaterio at the time of the assault, capture and sack of the city of Manila by the British expeditionary forces from Madras, India, in 1762. It is thus reported by the historian Joaquín Fonseca, O.P., in his poetic but vigorous style:

"The slaughter finally ceased, but the pillaging — in spite of what had been stipulated beforehand — continued; the turpitude of the soldier not sparing either the honor of the matron or the virginity of the maiden, who were the victims everywhere of his brutal appetites. Either rape or death: this was the sad alternative offered to unlucky beauty.

"According to ancient histories, many young women who had sought refuge in the 'Beaterio' of Santa Rosa of this city of Manila in the hour of danger, were ravished; and Mother Paula, the foundress and directress of the said Institution bore witness to the fact that none of its female inmates suffered such calamity from the beastly soldiery; adding, besides, in a letter to the Master General of the Order that, one of the attackers having raised his saber to kill a girl who resisted his advances against her purity, she emerged alive through a miracle that God worked on her behalf.

"In effect, when the sacrilegious weapon was gyrating in the air to fall on the neck of the innocent virgin, it got twisted, shrinking and forming angular sinuosities, as if an invisible hand had made it ineffective to wound at that moment the maiden.

"The soldier, bewildered at the sight of the prodigy," Mother Paula further adds, "threw the saber away, which I preserve as a constant reminder; and, horrified, the other soldiers fled."

"He who narrates and writes this has seen with his eyes and held with his hands the miraculous saber, which is still preserved, twisted and in the same miraculous condition as it was at the time when the British, frightened at the sight of the portent, threw it away. It is a divine trophy, an immortal monument, erected by the hand of the Almighty to the triumph of virginity and its beauty". (This saber must have disappeared in the burning of Santa Rosa College, as a sequel of a Japanese bombing, on December 27, 1941).

(Source: *Milicia de Jesucristo. Manual de los Hermanos y Hermanas de la Tercera Orden de Penitencia de Santo Domingo*, por su director el R.P. Fr. Francisco Gaínza, Manila, 1850, Establecimiento tipográfico del Colegio de Santo Tomás; Joaquín Fonseca, *Historia de los PP. Dominicos*, etc., Madrid, 1871, Tomo IV, pp. 631-632.)

## PASTORAL SECTION

By Fr. Wilfredo C. Paguio

### RIGHT TO THE SACRAMENTS

Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God (c. 204, 1). These faithful of Christ have the right to be assisted by their pastors from the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the Word of God and the sacraments (c. 213).

For pastors, therefore, it is important to know who these Christ's faithful are, who, by being baptized, have the right to the sacraments.

Since all those who are baptized are incorporated into the Church (c. 849), this problem identifies itself with the question on membership in the (Roman Catholic) Church.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

Looking back at history, we find that there was a doctrine of *mere belonging* tracing itself from Bellarmine to the Second Vatican Council.

#### BELLARMINE TO PIUS XII

Bellarmino's thought had a large following even including Pius XII and *Mystici Corporis*. He treated this problem in his *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Adversaria*. He said that to be a member of the Church, the following are necessary: (1) an external baptism; (2) an external expression of faith; (3) subjection to the unity of the hierarchy under the direction of the Pope.

Since there is only one Church to which one is either a member or not, Bellarmine concluded that catechumens, schismatics, apostates, heretics and the excommunicated are excluded because they were not subject to the legitimate pastor.

The problem, however, arose when Bellarmine was confronted with the question on reconciling the truth "outside the Church, there is no salvation" with the cases of persons who

live without the above mentioned three conditions. To this, he responded by distinguishing the manner of belonging to the Church. Those who possess the three requirements are *members in actuality* and the others are *members in potency*.

Pius IX wrote an encyclical on the subject with the same ideas. Vatican I upheld the same principles. Leo XIII, in his *Satis Cognitum* (1896), introduced the concept of the mystical body to the elements affirmed by Vatican I. He emphasized the three visible requirements of Bellarmine and explicitly deduced that baptized non-Catholics are outside the communion of the Church. Pius XI added nothing significant.

Pius XII, in his *Mystici Corporis* (1943), gives the most important insights previous to Vatican II. He said that the Roman Catholic Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. To belong to the Church, a person must possess the requirements which correspond to the nature and the unity of this Body. The Mystical Body, as the Roman Catholic Church, is a visible society and thus the bonds that unite its members should be both visible and invisible. Those who do not have the visible reality cannot have the invisible reality. Those who, in good faith, remain outside the Church, are outside of it, although they are members in potency. In no. 21 of the encyclical, however, the Pope affirms that, in the Church, the actual and real members are those who receive regeneration of water and the Spirit, profess the true faith and are joined to the legitimate authority. Thus, he returns to the constitutional requirements of Bellarmine.

## RECENT AUTHORS

Schmaus says that the sacramental character gives an unloseable conformation of being in and with Christ in his dying and rising. He who is baptized has this conformation to Christ which cannot be lost and which is the ontological foundation of being united with Christ. The other two of Bellarmine's requirements, viz., external expression of faith and subjection to the hierarchy under the Pope, are but visible signs of this ontological reality and are therefore, not equally important. They only become subjective elements.

For Morsdorf, a valid baptism constitutes membership in the Church. It confers a constitutional belonging. Catholics have an actual active belonging to her. Baptized non-Catholics have a passive constitutional belonging to her. To be activated, the latter must be externally professed in the Roman Catholic Church.

Schmaus and Morsdorf, therefore, believe that baptism alone is required for membership in the Church.

Morell and Congar revive the question of the word "*reapse*" in the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*. For them, this word does not mean "*really*" but "*entirely*" and "*fully*". From here, they conclude that baptized non-Catholics can "*really*" be members of the Church though not "*entirely*" and "*fully*". Catholics, however, not only "*really*" but also "*entirely*" and "*fully*" belong to the Church. They, therefore, admit real belonging to the Church even for non-Catholics.

## SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The Council fathers state that baptism constitutes the sacrosanct bond of unity in the Church (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 22). What is ontologically begun here must have a further deepening in what is to follow. There must be an integral incorporation into the paschal mystery. This incorporation is the insertion into the Eucharistic communion.

There must also be a hierarchical involvement of subjection. Christ has entrusted the ruling and direction of the Church to the apostles. And it is thus continued in the hierarchy (*Ibid.*, 2).

Here, we see that Vatican II gives the primary importance to baptism. However, it hastens to add that this is not sufficient. The other two requirements must also be present. Again, therefore, we have the three constitutive conditions of Bellarmine.

Moreover, the same Decree of the Council asserts that "all who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ." Due to this, "men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church" (no. 3).

*Lumen Gentium* (no. 15) confirms this assertion of *Unitatis Redintegratio* describing baptized non-Catholics as united with the Church though not in full communion with her. At the same time, it also gives the list of conditions for those who would be in full communion with her (no. 14). Which are the same as those given by Bellarmine.

## REVISED CODE OF CANON LAW

Following *Lumen Gentium* (no. 14), therefore, c. 205 enumerates the conditions for full communion with the Church, namely, baptism and visible connection with the Church's struc-

ture by the profession of faith, reception of the sacraments and adherence to ecclesiastical governance.

### NO BREAK WITH CHURCH

In this connection, those in doubt regarding the contents of the deposit of faith and those things proposed as divinely revealed including heretics (c. 751) and apostates (c. 751) do not break communion with the Church. As a matter of fact, they can still be sanctioned if they do not mend their ways (c. 1364, 2). Traditionally, even those who leave the Church (cc. 1071, 1, 40; 1086; 1117) cannot fully break with her (c. 11). Disagreement or dissent with Church authorities does not cause a break either. Even schismatics are still subject to the Church though not in full communion.

### NOT IN FULL COMMUNION

Those not in full communion with the Church can receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and anointing of the sick under certain conditions (c. 844).

Members of the oriental churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church and other churches in the same condition as the oriental churches according to the judgment of the Apostolic See can receive the above mentioned three sacraments from Catholic ministers provided that they ask for the sacraments on their own accord and that they are properly disposed.

Christians who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church may also receive the same sacraments from a Catholic minister on the following conditions: when there is serious need; when it is possible according to the judgment of the diocesan bishop or of the bishops' conference; when the recipients manifest that they are properly disposed.

Danger of death is an example of serious need. Other serious needs would be cases of imprisonment, persecution (Ecumenical Directory I, 55) and prolonged deprivation of the Eucharist (*Dopo Pubblicazione*, 6). The Catholic Bishops' Conference leaves to the judgment of the diocesan bishop to determine if there are some other grave and pressing needs which may warrant the administration of the sacraments here in question to Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church (cfr. CBCP Monitor, VI, 6, pp. 33-34). As regards the Eucharist, the recipients should not only believe in the real presence but also in the whole doctrine of the Catholic Church on this sacrament (*Dopo Pubblicazione*, 7).

## CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH

On the children of the Church, we can say that, for licitude, they have to receive the sacraments from Catholic ministers (c. 844, 1). Moreover, whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ's faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist or anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose churches these sacraments are valid.

These sacraments are valid in those churches where the substance of the Eucharistic teaching, the sacrament of orders and apostolic succession are kept (Ecumenical Directory, 55). For example, the Eastern Orthodox Churches separated in good faith (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 27).

Catechumens who, moved by the Holy Spirit, seek with explicit intention to be incorporated into the Church are by that very intention joined to it. With love and solicitude Mother Church already embraces them as her own (*Lumen Gentium*, 14; c. 849).

From what we have discussed, therefore, we see that all men are called to unity with God. But there are various levels in which this is realized. The first and foremost bond of this unity is the sacramental and ontological basic bond of baptism which confers a radical belonging to the Church of Christ and which gives certain rights like the reception of some sacraments which is recognized by the Church in her sacred canons.

With haste, however, we add that Christ's faithful in the Roman Catholic Church have the full and entire right to her abundant spiritual riches especially to the Word of God and to the totality of the sacraments. This, moreover, if asked opportunely and reasonably without any irregularity nor penalty following the laws for licitude and validity.

Auricular confession, for example, should be requested on the day or time suited to the minister except in danger of death (c. 986). The excommunicated, the interdicted and those who are manifestly in grave sin can be denied the Eucharist (c. 915). The following affect the reception of orders: insanity; apostasy, heresy or schism; attempted marriage; homicide or abortion; mutilation and attempted suicide; and abuse of sacred order (cc. 843; 1041). And, above all, rules for lawful and valid reception of each sacrament should be obeyed.

## HOMILETICS

### HOMILETICAL NOTES

**JANUARY:** by Fr. Hermogenes Bacareza, S.V.D.

**FEBRUARY:** by Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P.

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD**

**January 1, 1987**

The new title of the feast today, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God (or Divine Maternity) was introduced by Pope Paul VI to replace the old title, Octave Day of Christmas and Circumcision of our Lord. The new emphasis has been laid on the divine motherhood of Mary. Historically, however, the divine motherhood of Mary was the oldest celebration of our Lady's feast in the Roman liturgy.

We belong to God's own family by adoption, by grace (Gal. 4:4-7). In today's feast, Mary's Divine Motherhood, we celebrate the cooperation of Mary in this "marvelous exchange" in which "we have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled Himself to share in our humanity." Mary became both the Mother of God and the Mother of Christ's mystical Body, the Church. (*Ordo*, 29)

*First Reading:* Number 6: 22-27

*Second Reading:* Galatians 4: 4-7

*Gospel Reading:* Luke 2: 16-21

**Theme:** *The need for a human mother*

#### 1. Born of a woman

It is very significant that St. Paul, in today's second reading, tells us that Christ was "born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). This seems to be the only time he spoke about Mary. The Jews would ordinarily not say that. Normally, they would say "begotten by",

and then name the father of the child. The mother would not be mentioned at all. However, if the mother is mentioned by St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians, it suggests that he is aware that Jesus has no human father, that he was virginally conceived, that Mary was the only human factor in the procreation of Jesus. But even if this cannot serve as a clear proof, one thing however is quite clear: Paul claims that Jesus, whose divine nature he staunchly upholds, has a human mother. Therefore, Mary, that woman mentioned by him, is the mother of God. That could be the reason why this text of St. Paul's letter to Galatians is chosen for the feast of today.

## 2. Jesus wanting to be like us, except in sin

Sometimes we ask ourselves these questions: Why did Jesus want to have a human mother? Could He not have procured for Himself the complete equipment of adult manhood without starting from scratch as He did, without going through that tedious process of embryonic existence, deprived of every shred of freedom, without any say in his growth and development? He chose to be enclosed in the dark cavern of a womb waiting in utter helplessness for His first birthday. He was set on passing through all stages of human evolution, in total dependence on parental care from gestation to breastfeeding and childhood till He could reach adolescence and grow into manhood, without making use of any privilege. He simply wanted to be like us in all things but sin (Heb. 2:15).

## 3. Jesus needing Mary's tender loving care

Jesus needed a mother, unless He wanted to be a superman or monster. He was not only to be conceived, fed, and fashioned in her womb; He was to be nursed as a little tot at her breast, to be guided in His faltering steps, and to be taught to lips the first syllables of his Galilean dialect. He had to grow up in her arms and later on under her custody. Jesus needed Mary as any child needs his mother. He needed her kindness and understanding. He needed her sympathy and encouragement, her example and inspiration, in order to grow up to a well balanced individual. And Mary did not fail Him.

## 4. Stepping stone to perfection

There is still another reason why Jesus needed a human mother. He came to redeem us from the shackles of sin. What is sin after all? It is pride shown in disobedience. Jesus had to counteract it by humility in obedience. "He humbled Himself, being obedient even unto His death on the cross" (Phil. 2:7).

It was by obedience to a woman, by His subordination to her in the first years of His life, that Jesus had trained Himself in that perfect obedience which was total, final and heroic on the cross and which spelled our salvation.

As Mary was the physical mother of Jesus, so is she our spiritual mother. Let us, therefore, foster sentiments of filial love for her, depend on her as Christ did, and express our sentiments in prayer. Let us model ourselves after Mary as Christ did, who looked and acted like Mary in His own masculine way. (M)

## THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

January 4, 1987

The Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated in the Philippines on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. It commemorates the manifestation of Jesus for the first time to the non-Jews in the person of the Magi (wise men). This seems to be a Western invention, for historically in the East, the feast was mainly a commemoration of Jesus' baptism, hence the first epiphany or self-manifestation of the Lord. Later there came the second epiphany, the self-manifestation of Jesus at the wedding party in Cana where He changed water into wine.

What was originally in the East a feast in honor of Jesus' baptism, or in honor of Jesus' revealing His divinity at the wedding feast in Cana, was changed in the West as primarily commemorating the manifestation of Jesus Himself to the Magi.

Why is the Feast of the Epiphany celebrated elsewhere on January 6? Fr. Herman Müller, SVD, answers this question in his book, *Speak, Lord*; (A). He says:

January 6 was chosen for the date of Epiphany because St. Epiphanius suggests that in Egypt and Arabia a feast

in honor of the birth of Aion, daughter of the virgin Kore in connection with the winter solstice was celebrated on that day. Furthermore, Pliny, St. Epiphanius and St. John Chrysostome speak about certain wonders connected with January 5: spring water was changed into wine; water drawn on that day never turned foul. In order to christianize both the pagan feast and the wonders, the feast of Epiphany was celebrated. (p. 102)

The prophet Isaiah writes: "Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you (*first reading*). In Christ Jesus the Gentiles are now co-heirs with the Jews, members of the same body and sharers of the promise through the preaching of the gospel (*second reading*). Through the Mari astrologers the first non-Jews come to Jesus, who reveals Himself to them (*Good News*).

*First Reading:* Isaiah 60: 1-6

*Second Reading:* Ephesians 3: 2-3, 5-6

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 2: 1-12

Theme: *Reaching out to the star*

Many of our modern "astrologers" are mostly wrong in their predictions based on the movements of the stars. In December 1968 three American astronauts were scheduled to make the first flight to the moon. The whole world was watching. A few weeks before the take-off the British astrologers predicted that the flight would be a flop. Why? Because two planets, Jupiter and Uranus, would be close together, causing some personality changes in astronauts. As we know, the prediction was totally wrong. The Apollo 8 Flight was a success.

An Indian astrologer last year predicted that the previous Philippine president would win in a landslide victory in the snap election. According to the partial Batasang Pambansa, he won, but the Filipino people believed he lost the election. People power prevailed. Another astrologer predicted that the marriages of certain actors and actresses in Hollywood would succeed or fail because of the position of certain stars. The astrologer was proven wrong and had to eat his words. Another instance where astrologers were totally wrong.

## 1. True astrologers and their correct judgment

The Magi in today's Good News were actually astrologers who learned about Jesus' birth. The news about the birth of Jesus was for these wise men a special message since it involved the search for the newborn child. "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We observed His star rising and have come to pay Him homage" (Mt. 2, 1-2). Yes, they followed a star and found the Infant Jesus in a tiny crib in Bethlehem's cave. Then they offered their coffers and presented the Infant Jesus with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

## 2. Lessons of the star

What does the star that led the Magi tell us? The star tells us that neither the Wise Men nor we can find the Savior and salvation without a sign from heaven. Without God's help and grace, our search will end in frustration. Secondly, the star tells us that the Baby in the manger came from heaven. Although wholly and charmingly human and suffering from hunger and discomfort like any other infant, Jesus is nevertheless different from them. His Father is in heaven and He is the Son of God. Thirdly, the star tells us that the new heaven and God can be found here on earth even in poverty and privation, in suffering and in pain. For Christ made Himself familiar with us and left His blessings upon us. He still makes His presence, strength and grace felt in us. He makes us part of His redeeming passion and death.

## 3. The star showing us the way

What could be more consoling to us than to know that the star that led the Magi on to Bethlehem also tells us that our faith in him is a gift from heaven? Salvation is not man-made. It stems from a divine initiative of which the manger is a symbol. But most of all, the star is there to show us the way. It does not give us a free ride. We have to follow it laboriously. We have to follow the promptings of our faith throughout our whole life. Our whole life is actually nothing

else but a constant search for Jesus. That is indeed its true meaning: not to find riches, comfort, and achievements; but to find Jesus and heaven.

#### 4 Finding Jesus in man

Why are we here on earth to discover Jesus? Why am I here in this place to look for Jesus? To find Him in the Church which is the Risen Christ continued, to encounter Him in the sacraments where He touches and contacts us with His saving grace? To find Him in myself? Do I see His face when I look into a mirror? My face may be ugly, but that does not matter. It is not the beauty parlor that changes my features into those of Christ. It is Jesus Himself, who lodges deep down in me, who will make my face like His and be His. It is what is behind that face, namely, the love and kindness of Jesus that will shine in my face and eyes if I have been captured and captivated by Him.

I must also discover Him in the faces of my fellowmen. Jesus is looking at me with the pleading eyes of the poor and the beggars to get a little share of my riches. Jesus is looking at me with the pleading eyes of the suffering, the sick, and the desperate to get some words of comfort and encouragement. Jesus is looking at me with the pleading eyes of the sinners and criminals. Perhaps if I had the genuine and true love of Jesus and His compassion, then I would be able to transform them into genuine images of Jesus as Pope John Paul II endeavored to do with his would-be assassin and, perhaps, succeeded in doing.

These are some reflections on the star of the Magi. Let us follow the star and endeavor to find Jesus and be with Him in heaven. (M)

### BAPTISM OF THE LORD

January 11, 1987

In the Eastern Church, the baptism of the Lord was the first and most important epiphany among the many epiphanies (manifestation of God in the humanity of Jesus) of Jesus' life

on earth. The feast of Jesus' baptism was celebrated in the Eastern Liturgy on a date earlier than the feast of the coming of the Magi to Bethlehem.

The Western Church did the opposite. The account of the coming of the Magi to Bethlehem in order to adore the Child Jesus was so popular that the feast of Jesus' baptism had to give way to the Feast of the Magi or Epiphany of the Lord. This feast falls therefore on the First Sunday in Ordinary Time.

*First Reading:* Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7

*Second Reading:* Acts 10: 34-38

*Gospel Reading:* Mark 1: 7-11

*Theme:* *Should our Lord be baptized?*

It is interesting to note that in our Church liturgy we cover within one week the thirty years of Jesus's life from the adoration of the Magi in Bethlehem's cave to his baptism at the Jordan River. It would not be correct to ignore the significance of that period. Why? Because Christ identified Himself with us, with our daily toils and labor, with our daily worries and problems and with the ordinariness of our humdrum existence. In spite of his being the God of heaven and earth, he still adopted precisely this mode of life. He existed in it, he lived it and in it. He demonstrated to the whole world that even divine perfection can exist in it and be achieved, provided that we faithfully and conscientiously carry out the duties such a life entails. These are the same circumstances in which most men are living.

### 1. Jesus' baptism — its meanings

Sometimes one would think that Christ was overacting since there was no need for Him to be baptized. True, Jesus actually did not need any baptism at all. He was free from all stain of sin. Still He consented to it to teach us of its necessity. He classified Himself as a common sinner, although He was the spotless Lamb of God. He simply wanted to incarnate Himself fully into mankind. He wanted to take upon Himself all the burdens and sins, so as to clean them from all defilement. As

one spiritual writer says, He sanctified the element of water to make it as a "regenerative womb of rebirth in Christian baptism."

## 2. Threshold from animosity to publicity — His debut

Our Lord's baptism is the threshold, from being unknown in the eyes of the world to His public life. Jesus now steps out of His hidden life in Nazareth into the limelight of history. As His hidden life was introduced by the first revelation of the Blessed Trinity so are the same Blessed Trinity manifested itself and now vouched for the veracity of all that is reported in the Gospel. Besides, Jesus' baptism is the end and purpose of John's career. "He must increase, I must decrease," says St. John the Baptist. The baptism of the Lord is the beginning of Christ's itinerary as preacher and it points even beyond His final consummation. It points to the baptism of blood with which He is to be baptized in Calvary.

## 3. Jesus' baptism and ours

Let us remember what John the Baptist said: "I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:8). John's baptism was merely symbolical but Jesus' baptism was real. Christ has baptized us with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enters into us. He is interested in every moment of our life. He likes to guide us and cares about our every chore, our problems and difficulties. He helps us to know God and His Son, Jesus, by sacrificing ourselves to love and to serving others.

However, we are faced with this problem: how to live out our baptism to become more and more like unto Him who baptized us. We have to become victims as Jesus was. We are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. As Paul says, we literally die and rise with Him into glory.

### **FEAST OF THE SANTO NIÑO (Proper Feast in the Philippines) January 18, 1987**

The devotion to the Santo Niño among the Filipinos was evident during the February Revolution. One could see statues and statuettes of Him brought to EDSA, carried on the

shoulders of men and women, placed on barricades of stones and trees or placed conspicuously inside their cars and vans. In hospitals, patients love to display them on their tables.

Historically, this devotion traces back its origin to April 1521, when the Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, came to Cebu. According to some historical accounts, he gave a statuette of the Infant Jesus to Queen Juana, Cebu's native queen, as a baptismal present after 500 natives led by King Humabon and herself had been converted and baptized into the Catholic Church.

On January 13, 1565 the Legaspi-Urdaneta expedition arrived in Cebu. Because the natives were found hostile to them, Legaspi sent ashore a company of soldiers to put the 16 villages along the coast on fire. One house was not burned at all. Juan Camus, one of the sailors found inside that house the image of the Infant Jesus, which was placed on a little pine cradle. It had on a loose shirt and a little velvet hat. The cross which is generally on the globe which He holds was missing.

A chapel was built on the spot where the Image was found. Later, the first Augustinian monastery was also built there. Legaspi entrusted the Image to the Augustinian Fathers, who until now are still its keepers. In 1575 the foundation of the first stone was laid. A Church was to be built where the Image of the Infant Jesus was to be perpetually kept. Four centuries later the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño was erected whose left wing has served as the permanent place of the statuette of the Santo Niño.

It is interesting to note how miraculous the Image of the Santo Niño has been. The first two churches housing the Image were completely razed to the ground. In both fires, the Image escaped destruction. During the Japanese bombings in 1941 all the buildings around the area were totally destroyed, except the Monastery and the St. Augustine Church where the Image was located.

When the Americans bombed the City of Cebu on September 12, 1944, a bomb fell at the back of St. Augustine Church. The main altar of the church crumbled into pieces, dislodging the Santo Niño from His throne, but landing undamaged on one of the chandeliers near the main altar. The Image was then brought to the Redemptorist Monastery for safe keeping.

After the main altar of the St. Augustine Church was repaired by the Americans themselves soon after liberation, the Image was returned to its former place.

In spite of the passing of four centuries and despite fires and bombings, the Image of the Santo Niño still looks almost the same as when it was first given to Queen Juana. It remains as one of the most priceless symbols of the Christianization of the Philippines.

On October 20, 1978 a special Mass in honor of the Feast of Santo Niño, celebrated on the third Sunday of January, was approved especially for the Philippines.

*First Reading:* Isaiah 9: 1-6

*Second Reading:* Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-16

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 18: 1-5, 10

Theme: *Not an ordinary child*

In a survey conducted by one of our local universities in Cebu in 1973, a strange, unexpected conclusion emerged. Out of 80 respondents four said that the dominant figure is the Santo Entierro, six declared Santo Niño (Infant Jesus) while 50 students selected Christ the Friend as their dominant figure. The respondents came mainly from Catholic institutions. In other words, students prefer to look at Christ as the grown-up Christ.

But why honor the Santo Niño, the Christ Child? Why are so many people devoted to the Santo Niño? Why display devotion to the Santo Niño at EDSA during the February Revolution, in the hospital rooms, in offices and even in the corridors of Malacañang? Why build an imposing basilica in honor of the Santo Niño?

The devotion to the Santo Niño is not a Filipino invention. Already in the sixteenth century, St. Theresa of Avila and others venerated the Statue of Christ as a child. Whether in the 16th century or in the 20th century, the underlying principle of this devotion was to show people wherein real greatness consists, in serving, in being little, as did the Lord Himself who left His home in heaven and became one of us. The

Infant Jesus gives us a model and an inspiration to follow Him in His attitude of filial devotion and dedication to His heavenly Father. The Infant Jesus brought us salvation.

### 1. Being like children morally

Our Lord tells us: "Unless you turn and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3). "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mk. 10:15). What are the characteristics of a child that we want to be like? Let us mention some: Loving trust toward the parents, openness to them, total dependence, artlessness and purity of heart.

### 2. Loving trust toward parents

The image of the child brings home to us our trust and confidence in God. Sometimes children are found to be a little bit stubborn, mischievous or disobedient, but generally and in the long run children will trust their parents. They always think that their parents are the greatest persons in the world. They seem capable of believing just about everything. No matter how fantastic and unbelievable, they will accept all as gospel, if they trust the one who is speaking. We should be like children when we have full trust in God, who is our Father in heaven. What is trust after all? Is it not a firm, unshakable confidence in the honesty, reliability and justice of another? Trusting someone in your life is the greatest compliment you can pay that person. Distrusting somebody is a tragedy. In politics it means the waterloo of all your political ambition. Once a president incurs a no vote of confidence from the legislative body, that official has to step down.

### 3. Complete openness of the little child

Children are usually open to their parents and to one another. They appear the way they are, not the way they seem to be. They are not ashamed or inhibited unless they are guilty of some wrongdoings or mischief. They are not afraid to talk to their father and mother. They always think that their parents are the best authorities under the sun. If they need something, they will not hesitate asking from their parents.

Children usually have no biases or prejudices like adults. They simply feel at home anywhere. They feel free to act or to do anything where grown-ups would be ashamed. They are more outgoing, almost devoid of pretensions as adults have. They do not put up walls that would separate them from other children or from their parents.

#### 4. Total dependence on the parents

Take a child and leave him alone in a room. He will always look for his mother or his father. He cries and cries until the mother arrives or until the father brings him something. Children are totally dependent on their parents. They know that all they are and all they have come from their parents. They know they can not do anything without their parents. They readily admit their own limitation. "I'll ask Mama first." "I'll ask Daddy first." Like these children, we adults should be in regard to our dependence on God.

#### 5. He is fully human

As we honor today the Santo Niño born of Mary, we look at Him with tenderness and love. We enthrone His image in our homes, rooms, offices and cars. We admire and emulate the loving trust He showed to His earthly parents, His openness as a little Child and His total dependence on them while still in His tender years. But the liturgy of today reminds us that this Child is not just an ordinary child, not just a baby. He is the Savior of the World. He is Christ the Anointed One. And yet He is fully human as He grew up to become a man. From Him we also learn today that united with Him in mind and heart, we too must grow up to become mature adult Christians ever ready to take up responsible commitment and decisions in life.

### THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 25, 1987

Since the First Sunday in Ordinary Time is the Feast of Our Lord's Baptism and the Second Sunday is the Feast of the Santo Niño, we start the series of thirty-four Sundays of the

Year with the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. The series of Sundays, however, is divided into two groups. The first group ends with the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. This year, we have eight Sundays belonging to this group. The second group starts after Trinity Sunday and ends with the Sunday preceding the Solemnity of Christ the King. Pentecost Sunday and Trinity Sunday replace the two Sundays in Ordinary Time, as the two feasts mentioned above do in the first group.

For Year A the Gospel of St. Matthew is used almost exclusively. In the past two Sundays we have the accounts of our Lord's early preaching and His ministry after baptism.

Isaiah prophesied that the people who walked in darkness would see a great light (*first reading*). That light which is Christ should not be put out because of factionalism, disunity and petty quarrels (*second reading*). Reformation of lives (*metanoia*) and belief in the Good News is necessary because the Kingdom of heaven is at hand (*Good News*).

*First Reading:* Isaiah 8:23—9:13

*Second Reading:* 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 4:12-23

Theme: *Christ, the bond of unity*

Almost everywhere we find factionalism and intrigues. People just want to form groups by themselves with principles and ideals almost at odds with each other. Whether in business or politics, schools or sometimes even in religious communities, we find this modern cancer to unity. A business goes bankrupt because of intrigues. A political party falls apart because of factions. Families are at odds because of prejudices.

When the incumbent president accepted the nomination by the people to become a candidate for the presidency, many people especially from the party in power said "Who is she?" "Is she a lawyer?" "What is her educational attainment?" "Did she prepare for the presidency?" "*Talagang walang alam 'yon*" "She's only good for the bedroom!" Cory's victory made these critics scamper for safety elsewhere.

### 1. A rift in Corinth

In today's reading we are told that there was a rift in the Church at Corinth. The main causes were disagreements and divisions which grew into parties and factions. As a result there were four parties actually working against each other. First, was the Christ party which traced its origin back to Jesus Himself. Another party was called the Apollos party, named after the convert who succeeded in drawing a crowd by his learned and eloquent interpretation of the Bible. The third party claimed Peter as their leader and this party of Jewish Christian had come all the way from Jerusalem. The fourth party was named after Paul himself although he disclaimed any connection whatsoever with it except in name. Paul faced this split at Corinth squarely by pointing out that since they denied their baptismal reality, they were disunited. Consequently, dissension, factionalism and intrigues arose. He reminded them that they were baptized in the name of Christ and not in the name of Apollo, Peter, Paul or any other human leader, however powerful and exalted he might have been. The baptismal sign of oneness with Christ must be evident in them.

### 2. Unity among the first apostles

Was there unity among the apostles? The first apostles of Christ were Galileans, fishermen. It is interesting to note that Jesus started His ministry not in Judean territory but in Galilee of the Gentiles where he traveled extensively. The region was like a large garden, fertile and well cultivated. The Sea of Galilee was just in the neighborhood where fishermen were simple and modest people, cooperative and busy suppliers of abundant fishes.

It is from this Galilean setting that Jesus called His first four followers, Peter and Andrew, James and John. The first two were casting nets into the sea, the second pair were mending their nets. Was there any aptitude test or IQ examination, imposed by Jesus in recruiting these simple men of Galilee? He just looked at them and simply called them: "Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men!" (Mt. 4:19).

### 3. Response to Christ's call

The response from these persons called was immediate and enthusiastic. The call of Jesus was irresistible. The fishermen left everything they held dear: family, friends, their work, their nets. They were free because they had nothing to lose. They followed Him without hesitation, cheerful and confident. Peter would be able to say later: "To whom shall we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life!" And Philip would say to his companions: "Let us go to Jerusalem and die with Him!"

### 4. United with Him?

Except for Judas Iscariot who strayed away from the company of the Lord and betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver, the Apostles were always united with the Lord in all their work, joys, difficulties, sufferings and even in death. Should we not say this of ourselves too, as Christians and followers of Jesus our Master? Is it not that Christ is the bond of unity among us in spite of our differences in race, culture and conditions in life? Were we not baptized in the name of Christ? Therefore, the baptismal sign of oneness in Christ must be evident in us all our lives!

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 1, 1987

The liturgy of the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time speaks of the biblical "poor." Zephaniah, prophesying during a turbulent period in the history of God's people, foretells that during the messianic era a "humble and lowly people," the *'anawim'*, will constitute the remnant; St. Paul, in the second reading, reminds the Corinthians that God does not have any favorites in calling his faithful since the majority of the Corinthians themselves who are converted to the faith came from the lower class of society; but precisely the beatitudes or happiness is promised to such kind of people who are "lowly," "humble," "meek," "poor in spirit."

*First Reading:* Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

*Second Reading:* 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 5:1-12a

1. Zephaniah 2:3; 12-13. Zephaniah, according to the introductory verse in his book prophesied during the reign of Josiah (640-609), but most probably before the religious reform of this good king which happened in 622 B.C. His prophetic ministry can, then, span the years 640-630 B.C. Assyria which subjugated Judah since the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 721, with all the evils which accompany such colonization, is becoming weak because of internal troubles. But the moral and religious depravity rampant during the reign of the two previous king Manasseh (687-643) and Amon (642-640) are still around.

Zephaniah thus speaks of the "Day of Yahweh," foretelling the punishment of Judah and the other nations because of their transgressions. Yet a day of conversion will come. There is here a prophecy of the messianic era when a remnant of "humble and lowly people," the '*anawim*' will be the model of virtues and will enjoy prosperity and peace. Zephaniah has here given a moral and eschatological dimension of the "poverty in spirit."

2. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. St. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have nothing to be proud of for having been called to the faith. Many are uneducated, some are slaves, many are from the common "*tao*." In short Paul calls them *ta mē onta*, "those who are nothing," compared to the wise men, the powerful and the nobilities of this world. Yet God in his bountiful mercy chooses them and thus they receive in Christ true justice and holiness, true wisdom and true redemption. This is the realization of the Israelites' search for God embodied in the Mosaic Law striving to dispense justice and holiness, in the wisdom tradition tending to impart wisdom, and in prophetic proclamations stressing God's act of redemption.

Thus we find that during the first years of Christianity the faith is preached and spread among the lower class of people who, because of their condition, rely solely in God. They are the lowly, the humble, the meek, the "poor in spirit."

3. Matthew 5:1-12a. In St. Matthew the inaugural address of our Lord about the kingdom called the "Sermon of the Mount"

(5:1 — 7:29) is introduced in its turn by the Beatitudes. The traditional place of this sermon is a hill about 3 kilometers south of Capernaum where the ruins of a Byzantine church is discovered. Now a church of the Carmelites stands in this place.

There has been a question whether the Beatitudes are 8 or 7. The Jerusalem Bible in a footnote makes verse 4 (about the "gentle" or the "meek") a gloss. This is in fact a quotation of Psalm 37:11 in the Greek version. In some manuscripts, however, verses 4 and 5 have been interchanged. Hence in the New American Bible and other versions, the Beatitude about the "meek" or the "gentle" is in v. 5.

If, therefore, the saying about the "meek" is taken as a gloss it would be the best explanation of Beatitude number 1 about the "poor in spirit." The "poor in spirit" are no other than the "lowly," "the humble," "the gentle," or "the meek." They are the *'anawim'* mentioned in Zephaniah and the Psalms. They are those who, conditioned by their material poverty, think of themselves as nothing (the *ta mē onta* of St. Paul, the "non-entities") and depend solely on God.

4. *Reflections.* A recent movie with a telling message on the Philippine situation has been shown in our theaters entitled "*Gabi Na, Kumander.*" The story is about two brothers who are fighting against each other since they happen to belong to two opposite camps. The elder of the two is a soldier while the younger is the head of a rebel group. The soldier is sent on a mission to capture the rebel dead or alive. In the confrontation scene between the two brothers the elder tells the younger brother of his grave mistake of remaining inside the forest devoid of light which deprives him and his group of knowing the exact situation of the country now in the hands of a new government whose prime interest is for the welfare of the people. To be convinced of his mistake he must not remain in darkness but see the light being offered to him by his elder brother.

Much evil in the world thrives because people remain in darkness which as a matter of fact is what the Prince of Darkness also wants. But true light has already come in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples participate in this light. They are the light for all mankind. Every good that

they do is a glitter that dispels the darkness of evil. The world has become the arena of the battle between light and darkness. It is very important to make sure on which side we are.

The good works of Christians are the salt and light of the world. It is the will of our Lord that these good works be seen by all men, not for our own interest but for the praise and glory of God.

There is a saying: "many a man has never found himself until he has lost all." But the Gospel says "a man has never found happiness until he has lost himself." Poverty of spirit is not just having nothing. It is being nothing in the sight of God so that God would be his everything.

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 8, 1987

Both the Second and Gospel Readings in today's liturgy of the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time continue the texts of the 1st letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians and the Sermon on the Mount of St. Matthew. Taking the cue from the Gospel text telling of Christians as the light of the world, the first reading from Isaiah 58:7-10 shows in the context of the practice of fasting in post-exilic Israel how this light will shine, that is, by the practice of works of mercy, "the sort of fast which pleases God."

*First Reading:* Isaiah 58:7-10

*Second Reading:* 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 5:13-16

1. Isaiah 58:7-10. Chapters 56 to 66 of our present Book of Isaiah is commonly considered a post-exilic text, except probably chap. 57. In these last chapters of Isaiah, some texts of Deutero-Isaiah, the exilic author of Is. 40-55 are quoted (49:18-22 in 60:4ff 50:9 in 55:5; 49:23 in 60:14 etc.) Chapter 58 which is in poetic form speaks about fasting, a practice which became common during the exilic period and the immediate post-exilic years to commemorate tragic events in Israel's history,

like the Fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.; cf. Zech. 7:3) and even different events of this fall: the beginning of the siege, the breaching of the walls, the assassination of Gedaliah (2 K 25:25; Jer. 41:1). Later on, the Law prescribe fasting on the tenth day of the seventh month only, the day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 23:26-32; Lev. 16:29).

But as it is made clear in v. 6 ff. external fasting alone does not please Yahweh. The kind of fast that pleases him is "to break unjust fetters," "to share the bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor" (vv. 7-10). These are the very works of mercy which will earn the glory of heaven (Mt 25:31-46).

2. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. This is a continuation of last Sunday's text where St. Paul reminds the Corinthians not to boast of their calling since it is due to God's mercy that they receive the faith. Paul testifies that the success of his preaching at Corinth is not due to any "show of oratory or philosophy" but by the power of the Spirit. Paul must have reflected on his frustrating experience in Athens when he tries to preach Christ at the Areopagus with oratorical and philosophical flourish but is unsuccessful (Acts 17).

Verse 4: "a demonstration of the power of the Spirit" as translated by the Jerusalem Bible, is in the Greek "a manifestation of power and spirit." Thus the King James Version or the Authorized Version (AV), the version distributed by the Gideons International translates: "in evidence of the Spirit and power."

But we probably have here an example of a hendiadys, an expression of a concept by two nouns connected by "and" instead of by an adjective and a noun, for ex.: "I see stones and houses" could mean "I see houses of stones." Hence many modern versions of the Bible translate it as: "power of the Spirit" like the New American Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, The Good News Bible, etc.

3. Matthew 5:13-16. This is also a continuation of last Sunday's Gospel. After proclaiming the happy lot which awaits his disciples, Christ follows it up by stating what the disciples should be towards the world and mankind. They should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Salt has been known even in ancient times as condiment and preservative for food. In Lev 2:13 it is prescribed: "You must salt every oblation that you offer, and you must never fail to put on your oblation the salt of the Covenant with your God: to every offering you are to join an offering of salt to Yahweh your God." In Colossians 4:6, St. Paul writes: "talk to them agreeably and with a flavour of wit (lit. "seasoned with salt" — JB trans.).

Christians, therefore, must present the Gospel of Christ which leads to real happiness with such attraction accompanied by a good and holy life as "perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhand brood, and you will shine in the world like bright stars..." (Phil 2:15).

It is of interest to note that in v. 16 of the Gospel text the "light" is equated by St. Matthew to the "good works" performed by Christ's disciples.

4. *Reflections.* We always hear that poverty breeds crime, immoral professions, like swindling, graft and corruption, prostitution, pornography, etc. This is not the kind of poverty spoken of in the Gospel which leads to happiness. The "poor in spirit" are those who submit themselves totally to God. Material poverty is just the condition. The spiritually poor are those who seek God first and his justice and everything else is given to them besides. That is why they will enjoy real happiness. Just as Elisha in the Old Testament leaves his plow and oxen to follow Elijah and becomes the prophet of Yahweh, just as Levi leaves his tax-collector post to follow Christ and becomes St. Matthew, just as Joseph Barnabas sells his land and places his possessions at the disposal of the Apostles, just as Queen Elizabeth of Hungary sells her queenly treasures for the poor, and St. Francis of Assisi his belongings to follow his Lady Poverty, so also all Christians following their Master, who has nothing whereon to lay his head, must embrace this kind of evangelical poverty to find true happiness.

The kind of poverty spoken of in the Gospel is not only the lack of earthly possessions or riches. It is, as St. Paul says "being nothing," a *ton mē on* (plural: *tā me onta*).

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 15, 1987

A common thread, however loose, which runs through the readings in today's liturgy is Christian perfection. The text of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) of the first reading attests to man's freedom in his actions which is the basis for individual merits or condemnation. The second reading from 1st Corinthians has St. Paul telling us about the "mature in the faith" (the *teleioi*) in contrast to the "infants in the faith" (the *nepioi*). The perfection of the New Law in comparison with the Old is brought about in the Gospel reading.

*First Reading:* Sirach 15:15-20 (Greek: 16-21)

*Second Reading:* 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 5:17-37

1. Sirach 15:15-20 (Greek: 16-21). The Book of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus is not found in the Hebrew Bible, thus not accepted by protestants as canonical. It is, however, part of the Septuagint or the Greek Bible known to the Apostles and definitely accepted by the Apostolic Church as inspired.

The text of the first reading is especially very revealing with regards man's responsibility in his actions. Verse 14 which unfortunately is cut off from the liturgical reading says: "**He** (God) Himself made man in the beginning, and then left **him** free to make his own decisions." Then v. 15 follows with: "If you wish you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power." The translation, therefore, of the biblical version called *The Living Bible* (TLB) of Romans 8:3 is unacceptable since it directly contradicts this text of Sirach. TLB translates the text in Romans thus: "We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God, *because we can't and don't keep them* (italic ours), but God put into effect a different plan to save us." As a matter of fact that verse in Romans does not deal at all with man's capability or incapability to keep the commandments but on the inadequacy of the Mosaic Law as an inner principle of salvation in contrast with the Law of the Spirit (v. 1). Hence the Jerusalem Bible translates this same verse simply: "God has done what the Law, because of our unspiritual nature, is unable to do."

This text in Ecclesiasticus is one of the best sources of the affirmation of man's free will and responsibility in his actions in the Old Testament.

2. 1 Corinthians 2:6-10. Still a continuation of last Sunday's second reading. In contrast to human wisdom (1 Cor. 1: 19-25) which St. Paul rejects as a moving force for the spread of the Gospel, he now offers a wisdom to those who are mature in the faith (*teleioi*). There are, then, also "infants" in the faith, the *nepioi*; who have already received baptism and the Holy Spirit dwells in them but they still behave as "sensual men" (1 Cor. 3:1 ff.). They are fed not with solid food but with milk. The mature Christians on the "perfect" on the other hand are the *pneumatikoi*, those who are docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit. A dynamism and growth in the Christian life is clearly seen in this text.

Negatively this wisdom is not of this age (aeon) or world, nor of the rulers of this age.. The last phrase can either mean the evil forces or demons following the interpretation of Origen confirmed by the following texts: 1 Cor. 15: 24-25; Rom 8:38; Eph 2:2; 6:12; Col 2:15; Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31; or it can mean human rulers following St. John Chrysostom which seems to be the sense in v. 8 applying the phrase to those responsible for crucifying our Lord. Most probably it is alluding to both, the evil forces using human rulers as instruments.

Positively, this wisdom is the "hidden wisdom of God," the divine plan of salvation, initiated here on earth by his grace, perfected in the glory of heaven.

Worth noting is the phrase "Lord of Glory" applied by St. Paul to Christ which leaves no doubt that the Apostle equates Jesus to Yahweh. In the Old Testament this title is exclusively attributed to Yahweh (Ex 24:16; 40:34; Is 42:8). This is a clear affirmation of the divinity of Christ.

3. Matthew 5:17-37. The text of the Sermon on the Mount continues in this Sunday's Gospel reading. A confrontation between the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Christ is in the offing. Yet it must be understood that Christ does not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it or to bring it to perfection, not exactly in the sense of observing each single prescriptions but to give it a new spirit, the spirit of the Gospel, that even no detail of the Law is to be neglected.

Hence the virtue or righteousness of Christ's disciples must surpass that of the practitioners of the Old Law. St. Matthew gives six examples to show the perfection of the New Law vis-a-vis the Old: 1) against murder (5:21-26); 2) against adultery (27-30); 3) against divorce (31-32); 4) against false oaths (33-37); 5) against revenge (38-42); 6) against hatred of enemies (43-48). The four first instances are given in this Sunday's liturgy while the last two will be the subject of the Gospel reading of next Sunday.

Thus the Mosaic Law, the author of which is God himself, given to a particular people, is perfected by the authority of Christ and is transformed by his Spirit into the New Law, the cornerstone of which is charity, promulgated by the Apostles and their successors to all mankind forming and building the New People of God.

4. *Reflection*: A more perfect way. One time on a TV talk-show which featured converts from one "religion" to another, a woman who was a former Catholic and who became a Buddhist, was asked why she left the Church. She answered that there is so much suffering in Christianity.

It is obvious that this woman has totally missed the point of the Christian message. If there is suffering in Christianity it is because of a greater good, in fact the possession of the greatest good itself: eternal happiness with God. If men could suffer just for the meager hope of honors as sportsmen and athletes do to win medals in the Olympics, if some women could forego eating to maintain their figure to win a beauty contest, how much more should we struggle by passing through the real and perfect way.

Let us not think that Christ's way is only an ideal way to be admired but not to be practiced because it is difficult. Not only does our Lord show us the way but he gives us all the necessary help, his graces, to pursue this path towards blissful perfection. Nor do we go through this way ignorant and blind. So many saints have already passed through this way and have given their testimony even during their life time and are now enjoying that "which eyes have not seen nor ears have heard," prepared by God for those who love him.

If God is a perfect God, nothing less than a perfect way, a perfect moral code can make us reach Him.

## SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

February 22, 1987

As an echo of the Gospel text on the love that a Christian has to bear for his enemies and a non-violent stance for those who wrong him, the first reading takes a portion from the Law of Holiness in Leviticus citing the classical text in the Old Testament for the love of neighbor in Leviticus 19:18b. The second reading from the third chapter of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians enjoins them to avoid human wisdom which just leads to division and dissension. All of them are one in Christ.

*First Reading:* Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

*Second Reading:* 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

*Gospel Reading:* Matthew 5:38-48

1. Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18. This text from Leviticus in today's first reading is part of the so-called Law of Holiness (Lev. 17:1-26:46), purportedly the oldest portion of this book. This collection of Laws about holiness antedates the Babylonian exile of 587 B.C. It exhibits a literary unity starting with prescriptions concerning the sanctuary ending blessings and curses. The designation of this section as Law of Holiness is given by A. Klostermann in 1877 who observes that the unifying factor in this otherwise heterogeneous text is its stress on the holiness of Yahweh expressed by: "Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy." (19:2; 20:26).

Verses 17 and 18 give the classical text for the love of neighbor in the Old Testament and 18b together with Deuteronomy 6:5 sums up the whole Law and the Prophets as expressed in Mt 22:37-39 and Mk 12:29-31.

2. 1 Corinthians 3:16-23. Many times in his letters Paul speaks of the Christian community as God's temple vivified by the Holy Spirit, as it is in this text. In other texts such as 1 Cor. 6:19 this figure is applied to individual Christian, while in Eph. 6:16 the metaphor is given to the Universal Church. The first two verses (16-17) in today's liturgical text are the consequence of his use of the building metaphor in verses 10-15.

As concluding part of his lesson to the Corinthians on Christian unity, St. Paul affirms two basic things: first, that they should not judge according to human wisdom by taking sides

with any preacher be he Cephas, Apollos, or Paul himself; according to their own preferences; and second, that they should realize that the ministers, even the apostles themselves, are for the faithful not vice-versa and even all things in God's creation are for the good of his faithful (cf. Rom 8:28). All Christians belong to Christ. This has been a most prominent Paulinian doctrine (2 Cor 10:7; Rom 6:11; 8:9; 2 Cor 5:17).

3. Matthew 5:38-48. The two last examples of the perfection of the New Law as compared with the Old is the text in today's Gospel reading. First, against the law of revenge which in ancient times is embodied in the law of the talion: "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19-21). The evangelical prescription is not to resist the wicked man, meaning to say to resist by returning evil for evil. Four examples are then given how to practice this Christian meekness. 1) to turn the other cheek if anyone hits you on the right cheek. Among the Jews to hit the right cheek of someone, that is with the back of one's hand, is a most grievous offense. Our Lord wants to teach us not to be troubled by any offense, however grievous it may be, but to be prepared to receive even a greater one; 2) in legal contentions a Christian should be prepared even to yield beyond what is being contended. The cloak is the outer garment which is the poor man's protection against the cold. In Exodus 22:25-26 we have the injunction: "If you take another's cloak as a pledge, you must give it back to him before sunset. It is all the covering he has"; 3) in forced labor which is taken here from the practice of the Persians of obliging anybody to carry a load to fulfill the orders of the king, the Christian attitude should be to go beyond what is forcibly ordered; 4) not to turn away anybody who asks or borrows something even though nothing is expected in return.

The last example of evangelical perfection given here by St. Matthew is not only to love one's neighbor but even one's enemies. This is the culmination of Christian charity; that which makes a Christian truly God-like.

4. *Reflections*: A PERFECT LOVE. It is said that when you love your enemies you destroy them since you make them your friends. This Christian injunction to love one's enemies

has given a greater dimension to the virtue of love which no other doctrine in the history of the world's ideas and teachings had ever expressed prior to Christ's coming. Our Lord himself gave a very concrete example of how to love one's enemies when he forgave his executioners while he was dying on the cross. St. Stephen and a host of Christian martyrs did the same.

We only love the good not the evil. We love the man in the enemy, not the enemy in the man. We love the man not only because we have the same nature or the same skeletal structure and bodily form but because he is made to the image and likeness of God and most especially because all men without exception were redeemed by the blood of Christ on the cross.

If only this sort of Christian love would envelope every man's heart, then we could anticipate the happiness of heaven even here on earth.

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