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VOLUME LXIV, NUMBERS 700-701 MARCH-APRIL 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Ongoing Task of Mission

ROMAN CARTER, O.P.

IN THIS YEAR AS WE CELEBRATE the Fourth Centenary of our Dominican presence in the Philippines, this Marian Year following close on a Eucharistic Year, we can all be tempted to rest on our laurels and merely praise past accomplishments. We must of course remain loyal sons of our Fathers, adorers of the Eucharist and tender devotees of the Glorious Mother of God. However, just as life itself is ongoing, so is the task of mission in the Church everywhere in the world. The task of mission which began on the First Christian Pentecost is a task never completed by the Pilgrim People of God in time and space.

A never completed task has its own in-built requirements. The great challenge of mission is basically one of constant new outreach. Not only must we pass on the faith once delivered to us by our predecessors in belief to new generations, we must, furthermore, constantly reaffirm that faith to ourselves and our contemporaries in ways that are as new as the circumstances that call for this reaffirmation. Initial conversion has never been enough for any nation or local Church. Ongoing *metanoia* has been called for since Apostolic times.

How can we catch up with the real challenges of the Church in the world and the Philippines today? How can we overcome the built-in inertia caused by the stagnating sentimentality which is too often dubbed "religion" in our midst? I believe the catching up and the overcoming can only be done by a return to the basic Gospel message in the power of the same Holy Spirit who inspired it. To do this we have to admit we have all too often preferred the icing to the cake, the frills to the substance. When we, the clergy, let peripheral concerns take over our interests, it is no wonder that our people are (quite rightly all too often) accused of being ignorant and superstitious. This state of affairs can only be repaired by constant and consistent preaching and teaching with a view to evangelizing our people anew.

The ongoing task of mission always involves admitting our failures and renewing our teaching. If we are willing to abase ourselves before the Father and start again in Christ we shall be able to face the future, too. For our firmly rooted catechesis can then reach out and upwards by the power of the Spirit to what will be called for beyond our times. And those whom we train will be at least as open minded and inspired as ourselves or, hopefully more so. If we know there is a real mission of reevangelizing our people, we shall equip ourselves for the task. *Nemo dat quod non habet.* We shall have to read and listen to others more authoritative than overselves in order to cope with our task. And we must plan how best to share what we have learned. We must have constant recourse to the Word of God.

Most of the readers of *Boletin Eclesiastico* are priests. Some live in remote and isolated areas of these Islands. But all share with us here in Manila the mutual responsibilities of our missionary calling, the vocation of the Church and particularly of the clergy. We hope this number of *Boletin* and those which follow will give both guidance in the Spirit and new heart in Christ for encouraging our readers in the ongoing task of mission. We should like to see this review more than a vehicle of information. We pray that it may become a forum for leaders in the following of Christ.

On Mission and Vocation of the Church*

MOST REV. JOSE T. SANCHEZ, D.D.
Secretary of the Sacred Congregation
for the Evangelization of Peoples

Permit me, my dear friends, you who have honored me beyond my telling with your presence here today, that my first words after having been conferred this honorary Doctorate in a subject that has never ceased to fascinate my intellectual inclination, be those of profound and sincere gratitude to the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas for this very distinct honor. Very Rev. Fr. Rector, Rev. Fr. Dean and Members of the Faculty of Sacred Theology, without intending it, you have made me feel indescribably indebted to you and the University to which I already owe love and loyalty as one of its alumni. Very Rev. Fr. Rector, Fr. Dean, my Alma Mater, I shall ever cherish this privilege. Fellow alumni, fellow Thomasians, I feel truly challenged to be one of and among you.

* Address of Most Rev. Jose T. Sanchez, D.D. during the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Theology, *honoris causa*, upon him for the numerous meritorious services he has rendered the Church, and most especially for being the first Filipino to be appointed to the Roman Curia, as secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Sponsored by the Faculty of Theology, University of Santo Tomas. Held on January 26, 1988.

My friends, with your indulgence, in accepting this honor conferred upon me allow me to invite you to reflect briefly on the missionary nature and vocation of the Church.

MISSION AS WE ALL KNOW, has something to do with being sent. When someone is sent, there certainly must be a sender. In our present case the sender is God. God has been sending men to accomplish something. I am sure you shall readily identify the one sent by God in these words: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you... All the communities of the earth will find blessing in you" (*Gen.* 12, 1-3). You will much more easily identify the addressee in these words: "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you. Thus you shall say to the Israelites: The Lord the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you" (*Ex.* 3, 14-15). I am also sure you know the one sent in these words: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: 'Whom shall I send?' Who shall go for us? I said 'Send me!' And he replied: 'GO and say to this people: Listen carefully, but you shall not understand! Look intently, but you shall know nothing!'" (*Is.* 6, 8-9). And this one too: "To whomsoever I send you, you shall go; whatsoever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear of them because I am with you to deliver you" (*Jer.* 1, 7-8). Finally, who is not familiar with the herald mentioned in these words: "A herald's voice in the desert, crying: Make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill will be leveled. The windings shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God" (*Lk.* 3, 4-6).

JESUS IS FINALLY SENT BY THE FATHER. HE IS THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECIES, THE EVANGELIUM AND THE EVANGELIZER, THE TRUTH AND THE TEACHER, THE SAVIOUR AND THE PROCLAIMER OF SALVATION, THE ONE SENT AND THE SENDER.

Going through those different instances when God sent in various times different people, one can readily understand why St. Paul said: "In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our fathers, through the prophets; in this, the final age, he has spoken to us through his Son" (*Hb.* 1, 1-2).

All the evangelists, but especially St. Matthew, have called attention to the fact that in Jesus all the prophecies were fulfilled. At every turn St. Matthew would say: "All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophets (*Mt.* 1, 22). The Lord himself gathers all these in a wonderful summary when he said to his apostles just before his ascension into heaven: "Recall," he said, "the words I spoke to you when I was still with you: everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms had to be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to the understanding of the scriptures. "Thus it is written that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In his name penance for the remission of sins is to be proclaimed to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this" (*Lk.* 24, 46-48). Finally, the apostles, particularly St. Peter on the very day of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the days immediately following it, used this particular way of showing to his hearers especially the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets and that even those events happening on Pentecost were foretold by the prophet Joel (*Acts* 2, 16). At the height of the excitement caused by the descent of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gift of tongues and languages and people were pressing for an explanation, St. Peter declared to them: "God has brought to fulfilment by this means (the death and resurrection of Jesus) what he announced long ago through the prophets: that his Messiah would suffer."

Yes, with St. Paul we know "that when the designated time had come, God *sent* forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law to deliver from the law those who where subjected to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted sons." The Lord Jesus himself unequivocally declared: "It is not to do my

will that I have come down from heaven, but to do the will of him who *sent* me" (*Jn.* 6, 38).

JESUS WAS SENT TO BE OUR REDEMEER.

The messengers of God proclaimed to the world on the night Christ was born, saying: "I come to proclaim good news to you tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David's city a savior has been born to you, the Messiah and the Lord" (*Lk.* 2, 10-11). The good news that should be shared by all men is Jesus Himself, the Savior. In this same sense we should understand the Lord's words when he applied to himself the words of the prophet Isaiah (61, 1-2): "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore he has anointed me. He had *sent* me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord" (*Lk.* 4, 18-19).

For us who have the divine gift of Faith and nurtured this Faith with Christian living, we easily can understand that Christ offered us salvation through his blood and death, our sins are forgiven and we become adopted sons of God. What St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians (1, 7-8) is a synthesis of our faith in Christ's redemption: "It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, so immeasurably generous is God's favor to us."

This is not true with those who have no faith. This salvation that includes faith in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins and possession of everlasting life is beyond man's knowledge without anyone leading him to know Christ and invoke his help. "For there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved" (*Acts* 4, 12). In fact St. Paul traces the genesis of faith when he said: "But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach? And how can men preach unless they are sent? Scripture says, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who announce good news'" (*Rom.* 10, 14-15).

Today, we can easily conclude that Jesus Christ, in order to fulfill the will of the Father who sent him to offer salvation to all men through faith in him and everything that this faith requires, had to establish the Church which will be his body on earth (*Eph.* 1, 23; *Col.* 1, 18), and the means to perpetuate his presence and saving ministry to all men of all generations. To this end, from among his disciples he chose twelve after spending a whole night in prayer (*Lk.* 6, 12-16). He gave them a very special formation not through parables as he did with others. They lived with him, witnessed his preaching and the signs and wonders that he performed thereby giving them a unique opportunity to see traces and proofs of His divinity. They were with him during his passion and death, and saw the empty tomb on the third day after his death and lived with Him after the resurrection. This was Jesus' way of preparing the apostles to be witnesses of his life, death and resurrection and of his message. When they were about to be orphans because he shall return to his Father, he assured them that they will receive power from on high, the Spirit of Truth will descend upon them to teach them all the truth and console them in times of persecution and trial.

Christ promised the apostles that he indeed will establish his Church in which Peter would have a key role. He warned them that persecutions of all kinds and trials will afflict those who believe in him, that the world will hate them as it has hated Christ himself, assuring them that he will always be with the Church, to the end of time and promised everlasting reward to those who will persevere.

Formed by such a divine teacher who was also an example, the apostles were ready for their mission, except for the one who betrayed Jesus and thus forfeited his apostleship. After instructing them to wait for the promise of the Father, he gave them the solemn mandate: "Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on the earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to

carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (*Mt.* 28, 19).

In this mandate, which must be complemented by that recorded in St. Mark, namely, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation. The man who believes in it and accepts baptism will be saved, the man who refuses to believe in it will be condemned," offers to all men who believe in the good news salvation wherever they are and whenever it be. This would be impossible to carry out if there were no one authorized by Christ to continue proclaiming the gospel to all generations covering all times and places. This is precisely what the Church is for, what she actually is.

One can almost venture to wonder whether the apostles had a clear idea of how to implement what the Lord commanded them. Fortunately, the words of the Lord addressed to the eleven apostles just before he ascended into heaven when a cloud took him away from their sight (*Acts* 1, 9), seem to indicate that an idea had begun to develop in the minds of the apostles on how to fulfill the mandate. The Lord meaningfully told them: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judaea and Samaria, yes, even to the ends of the earth" (*Acts* 1, 8). *Yes, they must first receive the Holy Spirit, who will teach them how to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.* So, when they gathered in the upper room at Jerusalem together with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and some women they devoted themselves to prayer in preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* 1, 14). It was during those days that Peter stood up in the midst of some one hundred twenty brothers and told the gathering that it was fitting that someone be chosen to take the place of Judas who lost his seat in the apostolic college. He required that the one to replace Judas should be one of their company so that he could be a "witness with us to his resurrection." After praying they chose Matthias.

When the Holy Spirit came down upon them, the apostles understood their mission. They had to preach Jesus who was sent by the Father with "miracles, wonders and signs as his credentials" who was delivered to die on the cross and who has risen from the dead. In him alone salvation is possible. Peter also started to exercise a key role speaking always in the name of the twelve, and the people would address their questions to him such as: "What are we to do?" And Peter answered: "You must reform and be baptized each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven; then you will receive the Holy Spirit" (*Acts* 2, 38). In fact, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the presence of Mary the blessed Virgin, the Church was born. The *missionary* activity of the Church also started.

THE FIRST MISSIONARIES WERE WITNESSES.

It is worthwhile noting that the Lord referred to the apostles as his witnesses starting from Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria to the ends of the earth and the apostles, too, repeated over and over again, that they were witnesses to what they were preaching. In fact when Peter and John were forbidden to speak about Christ under threat of punishment, they answered: "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight for us to obey you rather than God. Surely we cannot help speaking of what we have heard and seen" (*Acts* 4, 19-20). With reassuring confidence and convincing sincerity St. John could write: "This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched — we speak of the word of life. This life became visible; we have seen and bear witness to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was present to the Father and became visible to us..." What we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may share life with us" (1 *Jn.* 1, 1-3).

It would seem to have been divine Providence's will to have as the first missionaries direct personal witnesses of the life,

death and resurrection of the Lord. It seemed necessary for the first generations that such witnesses establish the veracity of what they were proclaiming. This teaching and proclamation by witnesses will later form the written and unwritten tradition of the Church so that future missionaries will be sent by the Church and they will be using the institutional or ecclesial witness of the good news they are proclaiming to the world.

THE CHURCH IS MISSIONARY BY NATURE.

The Church being the body of Christ and his perpetual presence in the world cannot be different from Jesus. In his own words we know him to be an evangelizer. "To other towns," he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the reign of God, because this is why I was sent" (*Lk.* 4, 43). He was everywhere preaching to all kinds of peoples; to sinners and saints; to the rich and the poor; to the children, to the young and the old; He had appropriate teaching for all. We can say almost the same of the apostles who understood both the command and the example of the Lord. Thus we have this report on the preaching activity of the apostles (*Acts* 5, 42): "Day after day, both in the temple and at home, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news of Jesus the Messiah." Similarly we have the testimony of St. Paul: "Yet preaching the gospel is not the subject of a boast. I am under compulsion and have no choice. I am ruined if I do not preach it" (1 *Cor.* 9, 16). Pope Paul VI practically picked up this Pauline statement when he said, "Evangelization is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved... It does not permit either indifference, syncretism or accommodation" (*EV. N.* 5). In the same exhortation Pope Paul VI says: "It is with joy and consolation that at the end of the great Assembly of 1974 we heard these illuminating words: 'We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church...' Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation

proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and resurrrection" (*EV. N.* 14).

The Church exists in order to evangelize. She is sent to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Christ to all men of all times everywhere. Starting in Jerusalem she kept on expanding the frontiers because the target was the world. Prompted by the Spirit she established new churches that in turn became missionary churches. A missionary church, therefore meant a church that sent missionaries or ministers of the Gospel, making disciples of believers and implanting new ecclesial communities that in time reached a maturity that readily rendered it missionary. The popular notion of a missionary church that receives missionary personnel and aid does not correspond accurately to the missionary quality of the Church that we are discussing here.

The conciliar document, *Ad Gentes,* and the implementing pontifical documents speak of different stages in the development of new churches, more or less slow or fast depending on local circumstances, but all are expected to develop gradually forming their own hierarchy and missionary personnel including a complementary lay collaboration. The Philippine local Church has passed through these stages and now we feel a special inner joy in being able to send missionaries *Ad Gentes.* There are a few Church as old as ours who have not yet reached the maturity of a missionary Church in the meaning we have developed here. The promotion and coordination of the missionary activity of the Church has been entrusted to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. She acts with exclusive competence in all missionary affairs in the name and by authority of the Holy Father as the visible head and supreme pastor of the Church.

Failure to grasp clearly the idea that every Church is missionary, whether old or young, and that this missionary matu-

rity is reached through stages of gradual development, has led some to conclude erroneously that there is no need for mission and missionaries now. Moreover, the reaffirmation of the traditional doctrine of the Church that God in ways known to himself can lead those who through no fault of their own are ignorant of the Gospel and therefore of Christ to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, has also been used as an argument against the missionary activity of the Church. What God does with those who have not been evangelized should not and cannot abrogate the command God has given through his Son to the Church to preach the Gospel to all men. As far as the Church is concerned she must do everything to implement the command given to her to make disciples of all nations.

Aside from the command given to the Church, the Gospel truth has a right to be proclaimed and give its light a chance to illumine the minds of men who, on the other hand, have a right to be taught and to know the truth especially the truth that leads to the greatest good of man. Pope John Paul II stated this in his Peace Message last January when he said: "As Pastor of the universal Church, I would not be fulfilling my responsibility if I did not raise my voice upholding respect for the inalienable right of the Gospel to be proclaimed to every creature" (*Mk.* 16, 15).

A brief look at the missionary map of the world two years ago tells us that of the population of the world — around 4,817,-560,000 — only 851,953,000 are Catholics which is 17.68%. This embarassing reality confronts tauntingly the 403,480 priests (diocesan and religious), 917,432 religious Sisters, 65,200 Brothers, and 294,487 catechists. We may add to this the innumerable lay helpers, both institutional and individual, and the most modern means of social communications that science and technology have placed at the disposal of the Church. And limiting our attention to Asia we find an even more shocking reality: of a population of 2,873,649,000 only 72,000,000 are Catholics, which means an insignificant 2.51%.

This brings us to another reflection that may give us some consolation. Our Lord quoted what Jahwe told Isaiah when he sent him: "Go and say to this people: Listen carefully, but you shall not understand! Look intently, but you shall know nothing" (*Is.* 6, 8-9; *Lk.* 13, 14-15). This points strongly to the possibility that as in the OT the chosen people showed hardness of heart to the love of Jahwe, in the new convenant in Christ's blood a similar mysterious blindness and obduracy will be shown by those who shall hear the Gospel. This is similarly implied in the parable of the seeds (*Mt.* 13, 4-12). He also indirectly anticipated that many will not believe even after hearing the Gospel when he said: "Those who believe in it and accept baptism will be saved; the man who refuses to believe in it will be condemned" (*Mk.* 16, 15). We can justifiably presume that the Gospel has been actually preached to many more people than those who are known to be Catholics. If there are only 17.68% Catholics of the total population of the world, it is because many among those who have heard the Gospel have hardened their hearts. This might be a consolation. But is it an excuse?

Religious Instruction in Public Schools:

AN OPPORTUNITY, A CHALLENGE AND A CALL TO CONVERSION

SALVATORE PUTZU, S.D.B.
Docete, October-December 1987

AN EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION

"At the option expressed in writing by parents or guardians, religion shall be taught in public elementary and high schools by teachers designated or approved by the religious authorities of the religion to which children or wards belong, without additional cost to the government."

Such is the ruling of paragraph 3, sec. 3. of article 14 of the new Philippine Constitution. No doubt the fruit of protracted debates between opposing positions among the Commissioners, this brief paragraph does justice both to the right of parents to have their children instructed in their religion within the school environment, and to the equal standing (in front of the law) of all religious confessions, none of which is privileged by the Constitution.

Such a provision recognizes to religious instruction the long-denied right to be part of the ordinary curriculum in the education of millions of children coming from families in which religion is so much part of life. There has been a shift *from a rejection* (or a "tolerance", to put it mildly) of the role of religion is so much part of life. There has been a shift *from a* a role. The Bishops of the Philippines have called this innovation an *"educational revolution"*[1] and with good reason. The previous Constitutions of 1935 and 1973, which did not allow the teaching of religion as part of the school curriculum, were on this point still influenced by the anti-clerical attitudes which characterized the Philippine and European history of the second half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th. At all events, they were largely patterned after the American legislation, suited to a setting which is immensely different from the Philippine situation.

This provision of the new Constitution, then, is a welcome "revolution" which does away with an old-fashioned bias against religion, and takes due account of the specific reality of Philippine values and culture.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND THE CATECHETICAL SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Those interested in catechesis may ask, "Will this constitutional provision make any difference in the catechetical situation of our country?" The answer is, "It surely can make a difference."

First of all it can make a difference in the way people look at religion as an objective content to be learnt. The provision, in fact, enshrines a new way of viewing the role of religion in the formation of the new generations. This entails not just a change in legal standing, but especially *a change in value per-*

[1] See the C.B.C.P. pastoral letter on religious instruction in public schools, issued on July 9, 1987.

ception and actualization. Religion is an important factor in the formation of a person.

This provision offers also *practical advantages,* the most obvious of which is the possibility of *utilizing school facilities within regular class hours* to teach religion. Before the approval of the new constitution, the teaching of religion in public schools as a regular subject of the curriculum had no legal backing. So much depended on the disposition and likings of school principals and supervisors. Religion was usually allowed to be taught in "unholy hours" like recess time, or before or after class hours when the receptivity of the students is obviously quite low. In many cases the concession was more of a personal favor of the school administrator than a recognized right. As such, the concession could be denied, withdrawn or changed for any reason or no reason at all.

Now the situation has changed, and for the better. Class time and school facilities are made available for the teaching of religion, free of charge, not by the benign condescension of individual persons, but by the fundamental law of the country, ratified by an overwhelming majority of the people.

The Bishops term this change an *"opportunity"* and rightly so. It remains an opportunity even if the individual confessions wishing to avail of it will have to shoulder the burden of paying the teachers and the didactic materials needed for an effective religious instruction. In this respect the constitutional provision poses a *challenge.* As far as we are concerned, this is a challenge to the whole Catholic community to show in practice how much it values religious instruction, and how much it is prepared to invest in the Christian formation of the new generations.

This constitutional provision is also a challenge to religion coordinators and catechists/religion teachers.[2] The challenge is

[2] In the course of this article I will be equating catechist to religion teacher, though the role of the catechist is usually a wider one. By "catechist" I mean a properly trained person, duly qualified to teach religion, and formally commissioned to do so by the Ordinary.

for them to be "professional" in their formation, their planning, delivery of lessons, class management and so on. The moment one enters the formal educational environment of the school as a teacher, one must have the necessary preparation and behave as one.

This does not necessarily rule out the use of "volunteer catechists" and "student catechists" in religious instruction. One does not need to be a degree holder to teach the sign of the cross, elementary prayers and religious songs to children of Grades 1 and 2. There are many religious instruction activities which can be carried out by these non-professional catechists, wherever possible under the supervision and coordination of a "professional."

But it is likewise obvious that even for this form of "support service *an adequate formation is required.* The appeal for volunteer catechists, launched by the Bishops in their pastoral letter of July 9, 1987, has to be understood for what it sounds and means: an appeal to as many volunteers as possible to undergo the indispensable preparation to teach religion, and an equally urgent appeal to the catechetical training centers to offer special courses to these volunteers, in order to equip them with the minimum "know-how" needed to receive from their Bishop the mandate to teach religion. It is an appeal issued in an emergency situation which demands an emergency response.

But, how will the Church as a whole respond to the emergency situation emphasized (not created!) by the constitutional provision on religious instruction in public schools?

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THIS OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE

Laws make a difference in a country only to the extent that they are applied and the principles which they enshrine are appreciated and lived out by as many people as possible. The constitutional provision on religious education in public schools

is no exception to this rule. Opportunities are meant to be availed of. Challenges are meant to be faced. Alertness, wisdom, balance, creativity and courage are called for.

In spite of the wonderful possibilities offered us by this "provision," nothing will happen automatically. Proper planning and implementation are needed. No action can be undertaken and successfully brought to conclusion without a clear knowledge of the situation, realistic planning, intelligent coordination, gradual implementation and periodical evaluation... Only on these conditions will the opportunity be made the most of, and the challenge will become an occasion for great achievements.

This is a most demanding task which will require the commitment and cooperation of the entire believing community, from all the members of the hierarchy, to the numerous religious institutions and organizations, to the individual lay person, whether parent or single, without excluding the children themselves.

Such an all-encompassing circle of responsibility demands, first of all, that we make a serious reflection on the present situation, trying to be as objective as possible.

A Look at the Catechetical Situation in Public Schools[3]

The present situation of the religious instruction in public elementary and high school can be sketched as follows:

[3] Unfortunately, no comprehensive scientific data are available at present. A survey on the catechetical situation in the Philippines is about to be conducted by the ECERI Office, but it will take quite a time before the data are gathered, classified, interpreted and published. In this article I shall have to rely on partial data, articles, speeches and remarks by people who have been involved in the catechetical ministry for a considerable number of years. Every effort has been made to be objective. The picture presented will necessarily be a global one. The trends will likewise be general, but responding, I trust, to the situation that we all experience, though with varying intensity and features.

a. *Number of Catholic students having a right to receive religious instruction*: 12,000,000 ca. Of these only about 50% receive some form of religious instruction in public schools.

b. *Number of professional catechists* presently engaged in imparting religious instruction in public elementary and high school: 12,000 ca.

c. *Average monthly remuneration* given to these catechists: ₱600 to ₱1,500.

d. *Religion textbooks and activity books* used by the students in public schools: none.

e. *Teaching materials used by the catechists*: syllabi (usually mimeographed) provided by the diocesan/district catechetical Office. Occasionally, some posters and cassette tapes are also used.

f. *Funding* of the above-mentioned expenses (mostly salaries of catechists): normally parish-based, with occasional coordination at district/diocesan levels. The amount raised in most parishes is usually insufficient to cover the expenses needed to impart an adequate religious instruction in that area. This forces the coordinators to plan and act within a budget which is far below the minimum requirements.

g. *Number of Catechetical formation centers*: 24.[4]

If we compare these data (though allowing for their high degree of approximation) with corresponding ones of 10 years ago, we come up with some *trends* the most significant of which are:

i. the consistent increase in the school population;

ii. the much lower increase in number of qualified religion teachers/catechists actually imparting religious instruction in public schools;

[4] Such is the figure provided by the National Survey conducted by the C.F.P. and published in the Special Issue of DOCETE, 1986, p. 19-23. The actual number of Catechetical Formation Centers, however, is surely higher and could easily reach 30.

iii. no substantial improvement in either amount or quality of the teaching and learning materials available;

iv. a considerable improvement in coordination and organization at all levels: diocese, district, parish;

v. a significant increase in the number of catechetical formation centers. (From the first — the Pius XII Institute of Catechetics and Social Studies, founded in Jaro, Iloilo, in 1959, we have at present no less than 24 catechetical formation centers).[5]

Other data and trends could be added which would give a more detailed and factual idea of the catechetical situation in the country. They would not, however, substantially modify the overall picture as presented above.

The global situation, then, though not catastrophic, is highly dramatic and challenging. In fact, while there are areas characterized by a *clear improvement* (for instance, the increase in number of formation centers, with corresponding increase in the number of graduated catechists, increase in coordination and efficiency), other areas show no improvement at all and even a deterioration (for instance, the catechist-to-pupil ratio).

In addition to this, it would seem that the Catholic communities at large are not sufficiently aware of these deficiencies, nor are many sectors sufficiently involved in finding viable solutions.

MEANWHILE...

The dramatic situation of the religious instruction in public schools is made more acute and painful when we consider certain other aspects in the life of the Catholic community in the country — mean the immense amount of human, organizational and financial resources presently available, but channelled toward activities other than religious instruction in public schools.

[5] See Special Issue of Docete, 1986, pp. 19-20.

I am thinking, at this moment, of the great number of highly qualified men and women religious who teach non-religious subject matters and have no time for religion classes, especially in public schools. I am also thinking of the high percentage of qualified catechists who have stopped teaching religion in public schools and are at present engaged in other professions because the salary they were receiving as catechists was absolutely inadequate.

When it comes to financial resources (the scarcity of which is often at the root of so many deficiencies in the catechetical ministry in public schools), I cannot help feel indignant when I consider the immense amount of money squandered by so many Catholic Schools in voluminous annuals, endless sports activities and trophies, parties, galas and the like...

If we focus our attention on the basic Catholic community — the parish, we discover other instances of wastage: fiestas, fireworks, glamorous celebrations, costly decorations of churches and statues... All these things may be good in themselves. But in certain circumstances — in the present concrete Filipino situation — such an extensive use of money in the abovementioned activities, shows a lack of appreciation of urgent priorities. When millions of Catholic children cannot afford a personal copy of a catechism or activity book; when many volunteer or prospective catechists have to depend on sponsorships coming from abroad, and professional catechists are forced out of their teaching profession because their parish or diocese cannot afford to pay them a decent salary... then any investment of money by "Catholic Institutions" in activities such as the ones mentioned above, is something that bewilders and saddens me deeply.

THE URGENT NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

Let us face the hard facts and the prospects for the future. What is at stake is no less than the Christian formation of the new generations. Admittedly, the process of Christian

formation takes place in numerous environments and ways. The classroom is only one of them. But we should not neglect any of them. And when we reflect that this very influential environment has just been opened to the teaching of religion only recently, the availing of such an opportunity is imperative. It is a moral duty of the whole Catholic community. It would be an impardonable failure if we were to miss this chance because of "lack of funds" while funds are available for other, less vital, activities.

The dramatic problems connected with the teaching of religion in public schools cannot leave us unconcerned. They should prick us all to the quick. Any fatalistic attitude or easy procrastination must be avoided. Instead, the coordinated and generous effort of all Catholics is a must. But for such a gigantic effort to be made, a prerequisite condition has to be fulfilled: to believe that the *present situation of inadequacy can be changed,* and that *it must be changed fast.*

Three factors should spur us to immediate and concrete action:

1. The increasing disproportion between the number of students to be instructed in the faith, and the qualified catechists who can impart effective religion classes.
2. The growing number of sects which are infiltrating all strata of society, including the public schools.
3. The ever more aggressive and pervasive atmosphere of materialism, hedonism, vice and Marxism which have started affecting even the public school environment.

The Need for a Radical Conversion

The duty to give religious instruction to 12,000,000 children of the public elementary and high school, the need to recruit and train a proportionate number of catechists (some say that we would need 120,000 of them, while others would be satisfied

with 60,000), the duty to offer them a decent salary of at least ₱2,000 a month, and the necessity of making available adequate teaching and learning materials are only the main aspects of a task that confronts us all.

The situation is so urgent and so challenging that its concrete solution requires a real and radical CONVERSION in all the strata of the Catholic community. Such a "conversion" starts with a change of *attitude* toward the religious instruction in school, and passes through a series of adequate *plans* in response to the problems connected with it, to finally find its concrete manifestation in appropriate and timely *action.*

There is all a work of *mentalization* to be conducted. The National Catechetical Awareness Week has done much in this direction. But more than a week (and even more than a month) is needed to create a better understanding of all that is implied in the Catholic formation of our youth even in the school environment. Catechesis must become the primary concern of every parish, twelve months a year.

The relevance and beauty of the *vocation of catechist* within the community *has to be discovered, deepened, exalted.* The clergy must look at catechists with more appreciative eyes, and treasure their specific cooperation in the field proper to them. The whole people of God is called upon to understand, value and support the apostolic work of the catechists as those who share so closely in the teaching ministry of the Church. Moral support is needed. Financial support should not be forgotten, because plenty of money is needed too.

The catechists themselves have to grow in the awareness of the importance of their role and the greatness of their vocation. Many of them have to be convinced that good will is not enough and that a thorough formation is indispensable. They have to continuously remember that personal intimacy with Christ, mastery of the subject matter and of the methodology to teach it, and total dedication to their mission are all indispensable to real catechists.

We all must be convinced that long term and short term *planning;* national, diocesan and parish *coordination* are also indispensable to achieve concrete and well prioritized objectives. The time of individualistic and fragmented initiatives has to give way to team work and cooperation at all levels, including a continuous dialogue with the public school authoritias.

Some Practical Manifestations of the Conversion

I spoke of a radical conversion — a long process which has to start immediately even in its practical application. We saw that it is not just a matter of fund raising. Some instances of "conversion" and action may be mentioned for the sake of exemplication.

Regular prayers for vocation to "catechisthood" should be started and kept alive in every parish and community. Many more young people should view the possibility of becoming catechists as one of the most beautiful and relevant ways of serving the local community. And once they are "in", perseverance and total dedication should distinguish their lives. At formation level, many more formation centers for catechists have to be set up and kept vibrant with enthusiasm and professional excellence.

When it comes to the financial aspect, an increase in *generosity on the part of all Catholics* is absolutely indispensable. But — given the immense social difference existing in our country — a *brotherly sharing* of rich with poor communities is also needed. Affluent parishes are to remember and sponsor at least some catechetical projects in poor parishes. Paying for the formation of new catechists; shouldering the salaries of some catechists who teach in public schools located in poor parishes; donating teaching aids to those needy parishes, are just some instances of the brotherly sharing and solidarity which should be top priority not only for *rich parishes,* but also for *all Catholic schools,* especially the ones which have an affluent student

population. Finally the generosity of *rich people* and *funding institutions*, both local and foreign ones, should be urgently channelled toward the religious instruction in public schools.

CONCLUSION

The list is by no means exhaustive. What has been presented in the preceding pages is intended to offer some ideas, suggestions and stimuli for personal reflection and group discussion. Local situations and personal experience will surely enrich the picture and motivate for action.

Action is what matter, really. Without it, all becomes academic discussion and sterile investigation. We already have had so much of it. What is now needed is action along the lines sketched by the Bishops in their pastoral letter and occasionally underlined in this article. The concrete needs of the local situation will suggest priorities and modalities. If we act fast and together, the opportunity offered by the constitutional provision will be a real blessing which we make the most of. And the challenges which the present situation poses to us will be as many occasions for us to stand up as a strong and brave community which knows how to prioritize needs and does its best for the best of its constituents: the new generation of 12,000,000 Filipino children and youths who need to know their faith in order to live it out.

On the Training of Catechists

JOSEPH L. ROCHE, S.J.
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"HOW DO YOU TEACH RELIGION in public schools?" — seems to be a straightforward, simple question, until someone tries to give a simple, straightforward answer! This brief article makes no pretensions about providing such an answer; its purpose is rather to present a certain number of ordered reflection based on the author's limited experience and data, on the training of catechists and catechetical coordinators. The article first takes a look at the concrete situation of teaching religion in public schools and at the consequent demands such a situation makes on the individual catechist. The second section then takes up the general guidelines governing a contemporary approach toward catechetical training. Finally, one concrete program of courses is proposed together with an outline of the subjective development of the student catechist and a brief description of one experimental program of training. It is hoped that these reflections may elicit more valuable and substantial articles by those more knowledgeable and practiced in the field. With the new government policy allowing reli-

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gious instruction in the public schools, there is a tremendous need for the development and growth of a nation-wide catechist training program that is both practical and effective.[1]

Perhaps the new enormous challenge of teaching religion in public schools throughout the country will force both the hierarchy and catechetical leaders, lay and clerical, toward common recognition of the need to re-evaluate present catechetical efforts and initiate a serious study into how best to respond to the challenge. This would certainly involve: 1) maximizing the effectivity of the persons and institutions presently engaged in catechesis and religious education; 2) improving the quality and capacity of catechist-formation programs; and 3) production of model catechetical materials for religious instruction in elementary and secondary public schools. This article is concerned only with catechist formation programs today.

I. SITUATION OF THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A preliminary observation must be made regarding the great differences that exist concretely in teaching in provincial schools as opposed to urban, and, likewise regarding the substantial differences existing between the different areas of the country. Even in dioceses that border on one another, the needs, conditions, facilities and practical possibilities seem to be so different that any common catechetical program has thus far proven to be impossible of practical realization.[2] Nevertheless, some definite generalizations can be made which can be helpful in working out a realistic program for training catechists.

[1] Cf. the Pastoral Letter of the CBCP on "Religious Instruction in Public Schools: an Opportunity & a Challenge," *DOCETE* 10, No. 50 (July/Sept, 1987) 28-30, with the helpful comments of Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB, ibid., pp. 30-31.

[2] This raises what is perhaps the greatest obstacle to effective use of the present Church personnel and institutions in catechesis and religious education, namely the absence of any real collaboration among parishes, dioceses, religious congregations, etc. A great step forward would be effected in religious education if some basic sharing of common resources could be initiated and developed by competent authorities.

A. Many Students, Few Catechists

The first fact of the concrete situation is undoubtedly the sheer number of students. In many schools, especially the large city high schools, there is no real possibility of adequately reaching all students. Even if a policy of concentrating on especially selected "core groups" of students were adopted, there is often little practical ability to carry on sufficiently intensive and comprehensive catechesis.

Correlative to the large number of students is the *shortage of trained catechists.* The majority of catechists on both elementary and secondary levels are volunteers, with little or no professional training. Their time is limited; few could devote themselves to full-time professional training even if such formation were available. Their main asset is precisely their generosity and spontaneous enthusiasm. For the few trained catechists, perhaps the main problem is one of support, both financial and moral. Frequently they are very much overworked, being called upon to do many tasks that are quite peripheral to their catechetical training. What is badly needed for the trained catechists is regularly scheduled "refresher programs" to continue their development, interest and enthusiasm for the work of catechizing.

These two overriding factors — the sheer number of students to be catechized, and the widespread lack of sufficiently trained catechists — are very likely to be the eventual source of a major problem facing the Catholic Church in the Philippines. The problem simply put is: *poor* catechesis in terms of both content and method of presentation, is often *more harmful* than no catechesis at all. This seems to have been the experience in any number of "Catholic countries" whose civil government allowed religious instruction in public schools. The end result was often enough a situation in which the students complained of boredom, secularists demanded that religion courses be made optional, and parish priests discovered the real effec-

tiveness of such instruction was minimal. This only emphasizes the urgent need for adequate planning and effective implementation.[3]

B. Parish-School Relationship

Besides the number of students and the scarcity of trained catechists, another problem-area met in the concrete situation is the relation between the local parish and the school. For many, the ideal would be to have the catechists work both in the school and in parish activities. But it must be said that even in small provincial towns, the school has its own peculiar dynamism and life, with its own conditions and priorities, quite distinct from those of the local parish. A major effort is required, therefore, if the essential cooperation between parish and school is to be developed.

This difficulty of coordinating parish and school may be seen more clearly in terms of the differences between parish coordinators and school administrators. Often the individual catechist works for both, and finds difficulty in adapting to their different demands, hierarchy of values, and attitudes. Guiding an adult Bible-study group is a very different enterprise from trying to introduce school children to a love and familiarity with Scripture. The difference, moreover, is not just one of age and maturity, but rather of the whole context in which both catechetical works are carried on.

The difference between "schooling" and "initiation" is rather widely recognized today.[4] This means that religious instruction *in school* is of a different nature entirely from the total process of Christian education that occurs in family, parish

[3] This of course brings no guarantee of pastoral success. In the US and Europe catechesis has never been so "professional" as it is today, yet the pastoral results have been far below expectations.

[4] See D. Piveteau, "School, Society & Catechetics," in *RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & THE FUTURE,* ed. D. Lane (Paulist, 1986), pp. 20-30.

and neighborhood community. The importance of Christian *initiation* has been stressed in recent years by the publication of the *RCIA*.[5] Most realize that "schooling" is ineffectual if it is not complemented by adequate Christian initiation in the home and parish. The NCDP clarifies just what is needed to conduct adequate religion courses in Catholic and public schools (*cf. No. 479-87*).[6] What has to be emphasized here, however is the recognition that school religion programs are different in nature and methodology from Christian initiation at home and in the parish.

C. Religious Education in School

Perhaps the major difference between religious education in school and parish activities is that of *continuity*. The problem in school is not what to teach the students this year, but what to teach them for six or seven consecutive years. This alone separates school work from the major concerns of parish organizers. To work out a *progressive* plan for religious instruction, covering the whole span of elementary as well as secondary education, is something the parish coordinator is not forced to face. The school administrator is.

The concrete situation of actual teaching in public schools varies greatly. Many catechists lack adequate classroom space, educational materials, blackboards, reasonable teaching hours, and the moral support needed. Frequently their training has not exercised them in drawing on their own and their students' cultural experience to make the "Good News" both relevant and practical (*Cf. NCDP #167*). So much, then, depends on the initiative, creativity and perseverance of the individual catechist.

[5] The literature published on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) in recent years is overwhelming. Whether the RCIA is really applicable to our Philippine context is another question. Cf. the symposium *Becoming a Christian*, ed., W. J. Reely (Sadlier, 1979) and *Conversion and the Catechumenate*, ed. R. D. Duggan (Paulist, 1984).

[6] The references given to the *NCDP* are to the latest edition, *MATURING IN CHRISTIAN FAITH* (St. Paul Public., 1985).

Perhaps the most important lesson experience has taught concerning teaching in public schools is the need for outside-the-classroom contact with students. Such practices as *"recollect-nics"* (recollection with picnics) or *"swim-inars"* (swimming with seminars), where feasible, have proven their worth beyond all doubt. If catechesis is not simply an academic discipline, i.e., a discrete body of knowledge pursued through investigation, study, and research, with its own methodology, literature, etc., but rather is equally *a sharing in the faith,* and of faith, a "learning to be a Christian," then it must go beyond the classroom and relate to the attitudes and values that shape the total response of personal faith. The work of the catechists in these weekend "recollect-nics" or "swiminars" may be, in the long run, their most productive and effective apostolate. Yet the fruitfulness of such work depends on, and presupposes, a basic ongoing effort in the school to reach the students with the basics of the Christian message.

This twofold character of catecheticals work-inside the classroom and outbrings up the basic dilemma of all religious teachings: *what* to teach and *how?* The *what* and the *how* are not as separated in real practice as they frequently are in discussion, since the *way* in which "doctrine" is presented and taught determines to a considerable extent *what* the students are able to assimilate and learn. Nevertheless, the debate among religious educators goes on, regarding the proper focus of catechetics: Christian *doctrine,* or Christian living?[7] Caricatures of either extreme are easy enough to describe: the student, schooled in "Christian doctrine," who knows his catechism by heart, but has no interest, motivation or even simple know-how, regarding how to live this "doctrine" or the "Christian Living" program that cannot be distinguished from a civics or social studies class, and whose students have never heard of such

[7] John Paul II had strong words for those who separate doctrine and life. "It is useless to play off orthopraxis against orthodoxy: Christianity is inseparably both.... It is also quite useless to campaign for the abandonment of serious and orderly study of the message of Christ in the name of some method concentrating on life experience." *CATECHESIS IN OUR TIME* (Vatican Press, 1979), no. 22.

"medieval" concepts as sin, heaven or hell, much less are able to recite the Apostles' Creed, or even the Our Father (in any language). Unfortunately, the deficiencies which these caricatures point to are all too real; what is left out, however, in each is the corresponding deficiency of "their side," and consequently the incredibly difficult challenge of a balanced program of "living doctrine" or "life grounded on Christian truth."

Perhaps instead of talking of "split level Christianity" — a split that can be discovered in every Christian people, even going back to the apostles themselves — we should form our catechists to recognize the difference between teaching and preaching, between educating and moralizing, and to realize that the Christian challenge embraces all of these.

II. GUIDELINES FOR CATECHETICAL FORMATION

Let us begin by summarizing the elements described above, constituting the concrete situation of the typical catechist teaching in public schools. There is admittedly a great variety of local needs and capabilities, but generally speaking the following conditions prevail: *an extremely large number of students needing religious instruction; a scarcity of trained catechists;* frequently a *gap between school* and *parish,* between parish coordinators and school administrators; different *emphases on doctrinal content or on Christian living;* and the need for extra-curriculum contact with the students. These elements in the general catechetical situation indicate certain objective needs and priorities in the formation of catechists and catechetical coordinators. Among these priorities, perhaps the five following would win rather wide acceptance today.

First. Most recognize the need today of working of concrete human experience (*experiential*), from the *bottom up,* as it were, striving for a *holistic* method aiming at the develop-

ment of the whole person.[8] This approach tries to *incorporate the major values fostered by the three more specific approaches* that have gained wide publicity in contemporary catechetics: the *kerygmatic*, with its stress on evangelization and salvation history and its focus on the person of Christ; the *diakonia* (service) idea of the Church as servant of the poor and liberator from the snares of sin; and *Koinonia* (community) the Church as the community of the disciples of Christ, united in authentic worship of the Father in the Holy Spirit. These three approaches parallel the *NCDP's* basic division of Word (doctrine), Witness (moral) and Worship (prayer).

A *second* priority flows from the experiential stress since it rests on the same phenomenological principle that *what* is being expressed is intimately linked and affected by *how* it is expressed. This simply means that knowledge and the learning process are contextual, environmental — or in *NCDP's* terms, *inculturated.* Any effective proclamation of the gospel must be *incarnated* in the concrete, cultural situation and experience of the people, and be constantly related to their values, attitudes and needs.[9] This does *not* represent a canonization of the *status quo*, but simply the fact that man's total environment is the locus or place in which he lives, learns, dreams and creates. No better example of this basic principle could be found than Christ's own teaching in the New Testament.

Given this *experiential* and *incarnational* approach, the third priority puts the focus *on the person* of the catechist. So much depends on the sheer personality of the catechist, and the

[8] The so-called "experiential" approach can be located in relation to the history of catechesis in our century by consulting the helpful charts in J. Manternach & Carl Pfeifer, *CREATIVE CATECHIST* (Twenty-Third Publications, 1983), pp. 139-44; and D. J. Piveteau & J. T. Dillon, *RESURGENCE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION* (Religious Educ. Press, 1977), pp. 22-27. It is well grounded in Vatican II's "Church in the Modern World," nos. 3-4, 41 et passim.

[9] Much has been written about creating a Catholic Filipino theology. One recent outstanding work proving the central significance and importance of language is D. M. Miranda, SVD, *PAGKA-MAKATAO: REFLECTIONS ON THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES IN PHILIPPINE CONTEXT* (Divine Word Public., 1987).

variety of tasks, conditions and situations is so great, that one major integrating principle in any adequate formation program seems of necessity to be the total Christian formation of the catechists's own person. The elements of the concrete situation outlined above demand a great flexibility on the part of the catechist; hence the need for deep, sound, personal formation.

The *fourth* priority concerns the objective needs of the catechist formation. These can also be outlined in brief form. Contentwise, this means basic training in Scripture and Church teaching, as the source for Catholic doctrine (Creed), Catholic morality (Commandments/ Beatitudes), and Catholic worship (sacraments). Undergirding this academic formation is the essential and necessary *spiritual formation* consisting in a basic grounding in Christian prayer and spirituality. Finally there is need for developing practical skills in communication, organization, etc., of which the catechist is in constant need. These points are concisely outlined in NCDP #*488*, which can be summarized by the phrase: *inform, form, transform.*

The *fifth* and final priority for any catechist formation program is the *fundamental need for integration.*[10] How can the ordinary catechist-students be helped to integrate personally the academic content received, with the behavioral motivation and attitudes, the spiritual formation, and the required pedagogical and social skills, into a wholesome, on-going, personal life that is manifestly, and hence apostolically. "Christian"? This is too much to ask of the individual student catechist; the program itself must be designed and executed in such a way that everything possible is done to encourage and assist in this integration process. Moreover some system of follow-up has proven a necessary adjunct to any adequate formation program, since integration of this type is an on-going process that by its very nature must be spread over years of daily living and experience. There is no short-cut to Christian maturity.

[10] Integration is perhaps the key insight fostered throughout the *NCDP*. See "The NCDP's Multiple Integrations," *DOCETE* 10, No. 49 (Apr./June 1987) 2-11.

III. ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE CATECHIST FORMATION PROGRAM

Given the above priorities, what would one possible catechist formation program look like? The following is simply one possible attempt to respond to the concrete situation and the consequent priorities outlined in the preceding sections. We will first take up the program of studies, and then focus on the personal development of the catechist.

A. Program of Studies

First of all, there is a real need for an *organized curriculum of studies.* Because so much depends on the catechist's ability to attract and hold the students, there is a great temptation to focus on the "most relevant," the "latest trend," etc., and solid formation consequently suffers. No sound personal integration on the part of the catechist is possible without a definite curriculum that respects the basic requirements of Christian *truth.*[11]

Five basic disciplines can be proposed as the basic core program. The first is, obviously, *sacred Scripture;* the course should be designated to provide a sound, up-to-date appreciation of the Bible together with basic norms for interpretation. But more, it should aim at instilling a real *taste* and *love* for Scripture, so that the catechist can grow in familiarity with the Bible not only in teaching, but in personal prayer and daily life. All kinds of secondary sources are available; but what is needed most of all is developing in the catechist a twofold predilection: for grounding all teaching in the Bible itself and for building one's own spirituality and prayer life on God's own word in Scripture (*cf. NCDP #89-95, 488*).

The *second* discipline is *Christian doctrine,* taught in a way that hopefully spans the gap between memorized "catechism answers" and general Christian "living". Christian doctrine

[11] The persistent interest and search for up-to-date adult catechisms and explanations of the Faith prove the need for a well organized, integrated grasp of the Faith.

must be presented with a triple integration in view: *first,* the integration of all "doctrines" into an organic, living synthesis, in which the interrelations of the various truths are clearly seen and a hierarchy of truths becomes manifest; *secondly,* an integration of these doctrines with the Gospel message, as well as with the following disciplines: morals, liturgy, social sciences; *thirdly,* an integration between the doctrine proposed and the daily, living experience of the catechist. Christian doctrine must "make a difference" in their lives, otherwise they are not getting the real Christian salvific doctrine, but only a dry academic articulation of it (*cf. NCDP #165-179*).

The *third* and *fourth* disciplines — Catholic morality and Catholic worship — flow from Scripture and Church teaching as Catholic doctrine does. And as with doctrine, they each have their own proper "integrations" in order to be dynamic, relevant and practical dimensions of the Gospel message today.

Finally, there is a *fifth* discipline covering the human sciences, especially philosophy of the human person in society, with elements of psychology, sociology, history and cultural anthropology — all studied in a concrete practical way that directly affects the student-catechists' understanding and appreciation of themselves and their ministry.

This academic program must also include exercise in basic organization skills through various *"practicum"* courses or seminars. Development of skills needed by the catechist leads us to the final section of our program; viz., focusing on the personal formation of the catechist.

B. Personal Development of the Catechist

Contemporary personalism distinguishes *three levels* of the human person: the *intra* personal or the individual's personal depth and stature, involving self-awareness, self-identity and confidence; the *interpersonal* involving relations with others and the ability to work with, cooperate with, and even motivate,

others; and the *public or societal,* which focuses on the structures and institutions in which the person is involved, knowingly or not (*cf. NCDP #259-263*). The catechist is essentially involved on all three levels, precisely in the work of catechizing; hence the need for the program of formation to address itself to all three. This can best be done, perhaps, while focusing on the *basic aim of personal integration.*[12]

From the subjective side of the student-catechist, the process of integration can be described in terms of four steps. *First* there is the *experience* — a growing personal awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in oneself as well as in the catechetical apostolate as a whole. *Secondly,* this experience is deepened in the personal exercise of proclaiming the Faith in word, deed and prayer; *thirdly,* there is the inherent drive within the life of faith toward "understanding" — the reflective awareness that comes through critical study and reflection deepened by prayer in the Holy Spirit. *Finally,* there is the fruit of all this process in meaningful communication of the Gospel message in concrete, inculturated terms. This integrating process within the catechist is obviously a life-long pursuit, but the formation program can do much to inaugurate it.[13]

IV. CONCLUSION

Perhaps we can conclude with a description of one concrete attempt to implement this ideal. This *basic idea is as follows*: people learn by *doing;* therefore, the best scheme tries to get students to do a maximum of work on their own. People learn

[12] A key factor in personal integration is "imagination" — not understood in terms of fantasy, escape from reality, but rather as precisely that inner faculty that is necessary to reach a fuller grasp of what's real. See Imagination & Integration in the NCDP," *DOCETE* 9, No. 45 (Apr./June 1986) 2-7.

[13] Cf. L. Orsy, SJ, "Integration in Educating for Ministry," *AM, ECCL. REV.* 168 (Dec. 1974) 68-80.

by repetition and *by correcting* their mistakes; therefore, *one should try to program a repetition of student effort,* with close guidance and correction at every stage. People learn through *work in actual conditions;* therefore a program of formation should include actual work in the field, with honest evaluation afterwards.

And so a class of *student-catechists* was divided into *groups of four or five.* Each group picked *out one theme* to prepare, e.g.. sin, Eucharist, faith. The *only books* allowed were the *Bible,* a *Biblical dictionary* and one basic doctrinal adult catechism (like Lawler, et al, *The Teaching of Christ,* OSV, 1983). Each team prepared an hour's *presentation of their topic,* incorporating in an experiential approach three basic aspects: the doctrinal, the moral, and the worship, all drawn directly from Scripture and Church teaching. The presentation was given a trial run before the professor; their work was carefully evaluated, and changes, corrections made, and then the theme was presented a second time before the whole class. Another evaluation and critique followed, this time by the whole class. Further revisions were made before the team actually presented the topic before the parish or school for whom it was intended. This third presentation was again evaluated in terms of audience reaction. Then various "secondary sources" were introduced to enable each team to compare their efforts with the published work of contemporary authors, on the same general topic. Finally, their presentation was prepared in the form of a written booklet as a final conclusion to their work. Such a method stressed personal work, proper use of courses, and exercise in critical evaluation, teamwork and actual communication.

The Holy Eucharist in Our Lives

FAUSTO GOMEZ, O.P.

THE EUCHARIST HAS ALWAYS been *most important* in the life of a Christian. Jesus said: "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you" (*Jn.* 6:53). The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Sacraments, "the fount and apex of the whole Christian life" (Vatican II, *LG*, 11). "The Eucharist is the greatest gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" (Paul VI).

The Eucharist, then, is most important and relevant for us. Is the Holy Eucharist truly that important and that relevant in our lives? Let us reflect together, therefore, on *The Eucharist in Our Lives*. Let us focus our attention on some basic points, namely: the meaning of the Eucharist; our participation in the Holy Mass; our commitment to justice and solidarity; the Eucharist and the poor, and the Eucharist and prayer.

1. The Meaning of the Eucharist

The evangelical accounts of the *Institution of the Eucharist* by Jesus Christ speak simply and clearly of the meaning of the Eucharist. Let us read St. Matthew's account:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take and eat,' he said; 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said, 'for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Mt. 26:26-28; cf. Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:14-20; I Cor. 11:23-26).

From the evangelical accounts, three things come out very clearly: the *Real Presence* of Christ (He gives *his Body* to eat, and *his* Blood to drink); the Eucharist as *Sacrament* (grace and love are given to man); the Eucharist as *Sacrifice* (the perfect sacrifice, or living memorial of Christ's passion, offered to God for the salvation of the world). From the truth of Jesus' Real Presence flow the other two truths, namely, the Eucharist as Sacrifice destined to God and the Eucharist as Sacrament directed to man — to feed him spiritually.

There is an interesting painting in a German monastery: It represents Christ at the Last Supper, surrounded by Calvin and Luther, the Protestant Reformers. Calvin says: "This *means* my body." Luther: "This *contains* my body." Christ, looking at them with compassion, says: "This *is* my Body." The Eucharist is the mystery of Christian faith. "This is the mystery (the sacrament) of faith," the priest proclaims after the consecration of the bread and wine. The theologians today use three key words to explain the mystery of the Real Presence, namely, transubstantiation, transfinalization and transignification. *Transubstantiation*: the reality — the substance — of bread and wine is transformed by consecration into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, while the species — or accidents — of bread and wine remain. *Transfinalization*: by consecration the bread and wine are changed of finality; they are not physical food and drink anymore, but, spiritual food and drink for eternal life. *Transignification*: from the moment of consecration, the eucharistic Bread and Wine signify the Real Presence of Christ.

In the Holy Eucharist Christ is really present as eucharistic Bread and Wine. He is also present in the Assembly of the Faithful gathered together to pray; in his Word, being proclaimed in the Liturgy; and in the person of the minister. The different modes of Christ's presence are directed to the presence par excellence, that is, Christ as Christ — the whole Christ — in his Body and in his Blood. From this Real Presence stems the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, centered on the adoration of Christ as the Son of God and a Man-for-Others, and the reparation for sins.

Let us note here that the worship of the Blessed Sacrament is only enriching and, therefore, authentic, when it echoes the celebration of the Eucharist and leads to a better celebration of the Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Mass: the primary end of the Eucharist is the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

The Eucharist has often been called the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; it is a re-presentation (a new presentation), a re-actualization of the same, unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of the Cross. In Calvary and on the altar after consecration we have the same supreme priest Jesus, and the same Host, Jesus, sacrificed now in an unbloody manner. It is a living memorial: "Do this in memory of me," Jesus said; hence, as the perfect and true sacrifice, it has four elements or ends (cf. I *Tim.* 2:-1-4) ; it is an act of *worship* to honor God; it is an act of *reparation* for sins; it is an act of *petition* to ask for grace and glory; it is an act of *thanksgiving* (this is the meaning of Eucharist). At the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Church, the People of God, offers herself to God with Christ, the supreme priest, the minister and all the faithful, "Through Him, with Him and in Him. . . ."

The Eucharist is the central sacrament and, consequently, like every sacrament, it sanctifies those who are well disposed. The Holy Eucharist is a sacred sensible sign which gives grace and charity — and glory. As St. Thomas tells us, the Eucharist produces grace in four wonderful ways: first, because it gives Christ, the source of all grace; second, because it repre-

sents the passion of Christ, which is the instrumental cause of grace; third, because it signifies — and effects — union, symbolized by the grains of wheat of the bread and the many grapes of the wine (the species of the sacrament); and fourth, because it gives sanctifying grace and charity: that union cannot be but caused by sanctifying grace and charity. Briefly, the Eucharist causes grace and love. And also glory: the Eucharist has an eschatological dimension: "Anyone who eats this bread will live forever" (*Jn.* 6:51); it does not introduce us immediately into heaven, but, as St. Thomas says, it gives us the power to reach there; that is why it is also called "Viaticum" (cf. III, 79).

2. The Holy Mass and Participation

In the Old Testament, Passover, Pasch is a passage from the Slavery of Egypt by the Red Sea through the Covenant at Sinai to the promised land. It has a past, a present and a future. In the New Testament it means the passage of Christ from his death to his resurrection (past). The paschal mystery takes place now (the present): the death-resurrection of Christ is actual and effective; it is liberating and saving. The Paschal Mystery is directed to the future — to eternal life (*Jn.* 6:54; I *Cor.* 11:26). The Eucharist is, above all, a personal encounter with Christ, who gives himself to us as food and drink — the risen Lord who wants to communicate his life to us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The attendance at Mass is not merely, or mainly, a "legal" obligation; but, an act of faith in communion, which demands free and responsible participation. Through an authentic participation, the Christians contribute positively to grow in holiness and build community — the community of the Church. The faithful must participate in the Mass "knowingly, devoutly and actively" (Vatican II, SC, 48): *knowingly,* that is, knowing what is the Mass and what is going on at the Mass; *devoutly,* with an attitude of true piety and devotion to God; *actively,*

taking part by listening to the Word of God, by receiving Holy Communion, by being silent, or singing, or praising, or giving thanks or worshipping the Lord.

The Eucharist is the saving *sacrifice* of the Cross; to be saving for each one of us, however, we have to be united in faith and love to the passion of Christ (III, 79, 7 ad 2); to be more saving for us, we have to offer ourselves to God with Christ and through Him and after Him, surrender our lives to God our Father in the Spirit in an attitude of loving service to our neighbors (cf. *Rom.* 12:1). The Eucharist is the central *sacrament* of our faith; but to receive its grace — the spiritual food for the journey of our lives — we have to be in grace. The Eucharist is the *sacrament of charity* and, therefore, to receive Christ in communion entails also to receive the brother and sister in Christ.

In the Eucharist, we must participate, take part in the *two tables*, namely, the table of the Word and the table of the eucharistic Bread and Wine: *the Word* — Christ, the Word of God, in particular — challenges us to respond to it, to carry it out in our lives. It is not merely a "read" Word, or a "known" Word, but a proclaimed Word, God's Word for us here and now. It invites us with urgency to say "yes" to God and evangelical values and "no" to the bondage of sin, injustice and selfishness. The culminating moment of the eucharistic celebration is our *communion* with Christ: Christ instituted the Eucharist to give himself to us as food for our journey and as grace and love to progress in unity and fraternity (cf. *Jn.* 17:21-26), to build community. (Communion means "common-union" that is the full union that must be present between the communicant and Christ — and the brothers and sisters of Christ). The Eucharist, then, is beautifully symbolized by Jesus' journey with two disciples to Emmaus after Easter: in the Mass Jesus narrates the Scriptures (and our hearts must burn with the love of the Word), and at the end, He breaks bread with us (He is our Bread, and we recognize Him fully in his breaking of the Bread). Thus, the full participation in the Eucharist includes receiving

communion: not to receive communion is like going to a banquet and not sharing the food and drink on the table; the state of grace and love is needed, however, to participate at the table of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the heart of the liturgy, of Christian worship. Its day is, above all, Sunday, the First Day of the Week, the Day of the Lord and of the Church: every Sunday is like "little Easter," the day to break and share in the eucharistic Bread (cf. *Mt.* 28:1), the original feast day, a day of joy and freedom from work (Vatican II, *SC,* No. 106); a marvelous occasion to encounter also the beauty of God's nature. The first Christians understood this quite well; and thus they did not need to be obliged to go to Mass (their problem was not to go to Mass). They were keenly aware of what we read in an important early document: "He who does not celebrate Sunday is diminishing the Church and depriving the Body of Christ of one member" (*Didascalia Apostolorum*). The Christian who understands the meaning of the Eucharist will joyfully go to Mass every Sunday, even if it means to make some sacrifices; and definitely, he will go on time!

And he knows that after the celebration, the Eucharist has to be lived: the "Go in peace, the Mass is over," truly means "Go and tell the world." Like Mary Magdalene (*Jn.* 20:18), and the apostles, the Christian is asked by the Risen Lord of the Mass to be a witness of His death and resurrection — dead to sin and alive in love.

3. *The Eucharist and Commitment to Justice and Solidarity*

Speaking of true and false prophets, Jesus said: "By their fruits, you will know them." Are we devotees of the Blessed Sacrament? A true devotee is one who is, and tries to become more, just and fraternal to all. Are we prayerful people? A genuine prayerful Christian is the one who, as St. Teresa of Avila tells us, produces good deeds of charity, humility, obedience, peace. Do we celebrate our Eucharists well? Then we

are truly committed to justice, love and solidarity. Are we true or false eucharistic people? By our fruits, they will know us!

The main motivation, center and goal of Christian life and commitment is charity, the virtue of divine and fraternal love; however, there can be no authentic charity without justice, which is the minimum, the condition *sine qua non* of charity. While justice means to give to each person his due, his rights, that is, what is his, charity signifies to give to him also from what is ours. Hence, there can be no charity without justice, no almsgiving without paying just salaries.

The Eucharist, as the sacrament of unity and fraternity, is necessarily connected with our practice or lack of practice of justice. Through the first centuries, in particular, the Christians were keenly aware of the incompatibility there was — and is — *between the Eucharist and injustice.* In fact, those who were really unjust among them were barred from receiving holy communion; the Churches were even asked then not to receive the alms of those unjust Christians for the poor. Injustice was then considered a "scandalous" sin (with homicide and robbery, among others), and, therefore, it required public penance and exclusion from full participation in the Eucharist until it was forgiven (forgiveness included restitution, of course). In this context, St. Thomas said strongly that public sinners, including usurers and gangsters, should not be given holy communion. This teaching explains why at the beginning of the evangelization of the Philippines the Dominicans were asked by their Provincial Chapters to punish the guilty of grave sin and public scandal, such as adultery and drunkenness, by depriving them of communion. Likewise, Dominicans refused to give absolution and communion to those Spaniards who exploited the natives.

To celebrate the Eucharist properly demands to be just and to promote justice. Jesus said: "If your justice goes no deeper than that of the scribes and pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven" (*Mt.* 5:20).

By justice, cold human justice alone, the other person remains "another", like an alien; but by charity, the other becomes "another I." In solidarity, the other person becomes a brother or a sister in Christ and a child of God, the universal Father. Justice in Christian perspective, the justice of Christ, is a mediation of charity. Christ's justice is a merciful and compassionate justice. "The new thing in the new justice of Jesus is that He brings compassion into the historical project of building a just world" (A. Nolan, O.P.).

The Eucharist is *the sacrament of charity* (St. Thomas Aquinas). It pre-requires grace and love to receive it worthily and it energizes those who receive it worthily to practice love of all neighbors, in an attitude of service, symbolized by Christ's washing of the feet of his disciples (cf. *Jn.* 13:14). The first Christians understood well this basic teaching and tried to practice it properly. They were quite aware of Jesus' fundamental saying:

> *So then if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering* (Mt. 5:23-24).

St. Paul went as far as saying that to share in "the breaking of the bread" without fraternal love amounts to receiving the Eucharist unworthily and behaving unworthily towards the body and blood of the Lord (cf. I *Cor.* 11:27). St. Irenaeus expressed the same doctrine — repeated by the Fathers of the Church — when he spoke of the sterility of the sacrifice of the Mass when offered by people who are truly divided among themselves. (To celebrate the Eucharist well implies to have fundamental, but not perfect union with others; truly, participation in the Eucharist must help eradicate our sins and sinful inclinations and increase and perfect that union.)

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4. The Eucharist and the Poor

The Eucharist, then, demands commitment to justice and solidarity: justice and solidarity for all; but, preferentially, principally, for the poor, the needy, the oppressed.

In the Eucharist we encounter Christ, we receive Christ, the Risen Lord, who is for us, here and now, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is our Way, the Way, to love: His love is universally and unconditionally for all, but, in the first place for the poor, the "little ones." In fact, He came to preach the Good News to the Poor, whom he called "Blessed." The Eucharist is union and fraternity; it is sharing: as Christ gives himself to us, we give ourselves and our things to the other brothers and sisters, especially to those who need them most — the poor. Moreover, the Eucharist must lead us to real *poverty in spirit* (without this, we cannot be saved!), and, therefore, to a life of humility and detachment, to an austere life style ("let us live simply so that others might simply live"), to solidarity with the poor which entails sharing time, talents and possessions with the poor (cf. *Lk.* 14:12-14; *Gal.* 2:10; *Ac.* 2:42-46). Hence, "no man has the right to live like the rich man while Lazarus is at his gate" (W. Barclay).

The first Christians give us an excellent example of this. At the *Offering of the Faithful* (an important part of their celebration of the Lord's Supper), they all shared something of what they had with the poor. As St. Justin wrote: "Those of us who have any resources come to the aid of all who are in need, and we are always assisting one another." For his part, the great Tertullian reported the life of the followers of Jesus thus:

> *Such work of love (the offerings of coins for the poor and needy), for so it is, puts a mark upon us, in the eyes of some. "Look," they say, "how they love one another" (for themselves hate one another); "and how they are ready to die for each other" (for themselves*

will be readier to kill each other) . . . So we who are united in mind and soul, have no hesitation about sharing property. All is common among us — except our wives.

In the Holy Eucharist, we say "yes" to Christ and also to all brothers and sisters, particularly, — like God like Christ, liberator of the oppressed — we say "yes" to the poor, who represent Christ in a particular way (cf. *Mt.* Chapt. 25). Pilate asked Jesus: "What is truth?" Writer Van der Meersch answered him: "Pilate, the truth is this: to be at the side of the oppressed." That is why at the end of our lives, we will not be asked how many devotions we had, how many prayers we recited, not even how many Masses we attended. We will only be examined on love, particularly on love of the poor; and we shall be saved if we truly loved them: "Then the King will say to those on his right hand, Come... for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me" (*Mt.* 25:34-36).

5. Prayer and Social Commitment

One constant attitude we find in Jesus' life was his prayer. Thus, he taught the disciples to pray. As his followers, we need and are obliged to pray, to raise our hearts and minds to God — as individuals and as a community. The Eucharist is the central and best prayer the Christians can offer to God: no prayer, no pious exercise can compare with the unique excellency of the Lord's Supper. As a true prayer, the Eucharist must produce good deeds, fruits of love — and justice!

The Eucharist is the center of Christian worship and the Christians' prayer; but *worship-prayer without justice-love cannot be true but false worship-prayer.* Jesus, and the prophets before Him were very strong on this necessary linkage. A representative text from Isaiah:

What are your endless sacrifices to me?
says Yahweh.
I am sick of holocausts of rams
and the fat of calves. (...)
Take your wrong-doing out of my sight.
Cease to do evil.
Learn to do good,
search for justice,
help the oppressed,
be just to the orphan,
plead for the widow (Is. 1:11, 17; cf. Ho. 4:1-2; Am. 5:7-17; Jr. 7:1-11).

What God wants is not sacrifice, but mercy, that is, justice and love (cf. *Ho.* 6:6; *Mt.* 12:7; and 23:23). He does accept, however, the sacrifices of those who practice justice and equity (cf. *Is.* 56:1): "Pure, unspoilt religion, in the eyes of God our Father is this: coming to the help of orphans and widows when they need it, and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world" (*Jm.* 1:27).

Prayer in general and the Eucharist in particular are also needed to practice justice and love. This is the first and daily miracle we Christians are asked to perform and can perform — with God's grace and love. Thus, our prayers must ask God not really for extra-ordinary miracles — which He can always do — but for the daily miracle of living our faith doing the works of justice and love — which is the miracle we must always do, with the irreplaceable help of the Holy Eucharist. This insight is masterfully expressed by Gerard Bessiere in one of his novels.

One of the main characters is a very young girl named Gabriela. She is attending school, and her religion teacher is a young woman who is paralized and goes to school in a wheelchair. One afternoon, Gabriela's friend Jacinto asked her: "What did you do today in school?" Answered Gabriela: "A miracle." "How is that," Jacinto asked. "Well," Gabriela said, "our teacher is paralized; she cannot walk; she can only

talk and smile. Today she talked to us about the miracles of Jesus, and we told her that we did not believe in miracles. Why? Because if there were miracles God would have healed her." "And what did your teacher answer to that?" Jacinto asked. Gabriela said: "But Jesus is making miracles for me also. You, children, are my weekly miracle, because every Wednesday you push my wheel-chair and take me to the park."

With the help of the Eucharist, we Christians have to make the daily miracle of justice and solidarity. After all, as St. Thomas says, the Eucharist is "Christ's greatest miracle," and it should help us be just and fraternal, and promote justice in our society. Thus, we will contribute, as we should, to hasten the social revolution of justice and love. Facing so much injustice and poverty in our society, we cannot remain indifferent: our true and genuine participation in the Holy Eucharist does not allow us to pass by the poor who cross our way. Like the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk.* 10:37) we have to help them, we have to accompany them in their just struggles for human dignity and rights.

6. Conclusion: The Challenges of the Eucharist

Our participation in the Eucharist challenges us seriously here and now!

When we participate in the eucharistic celebration, are we well *prepared* so that we can receive its great fruits of grace and glory? Those who are in the state of grave sin or great injustice or deep lack of love cannot receive the Lord as the Bread of Life. In fact, for those Christians who are gravely unjust or selfish — and unrepentant —, the Mass is merely a ritual without true meaning.

When the *Word of God* is proclaimed to us, do we really listen and try to respond to it in our lives? Those who do not

respond to the Word of God, to Christ will not be helped by this Word which is a lamp on our journey.

At the *offertory*, when the bread and wine are offered to God our Father, do we offer ourselves to God and tell Him "Lord, your will be done"? Those who do so will find the energy of God in their souls — the patient and loving grace of our merciful Father.

When we pray the *Our Father*, do we really realize that God is *our* Father and that, therefore, the others are brothers and sisters in Christ, including our enemies? And when we give *the sign of peace* to each other, do we really wish peace to all, and commit ourselves to work peacefully for peace? Those who do not consider the others as brothers and sisters or do not promote peace do not participate fully in the celebration of the Eucharist.

When we receive Christ in *Holy Communion* do we receive also the brothers and sisters of Christ, particularly the poor, and, therefore, do we commit ourselves to work for justice, love and peace? Those who are not united to the neighbors, especially the poor, cannot receive fully the Bread of Life and the Spiritual drink.

St. Augustine said to the faithful at Mass: "You hear: *The Body of Christ*, and you answer: *Amen*. Be a member of the Body of Christ so that your *Amen* is true."

We are disciples of Christ. We will be recognized as his disciples not so much because we hear Mass, but because we love each other. However, we should not oppose but link the Eucharist and love; certainly, the genuine celebration of the Eucharist necessarily leads to love one another more; above all, to love the poor among us.

The genuine celebration of the Eucharist necessarily implies social commitment. We all know this: our problem is not usually lack of knowledge, but of commitment. How to bridge the gap between conviction and commitment? Only through *conversion* — and continuing conversion. And also through hope!

In spite of all our problems, we Christians have to be hopeful, especially today. And, therefore, we have to go on celebrating — and trying to improve our celebration of the Eucharist — "the symbol of God's greatest love" and also "the support of our hope" (St. Thomas).

May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the risen Lord of the Eucharist, and our Mother in the order of grace, lead us to the full understanding of and commitment to the Eucharist as Real Presence. Sacrifice and Sacrament — as communion and commitment to justice and solidarity.

Cases and Inquiries

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

1. Faculty to Hear Confessions

I was granted the faculty to hear confessions in my country by the local Ordinary. There was no limitation of time. Recently, I was assigned by my Superiors to the Philippines. May I continue hearing confessions in the Philippines by virtue of canon 967 § 2?

A Religious Priest

CANON 967, § 2 READS AS FOLLOWS: "Those who have the faculty habitually to hear confessions, whether by virtue of their office or by virtue of a concession by the Ordinary of either the place of incardination or that in which they have a domicile, can exercise that faculty everywhere . . ." It is clear that canon 967, § 2 contemplates the case when a priest is outside the place where he had obtained the faculty to hear confessions, *still holding the office, or retaining the same incardination or domicile,* by reason of which he enjoys the faculty. The canon does

not contemplate the case when the priest has lost the office, incardination, or residence, by which he had obtained the faculty. The wording of the canon is clear: "qui facultate *gaudent*..., aut loci in quo domicilium *habent*."

This foregoing affirmation is confirmed by canon 975, which reads: "Apart from revocation, the faculty mentioned in can. 967, § 2 ceases by loss of office, by excardination, or by loss of domicile." Therefore, the faculty to hear confessions granted by reason of office, incardination or residence, ceases to exist the moment such office, incardination or residence are lost.

If our consultant received in his country the faculty to hear confessions by virtue of his residence, this residence has ceased when he was assigned to the Philippines (can. 103). He cannot therefore invoke the fact that he was granted the faculty to hear confessions in his own country. Such faculty was attached to his residence there. This residence having been lost, the faculty attached to it, has ceased also.

2. A Moral Problem

In view of the unclear teaching in our Catholic schools run by priests, brothers and nuns, may I ask the following questions:

Do the below persons commit a grave sin against the 5th Commandment of the Church, "to observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage":

1. *Those who contract marriage before a judge or the mayor,*

   a) if after the civil marriage, they do not live as husband and wife until they are married in the Church?

b) if after the civil marriage, they live as husband and wife?

2. Those who contract marriage before a Protestant minister or of the Iglesia ni Cristo, ie. de Manalo,

a) if after the said marriage, they do not live as husband and wife until they are married in the Church?

b) if after the said marriage, they live as husband and wife?

Sacerdos

OUR CONSULTANT DOES NOT SPECIFY what is meant by the "unclear teaching in our Catholic schools run by priests, brothers and nuns." So we cannot comment on it. He, however, raises two different questions, namely: 1) Do those who contract marriage before a judge or the mayor commit a grave sin, a) if they do not live as husband and wife; and b) if they live as husband and wife? 2) Do those who contract marriage before a Protestant minister or of Iglesia ni Cristo, ie. de Manalo, commit a sin, a) if they do not live as husband and wife after marriage; and b) if they live as husband and wife after the same? In order to answer the proposed questions, we say that Catholics, as a rule, are bound to get married in the Catholic Church only. Canon 1108, § 1 reads: "Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local Ordinary or parish priest or of the priest or deacon delegated by either of them... and in the presence of two witnesses." And canon 1117 says: "The form prescribed above is to be observed if at least one of the parties contracting marriage was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not by a formal act defected from it."

The Church laws on marriage celebration are clear. The marriage of Catholics is to be celebrated only before the local

Ordinary or before the parish priest, or before the delegate of either of them; otherwise, their marriage is invalid. Catholics who attempt to get married not according to this Church rule, break the law. In other words, they commit a sin, as a rule, since sin is defined as "a transgression of the law of God or of his Church." Whether this sin is serious (mortal) or not will depend on the matter transgressed and the circumstances surrounding such transgression. A grievous sin is defined as "a transgression of a commandment of God or of the holy Church in a grave matter, with perfect knowledge and with full consent."

As to when a concrete transgression constitutes a serious sin or only a venial sin can, to some degree, be determined by moralists, after weighing accurately all the concrete circumstances of the transgression. At any rate God alone is the sole judge who knows the objective and subjective elements formally constituting each transgression. The role of canonists is only to determine whether the Church law is transgressed or not, leaving to theologians to determine the morality of transgressions.

Bearing in mind the foregoing observations, we answer the questions of our consultant in the following way:

1. a) Those who contract marriage before a judge or the mayor break the law of the Church by that fact. The law of the Church binds them to get married before the local Ordinary or before the parish priest, or before a priest or deacon delegated by either of them (cans. 1108, 1117). Their breaking this law takes place even if after their civil marriage they do not live as husband and wife. Whether this transgression is a venial or serious sin will depend on the circumstances motivating the transgression.

b) Those, however, who contract marriage before a judge or the mayor and after such civil celebration live as husband

and wife, cannot be excused from having committed a serious sin. The magisterium of the Church is crystal clear in this respect. Pius IX made this pronouncement: "No Catholic is or can be ignorant that matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Evangelical Law, instituted by Christ our Lord, and that for that reason there can be no marriage between Catholics which is not at the same time a sacrament; and that in consequence any *other union of man and woman among Christians save that which is a sacrament, no matter by what civil law it is effected, is nothing else than shameful and soul-destroying concubinage,* which the Church so vehemently condemns; and further, that the sacrament can never be separated from the bond of marriage, and that it belongs to the Church's authority to determine all that in any way appertains to such marriage" (Allocution to Cardinals, Sept. 27, 1852: Denzinger, ENCH., n. 1640).

2. a) Those who contract marriage before a Protestant minister or of Iglesia ni Cristo, i.e. de Manalo, break likewise the law of the Church on the form in which Catholics are bound to celebrate their marriage (cans. 1108, 1117), even if the persons concerned do not live afterwards as husband and wife. We can even say that the Church is more strict in this case of religious celebration than in that of civil marriage. She expressly forbids "to have either before or after the canonical celebration in accordance with can. 1108, § 1, another religious celebration of the same marriage for the purpose of giving or renewing matrimonial consent" (Can. 1127, § 3). It is more serious to have a religious celebration outside the Church. Such celebration can hardly be justified, hence the transgression involves the so-called *communicatio in sacris.*

b) Whatever has been said with regards to the civil marriage in 1-b and in 2-a applies here. The living together of the persons concerned as husband and wife is to be considered as a *concubinage,* since there is no valid marriage between them.

3. A Previous Marriage Is a Diriment Impediment

A relative of mine wants to get married to a man separated from his wife. The man and his wife are Presbyterians and were married in the Presbyterian Church. The wife is now living with another man. My relative informed me that she and the man had contracted a civil marriage.

The question is: Can my relative marry the man in question in the Catholic Church? Can she have a Church wedding?

A Priest

THE MAN AND WOMAN MENTIONED by our consultant are Presbyterians. They validly married in the Presbyterian Church. We presume that whoever solemnized their marriage had the authorization from the State to do so. Being validly married, neither of them can marry another person, as long as his or her spouse is still alive.

The relative of our consultant, therefore, cannot marry a man whose marriage still subsists. A previous subsisting marriage is a diriment impediment in civil law as well as in Church law. A valid marriage subsists until it is dissolved by the death of one of the parties.

The answer, therefore, is that the consultant's relative cannot get married in the Church to a man who is still married. The civil marriage she has contracted with him is null and void for the same reason.

Documents Concerning the Philippine Church

1. Bull of erection of the Diocese of Kabankalan (Negros Occidental)

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei
ad perpetuam rei memoriam

Resonant usquequaque in animo Nostro, quibus divino consilio fidelium grex commissus est universus, verba illa Salvatoris: — Euntes ergo in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae... Mc. 16, 15. Docent enim voces illae divinae oportere omnino Apostolos mundum hunc peragrare ad praedicandum verbum salutis, sine quo neminem posse salvum fieri. Haec autem ratio est, cur Nos cogitationes Nostras omnes eo intendamus, ut praedicatio atque propagatio christianae veritatis velox per gentes currat et clarificetur — II, Thess. 3, 1. Quare, cum Venerabilis Frater Antonius Fortich Episcopus Bacolodensis, audita Conferenita episcopali Insularum Philippinarum, iam ab hac Petri Sede petieret, ut e suo territorio nova

diocesis conderetur: esse enim nimio incolarum numero habitatam; Nos, Venerabili Fratre Brunone Torpigliani sententiam rogato, Archiepiscopo titulo Mallianensi atque in iis Insulis Apostolico Nuntio, item Venerabilibus Fratribus Nostris S.R.E. Cardinalibus Congregationi pro Episcopis praepositis, haec statuimus: A Bacolodensi dioecesi has paroecias distrahimus: La Castellana, Moises Padilla, Isabela, Aguisan — Himamaylan —, Binalbagan, Himamaylan, Parao — Binalbagan —, Su-ay Himamaylan, Kabankalan, Candoni, Dankalan — Ilog —, Ilog, Sipalay, Cauayan, Hinobaan; quibus territoriis novam dioecesim constituimus *Cabancalensem* appellandam, nempe iisdem finibus terminandam, quibus paroeciae e quibus coalescit. Sedes dioecesis Cabancalensis in urbe Kabankalan ponetur; in eiusque templo S. Francisco Xaverio dicato Episcopus cathedram suam collocabit docendae religionis. Erectam dioecesim suffraganeam facimus archiedioecesis Jarensis, sicut eius Episcopum sacri Praesulis Jarensis, ad normam iuris Canonici. Statuimus item, ut Episcopus collegium Consultorum quamprimum eligat, in sui ipsius auxilium. Ad mensam episcopalem quod attinet, provideatur Curiae emolumentis, fidelium collationibus, atque bonis quae adhuc Bacolodensi propria erant, pro rata parte, iuxta canonem 122 C.J.C. De Seminario res ita agatur, ut serventur praescripta iuris communis, prae oculis habitis normis atque decretis Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica. Ceterum, qui ex alumnis optimi fuerint, Romam mittantur ut in Pontificio Collegio Philippino philosophiam atque sacram theologiam recte discant; similiter et de sacerdotibus statuimus, qui sacra studia complere debeant. Ad regimen novae dioecesis quod pertinet, electionem administratoris dioecesani, similia adamussim canones Ecclesiae serventur. Edicimus etiam ut, dioecesi condita, eo ipso sacerdotes Ecclesiae illi addicantur, in cuius territorio officium ecclesiasticum habent; ceteri vero clerici atque Seminarii tirones, ei in quà legitime degant. Documenta tandem et acta, quae quoquo modo conditam dioecesim Cabancalensem respiciant, ad eius Curiam mittantur, ibique religiose serventur. Contrariis nihil obstantibus. Ad haec omnia perficienda Venerabilem Fratrem Brunonem Torpigliani deputamus, vel quem

ipse delegerit, modo in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum virum. Re vero acta documenta exarabit, quorum fide dignum exemplum ad Congregationem mittet pro Episcopis, idque cito. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die tricesimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri nono.

† Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a Publicis Eccl. negotiis

† Bernardinus Card. Gantin
Prefectus Congr. pro Episcopis

Josephus Delton
Proton. Apost.

Angelus Lanzoni
Proton. Apost.

2. Bull of erection of the Diocese of San Carlos (Negros Occidental)

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei
ad perpetuam rei memoriam

Certiores quidem facti de multitudine incolarum, qui intra fines Ecclesiarum Dumaguetensis et Bacolodensis habitant, non dubitamus quin consentiendum sit precibus huic Apostolicae Sedi ad hoc ab earum Episcopis adhibitis ut nova illic dioecesis condatur ad Christifidelium commodum perutilis, audita Conferentia Episcopali Insularum Philippinarum. Quare, cum res in votis sit ipsius Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigliani, Archiepiscopi titulo Mallianensis et in Philippinis Insulis Apostolici

Nuntii, ex sententia Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium Congregationis pro Episcopis negotia procurantium, quam ratam omnino habemus, deque potestate Nostra Apostolica harumque Litterarum virtute, ipsa suppleto consensu quorum interest aut interesse censetur, haec decernimus quae sequuntur, atque iubemus: A dioecesi Dumaguetensi has seiungimus circumscriptiones paroeciales: La Libertad, Guihulngan, Vallehermoso, Canlaon, Quezon San Carlos, San Carlos, Calatrava, Taboso, Old Escalante, New Escalante; a dioecesi autem Bacolodensi has separamus: Manlapa, Caduhaan, Cadiz, Pandanan, Fabrica, New Sagay, Olda Sagay, Vito; ex iisque omnibus simul sumptis locis novam dioecesim condimus nomine *Sancti Caroli Borromeo,* iisdemque definitam finibus paroeciarum modo memoratarum propriis, quam et suffraganeam constituimus Ecclesiae Tarense, huiusque Metropolitae Archiepiscopi iuri ipsum pro tempore dioecesis nunc conditae Episcopum subicimus. Simul statuimus ut dioecesana nova sedes in urbe collocetur, cui nomen vulgo — San Carlos, —, dum templum paroeciale ibi exstans in honorem Sancti Caroli Borromeo Deo dicatum ad cathedralis templi gradum evehimus insigniaque una cum privilegiis et honoribus ei tribuimus, quibus reliqua id genus templa fruuntur. Episcopo vero pro tempore dioecesis Sancti Caroli Borromeo onera iuraque facimus, quae ad dioecesanos pertinent Episcopos, unoque tempore commonefacimus ut ibi Consultorum Collegium quamprimum instituatur, qui Ordinario loci praesenti sint adiumento. Quoad congrua respicit alimenta Praesulis Sancti Caroli Borromeo, in Curiae emolumentis fideliumque stipibus constare debent iustaque bonorum in portione quae ad mentem can. 122 CJC ab episcopalibus mensis Dumaguetensis et Bacolodensis necesse est novae obveniant mensae episcopali. In iisque dein, quae et Seminarii dioecesani aedificationem et sacrorum alumnorum institutionem spectant aut formationem, praescripta iuris communis serventur, ratione quidem habita normarum a Congregatione pro Institutione Catholica editarum. Videatur praeterea ut selecti tirones philosophicis aut theologicis disciplinis instruendi, necnon sacerdotes quibus altiora fuerint studia complenda, ad Pontificium Colle-

gium Philippinum mittantur in Urbe situm. Quae canonicis normis et de dioecesium regimini et de bonorum ecclesiasticorum gestione et de dioecesano Administratore sede vacante eligendo et de oneribus et iuribus fidelium, deque aliis id genus statuta sunt, ea adamussim ibi quoque serventur. Constitutione novae dioecesis ad effectum adducta, sacerdotes eidem censeantur adscripti Ecclesiae intra cuius fines officium ecclesiasticum habent, quemadmodum ceteri clerici et Seminarii tirones illi Ecclesiae addicantur, in qua legitimum habent domicilium. Omnia denique actorum scripta documenta quae nempe aut ad novam dioecesim eiusve clerum aut ad fideles aut ad bona temporalia pertinent, ad Curiam Sancti Caroli Borromeo transmittenda curent dioeceses Dumaguetensis et Bacolodensis, ut in condendo archivio probe custodiantur. Quod reliquum est, Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem diximus, a Nobis deputatus quae hic decrevimus rite exsequantur, facultate sibi facta id delegandi ad virum in ecclesiastica dignitate constitutum, onere tamen addito studii collocandi in certo veroque actae exsecutionis litterum exemplo Congregationi pro Episcopis mittendo. Quas Apostolicas Litteras nunc et in posterum ratas esse volumus, contrariis haud obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die tricesimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septim, Pontificatus Nostri nono.

† Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a Publicis Eccl. negotiis

† Bernardinus Card. Gantin
Praefectus Congr. pro Episcopis

Marcellus Rossetti
Proton. Apost.

Angelus Lanzoni
Proton. Apost.

3. Designation of Mons. Maximiano Cruz as Auxiliary Bishop of Calbayog and Titular Bishop of Tanidaia

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

dilecto filio *Maximiano Cruz,* hucusque Vicario Generali dioecesis Calbayoganae, electo Episcopo Auxiliari eiusdem dioecesis et titulari Ecclesiae Tanudaiensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum non semper Episcopi, varias ob causas, omnia exsequi valeant sibi commissa ministerii munera, praesertim si soli in illum exercendum incumbunt, iidem solent ab hac Apostolica Sede auxilia petere, ut greges suos maiore cum utilitate regant ipsique aliquid levaminis capiant negotiorum, Nostrumque est et necessitates considerare et iustas exaudire postulationes. Quoniam igitur Venerabili Fratri Petro Dean, Archiepiscopo Palensi, Episcopus Auxiliaris opus erat, quo melius consuleret bono vacantis dioecesis Calbayoganae, in Administrationem Apostolicam ei commissae, eius precibus duximus esse concedendum, bene scientes hoc ipsis dioecesis condicionibus requiri. Illud autem munus tibi concredere voluimus, dilecti fili, tum quia utpote Vicarius Generalis illius dioecesis, utilissima es experientia instructus ad eam administrandam, tum quia virtutibus notus, animabus proderis plus moribus quam verbis. Hinc, ex consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium, negotiis Congregationis pro Episcopis praepositorum, et Nostrae Apostolicae potestatis et auctoritatis plenitudine, his Litteris te Episcopum creamus et Auxiliarem assignamus Archiepiscopo Palensi, titulum tibi simul tribuentes vacantis *Tanudaiensis* Ecclesiae, ad normam iuris com-

r unis. Quod autem ad tuam pertinent episcopalem ordinationem, sineris eam accipere secundum liturgicas leges a quovis catholico Episcopo, facta prius fidei professione et iureiurando interposito fidelitatis erga Nos Nostrosque in hac Apostolica Sede Successores, teste sacro aliquo Praesule. Formulas vero horum actuum quamprimum ad Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes, ex more signatas sigilloque impressas. Ut quoddammodo imagine utamur Sancti Doctoris Ambrosii, navem conscende, dilecte fili, et cum aliis remigibus, ad litus remis navem appelle, non maris tempestatibus timens, sed pharo portus confirmatus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die decimo mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

Joannes Paulus PP. II
Rodomonty Galligani
Proton. Apost.

4. Designation of Mons. Sebastian Dalis as Auxiliary Bishop of the Mountain Province and Titular Bishop of Tabraca

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

dilecto filio *Sebastiano Dalis*, electo Episcopo Auxiliari Vicariatus Apostolici Montani, necnon titulari Thabracensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Prudentiae et caritatis index est Episcopis subvenire, qui ob difficultates vel onerosa negotia

ad sacrum ministerium pertinentia, ab hac Apostolica Sede postulant auxilia, quo expeditius et fructuosius possint suos regere fideles. Eam ob causam petitionem non renuendam esse censuimus Venerabilis Fratris Aemiliani Madangeno, Vicarii Apostolici Montani, qui rogavit ut sibi per Episcopum Auxiliarem opitularemur. Cum autem tu, dilecte fili, eius Vicariatus sis, indeque condicionum eius gnarus et necessitatum, et insuper vir sis religiosus, christianae veritatis disseminandae studiosus, peritia et prudentia aliisque magni momenti ornatus virtutibus, consentaneum duximus illud tibi delegare munus, fisi hoc mandatum in bonum Vicariatus esse cessurum. Quocirca, audito probatoque consilio Congregationis pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda fide, plena usi Nostra Apostolicá potestate et auctoritate, his Litteris te Episcopum Auxiliarem Montanum nominamus, ad normam iuris communis, quod quae officia tua sint et privilegia clare describit; simul tibi tribuentes vacantis Ecclesiae *Thabracensis* titulum. Quod vero ad tuam attinet episcopalem ordinationem, eam sineris extra urbem accipere a quolibet catholico Episcopo, servatis liturgicis legibus. Ante tamen quam ad eam accedas, est tibi fidei professio facienda et iusiurandum interponendum fidelitatis erga Nos et Nosotros in hac Apostolica Sede Successores, teste sacro aliquo Praesule. Quorum actuum formulas postea quamprimum curabis Congregationem pro Gentium Evangelizatione mittendas, ex consuetudine signatas et sigillo impressas. Si vere, dilecte fili, vis Regnum Christi crescere et confirmari, duc potissimum officium tuum evangelium nuntiare, pro verbis sancti Apostoli Pauli: — Quomodo invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? aut quomodo credent ei, quem non audierunt? Quomodo autem audient sine praedicante? Quomodo vero praedicabunt nisi mittantur? sicut scriptum est: Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium bona — Rom. 12, 14-15. Datum Romae, die duodevicesimo mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

Joannes Paulus PP. II
Marellus Rossetti
Proton. Apost.

5. Designation of Mons. Nicolas Mondejar Former Bishop of Romblon as First Bishop of San Carlos (Negros Occidental)

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Venerabili Fratri *Nicolao M. Mondejar,* hactenus Episcopo Romblonienſi, ad Ecclesian Sancti Caroli Borromeo translato, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum praeficiendus sit Episcopus dioecesi Sancti Caroli Borromeo, quam nuper constituimus, te, Venerabilis Frater, congruis dotibus ornatum, idoneum putamus quem ad illam pascendam destinemus. De consilio igitur Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti, Apostolica Nostra potestate usi, te, vinculo solutum Sedis Romblonienſis, Episcopum *Sancti Caroli Borromeo* Ecclesiae nominamus, datis iuribus impositisque pariter obligationibus, quae officium tuum ac dignitas secum ferunt. Ab iteranda autem catholicae fidei professione itemque a iureiurando fidelitatis erga Nos et Nosotros Successores dando te eximimus, contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus. Mandamus insuper ut de his Nostris sub plumbo Litteris clerum ac populum istius dioecesis facias certiores, ad normam iuris; quos dilectos Nobis filios hac data occasione hortamur ut te libentes accipiant, mandatis tuis pareant, pastoralibus faveant coeptis, quae ineunda esse censueris. Denique, Venerabilis Frater, omnipotentem Deum suppliciter deprecamur ut supernis te sustineat donis, quibus adiutus fideles tibi creditos valeas prudentia regere, sana doctrina docere, omni caritate et diligentia in Domino pascere et sanctificare. Adsit tibi de coelo propitia Beatissima Virgo Maria, Apostolorum Regina.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die uno et vicesimo mensis Novembris, Mariali Anno millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

Joannes Paulus PP. II
Angelus Lanzoni
Proton. Apost.

6. Designation of Mons. Vicente Navarra former Auxiliary Bishop of Capiz as First Bishop of Kabankalan (Negros Occidental)

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Venerabili Fratri *Vincentio Navarra,* adhuc Episcopo titulo Velefitano ex Auxiliari Capicensi, ad nuper erectam dioecesim Cabancalensem translato, salutem et Apostolicam Benediciotnem. Apostolica omnino servantes instituta ac pastorali permoti sollicitudine, pro Ecclesia universa curam dependimus Nostram potissimumque in novensiles fidelium communitates cogitationes intendimus ne ipsae quam aptissimis careant Pastoribus. Est profecto causa, propter quam haud cunctandum esse censuimus quin ad novellum Dominicum ovile Cabancalense idoneum mitteremus ductorem. Ad te ergo mentem convertimus Nostram et te prorsus aptum existimavimus cui ipsa crederetur administranda. Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti comprobantes quidem sententiam, Potestatis apostolicae Nostrae usi plenitudine, te prioribus solvimus vinculis Ecclesiae videlicet Velefitanae et

Capicensis, destinamus pariter Episcopum Ordinarium ad novam dioecesim *Cabancalensem*, dato nempe regimine omnique administratione, cum iuribus atque oneribus quae ad munus spectant tuum, secundum iuris canonici praecepta. Quamvis autem a fidei professione iteranda sis solutus necesse est tamen fidelitatis iusiurandum erga Nos Nostrosque in hac Sede apostolica Successores nuncupes, ad statam formulam quam subsignatam sigilloque communitam ad Congregationem pro Episcopis perferendam diligenter curabis. Volumus praeterea ut opportuna arrepta occasione dilectos fideles Cabancalenses de tua destinatione in eorum posthac Episcopum convenienter doceas eosque adhortamur non modo te urbane excipiant sed etiam more filiorum et animarum suarum pastorem. Ceterum, Venerabilis Frater, Dominus qui te vocavit ipse ex alto induat virtute ut boni pastoris munera explere valeas unde ductu ac magisterio tuo communitas ecclesialis Cabancalensis novis usque floreat incrementis. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die uno et vicesimo mensis Novembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

Joannes Paulus PP. II
Angelus Lanzoni
Proton. Apost.

7. Elevation of Quiapo Church "Del Nazareno" to the Status of Minor Basilica

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II
ad perpetuam rei momoriam.

Qui loco Petri Apostolorum principis, Christi Ecclesiam gubernamus, eodem etiam, si fieri possit, amore, quo beatus ille Apostolus, regere annitimur. Quare quidquid in Dei honorem

decusque cedere intellexerimus, id studioso animo gerimus, aut gerendum curamus. Resonant enim in animo Nostro illa divini Redemptoris verba: — Si amas, Petre, pasce — Jo. 21, 15-17 - -. Cur ergo Venerabilis Frater Noster Jacobus S.R.E. Cardinalis Sin, Archiepiscopus Manilensis, suo suorumque tum cleri Dei ipsius populi nomine iam ab hac Apostolica Sede petierit, ut paroeciale templum S. Joannis Baptistae, a populo — Iglesia del Nazareno del Quiapo — cognominatum ad dignitatem Basilicae Minoris eveheretur: esse enim illud antiquum, opere novile, pietate venerabile; Nos, post iustam rerum considerationem bene fieri censuimus, si admotae expostulationi concederemus. His ergo probatis, quae Congregatio pro Cultu Divino, factis olim a Nobis facultatibus, de re statuerit, quam aequissimo animo templum S. Joanni Baptistae sacrum, de quo locuti sumus, quodque populari sermone — Iglesia del Nazareno del Quiapo — appellatur, Basilicis Minoribus accensemus, factis iuribus talium Templorum propriis, modo servata sint quae Decretum — De titulo Basilicae Minoris — iubet, anno MDCCCCLXVIII, die VI Junii, factum. Contrariis nihil obstantibus. Ceterum quae gessimus tum sacro Praesuli prosint, tum dilectissimo eius gregi fiilorum. Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, sub anulo Piscatoris, die XI mensis Decembris, anno MDCCCCLXXXVII, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

† Augustinus Card. Casaroli
a publicis Eccl. negotiis

8. Designation of Mons. Romulo De La Cruz as Bishop/Coadjutor of Isabela

JOANNES PAULUS
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

dilecto filio *Romulo de la Cruz,* Vicario Generali archidioecesis Cotabatensis, electo Episcopo Coadiutori pro Ecclesia Isabella-

politana, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Plane conscii rerum status, in quo nonnumquam Ecclesiae particulares tam incommode versantur, ut iis nonnisi peculiari ratione provideri possit, haud dubitamus quin probatam Sanctae Sedis consuetudinem etiam in constituendis Episcopis Coadiutoribus sequamur. Cum igitur eiusmodi auxilium Venerabilis Episcopus — Praelatus Isabellapolitanus — modo a Nobis sibi suppliciter petierit, cuius preces non sine causa audiendas censemus, Te, dilecte Fili, exercitatum quidem in negotiis pastoralibus expediendis, vi et potestate Nostra Apostolica ad dignitatem episcopalem evehimus atque, a superiore munere absolutum, ad claram quam diximus Ecclesiam *Isabellapolitanam* transferimus ibique his ipsis Litteris electum Coadiutorem Episcopum constituimus, specialibus eiusmodi muneris propriis facultatibus auctum officiisque devinctum. Cave tamen, ut ordinationem episcopalem ne suscipias nisi professione fidei nuncupata et iureiurando fidelitatis erga Nos Nostrosque in Successores rite praestito, quem ad modum lege sancitur; adhibitae autem formulae, testes actorum, oportet ut, sueto more obsignatae sigilloque impressae, promote ad Congregationem pro Episcopis transmittantur. Te interea, dilecte Fili, amanter hortamur ut, capta officii tui canonica possessione — cf. can 404,1 —, maius dehinc mandatum nunc Tibi datum pro viribus bonisque tui ingenii animique artibus impleas, ita videlicet ut, in parte, sollicitudinis Isabellapolitani cui mitteris Episcopi — Praelati. Apud S. Petrum, die septimo decimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septimo, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

Joannes Paulus PP. II

Josephus Delton
Prot. Apost.

Thirsting for Justice

CATHOLIC BISHOPS'
CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
A Pastoral Exhortation
on Agrarian Reform
14 July 1987

BELOVED PEOPLE OF GOD:

> *Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social . . . peace* (Vatican II, *The Church in the Modern World,* 29)

Poverty and the Challenge of Faith: Solidarity

People thirst after an ever more perfect reign of justice (*Ibid.* 27).

Practically everywhere in the universal Church today, we are painfully conscious of that thirst. And we talk much of our preferential (but not exclusive) option for the poor.

And we here in the Philippines?

Alas, there is no peace in our land today, though we all long for peace. And there is no peace, because we have not yet attained the justice that brings about peace.

Where 70% of the people live below the poverty line, we see the hand of injustice. For such a tragic situation is against the righteousness of God whose will is "that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity" (*Ibid.* 29). It is his will that every person "has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's goods for himself and his family" (*Ibid.*).

Poverty and inequity are a scandal of the first order for any national community, more so for one that calls itself Christian. They challenge our faith and move us to solidarity, the call of God for all of us to form one human family bound by a love that does justice.

Hence, we must ask ourselves: what are we doing for our own who thirst for that ever more perfect reign of justice that our faith speaks about?

Sharing in Justice

Today we are in danger of being torn apart as a nation on a problem that springs precisely from that universal "thirst for justice": the problem of agrarian reform — and the government's desire to meet it in a truly comprehensive manner.

We fight among ourselves whether the government should issue or not a comprehensive agrarian reform law. We argue among ourselves about whether we should have land reform at all; or if we accept it on principle, how compensation should be made, what the retention limits should be, whether by executive order or congressional legislation.

These are not problems we can easily brush aside.

But would they, we ask, be as insurmountable as they are now if we all decided to approach them from the perspective of our faith?

That faith in its essence is *sharing* — and should impel us then to sharing. God shared himself with us fully in creation; so we must share his creation with one another. Christ shared himself in becoming man for our redemption; so we must share him with others. The Spirit shares himself in his indwelling in us so we in turn must share with one another in the spirit of justice and charity.

If we were true Christians, if we shared willingly as Christians, would we need a decree or an executive order from government to do what we should as Christians do as a matter of course — to share: the haves with the have-nots; the landed with the landless; the privileged with the underprivileged?

Option for the Poor
and Comprehensive Agrarian Reform

This year we celebrate a National Eucharistic Year. The heart of the Eucharist is sharing — Christ sharing himself with us totally.

In this celebration God is asking us to *do* what we celebrate: to share to the utmost of ourselves with others, especially with those with whom Christ himself identifies: the thirsty, the hungry, the naked, the homeless (Mt. 25:35-46). In the Philippines today, these are the landless, the exploited, the disadvantaged, the powerless. These have the single most urgent claim on the conscience of the nation. To opt for them, to share with them is a requirement of the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, under this perspective of a loving faith that does justice, we, your bishops, have no alternative as far as the question of agrarian reform is concerned:

We are for as *comprehensive* a program of agrarian reform as possible — one that will make it possible for all, the 70%

who live below the poverty line especially, *to have* more in order *to be* more (Cf. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio, 6*).

We believe furthermore that a genuine agrarian reform program must be *realistic.* No program can be successful if it transcends the capabilities of government to manage and finance.

Pain and the Joy of Sharing: the Paschal Mystery

As Bishops we neither have the competence nor the call from God to design the specific and technical details of socio-economic programs. We can only point out to the proper authorities the principles of justice operative in a given situation. Even this stand of ours will surely create dismay in some quarters who would have us do more than we can.

As in the sharing of Jesus' life with us on the cross, no sharing with others is painless. Whatever law or decree is passed in regard to the agrarian problem today, we know it cannot please everybody.

Nonetheless, we urge those in authority to abide by the principles of social justice and preferential option for the poor in designing a truly realistic and comprehensive agrarian reform program.

We plead with all landed people to respond boldly and generously to the call of the gospel — to share not simply of their superfluous goods but out of their very substance (Vatican II, *The Church in the Modern World,* 69). Even superfluous goods must be measured today not so much in relation to one's own status or accustomed way of life but in terms of the needs of others.

We highly commend those, who, prompted by the ideals of social justice are determined to share with others voluntarily without waiting for any legislative *fiat.*

On our part we will not seek exemption to whatever may be legislated towards a comprehensive agrarian reform program.

We urge moreover that beneficiaries of agrarian reform, motivated by the common good and in the interest of law and order, should not unjustly and forcibly pre-empt claims to lands in question prior to approval of the agarian reform act. The contrary would further compound injustices on all sides and forestall immediate implementation of a truly comprehensive and just agrarian reform program.

Hence we must all work together — in a generous spirit of sharing, with all its pains and joys reflective of the Paschal Mystery of Jesus to come up with an agrarian reform program that will indeed be Christian and Filipino.

To our Blessed Mother, the Mirror of Justice, we commend for her intercession and guidance our country's total effort towards quenching our thirst for an ever more perfect reign of justice.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference
of the Philippines:

† RICARDO CARDINAL VIDAL
President

Religious Instruction in Public Schools

AN OPPORTUNITY AND A CHALLENGE

CBCP
Pastoral Letter
15 July 1987

THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF THE PHILIPPINES says:

> *"At the option expressed in writing by the parents or guardians, religion shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards in public elementary and high schools* within the regular class hours . . ."
>
> — Article 14, Section 3, No. 3.

This is an educational revolution. It ushers in a new era in the life of the Church in our country.

For years religion was taught before classes began or after they had finished, on staircases, or under mango trees in the schoolyard. Now religion has to be taught within regular class hours — up to 90 minutes a week, if requested by the parents.

This is magnificent opportunity, placed in our hands with great love, by God. It is also a challenge, which the Church will not be able to meet without the collaboration of everyone in the community.

Therefore, we, your Bishops, appeal for many more *volunteer catechists.*

* There are twelve million children in the elementary and high school public system. We now have about 4,000 professional, fulltime catechists. This means one professional catechist to every 3,000 public school students. A number out of proportion with the number of students!

* The Constitution offers 90 minutes religious instruction a week. To handle these religion periods properly we would need 60,000 professional full-time or about 240,000 part-time volunteers, assuming that each volunteer handles 90 minutes a week.

* Even now our professional catechists are greatly underpaid. To field 60,000 of them and pay them is not presently attainable. It appears then that the immediate practical and realistic solution is, while continuing the necessary program of building up the professional catechists through our catechetical training centers, to train and employ a legion of volunteers. Thus your Bishops appeal to you, retired teachers, active public and Catholic school teachers, members of the religious associations, students in the seminaries, and in Catholic schools.

* Catechetics should be given importance in the curriculum of seminaries, and all seminarians at all levels should teach religion at least once a week in the public schools.

* Every Catholic college and school should have, where not as yet exists, an office for catechetical instruction giving the students an opportunity to teach religion in the public schools.

* We note with joy how providential is the timing of this appeal. We are only three months away from that time when the country's Catholic faith will receive the Church's universal recognition with the canonization of the first Filipino canonized saint, Lorenzo de Manila, himself a catechist.

In this context the *training for volunteer catechists* becomes a crucial need. Therefore we urge

* the *catechetical training centers* in our country forming professional catechists to extend their services, giving shorter courses for part time volunteers. So also the religious associations, the Basic Ecclesial Communities, the seminaries and the Catholic Schools should give special attention to the training of catechists.

Finally the need to *support the cost* of providing religious instruction.

Teaching catechism is a pre-eminent apostolate. Those who teach are doing it from a deep sense of faith. But the professional catechists cannot live without salary and the volunteers need allowances for their training, their teaching materials and their transportation. Without funding, the apostolate of teaching catechism in the public schools will never be greatly hampered.

There is then a need for a catechetical fund in every parish to cover the training of catechists, the salaries of professional catechists and the allowances for volunteers. Funding for catechists should be in the annual budget of every seminary, and of every school. This fund can be drawn from the sharing of parents, special benefactors and the like; but catechesis should be considered as a necessary activity of every parish, of every seminary, of every Catholic school.

We need more professional catechists, who will consecrate their lives to the beautiful task of forming the character of children — teaching them to know, to love, and to serve Christ, our Lord. But at this important period of our history we need volunteers for this apostolate.

We appeal finally with equal urgency to the appropriate government authorities to facilitate the implementation of this important constitutional mandate.

It was the last word of our Lord to the Apostles, on the mountainside, before He ascended into heaven "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations—teaching them to observe all things

that I have commanded you." This mission, given to us by God, begins at home, with our own children. Parents are the first catechists. In our desire to equip parents to undertake this all important ministry, we launched, through the Episcopal Commission on Education and Religious Instruction (ECERI) a religious education Program for Family Catechesis entitled "The Filipino Family Growing in Faith." We hope that this work of love will assist our parents in the fulfilment of their catechetical responsibility.

We cannot end this Pastoral Letter without expressing our deep gratitude to all those who brought about this educational revolution. With special mention, we are sincerely appreciative of the open cooperation of the public school administrators and teachers.

With a certain note of joy we convey to you, dear parents our warm commendation for the fidelity with which you help build up the Church in faith.

A most special expression of gratitude however we reserve to our catechists. To educate children in the faith, to assist the adults in their growth in the faith — you have made this your chosen ministry within the Church. The price has been heavy, and still is. But you carry out your mission, year after year, with perseverance, with fidelity to God, to the Church and to the world. May the Lord through Mary, the Mother and model of catechists, sustain you in your difficult but essential task. May your example inspire many generous souls to join your ranks in the service of God's people.

† RICARDO CARDINAL VIDAL
President

What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land

CBCP
A Pastoral Letter
on Ecology
29 January 1988

Introduction

THE PHILIPPINES IS NOW at a critical point in its history. For the past number of years we have experienced political instability, economic decline and a growth in armed conflict. Almost every day the media highlight one or other of these problems. The banner headlines absorb our attention so much so that we tend to overlook a more deep-seated crisis which, we believe, lies at the root of many of our economic and political problems. To put it simply; our country is in peril. All the living systems on land and in the seas around us are being ruthlessly exploited. The damage to date is extensive and, sad to say, it is often irreversible.

One does not need to be an expert to see what is happening and to be profoundly troubled by it. Within a few short years brown, eroded hills have replaced luxuriant forests in many parts of the country. We see dried up river beds where, not so long ago, streams flowed throughout the year. Farmers tell us that, because of erosion and chemical poisoning, the yield from the croplands has fallen substantially. Fishermen and experts on marine life have a similar message. Their fish catches

are shrinking in the wake of the extensive destruction of coral reefs and mangrove forests. The picture which is emerging in every province of the country is clear and bleak. The attack on the natural world which benefits very few Filipinos is rapidly whittling away at the very base of our living world and endangering its fruitfulness for future generations.

As we reflect on what is happening in the light of the Gospel we are convinced that this assault on creation is sinful and contrary to the teachings of our faith. The Bible tells us that God created this world, (*Gen.* 1:1) ; that He loves His world and is pleased with it. (*Gen.* 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31) ; and that He created man and woman in His image and charged them to be stewards of His creation. (*Gen.* 1:27-28). God, who created our world, loves life and wishes to share this life with every creature. St. John tells us what Jesus saw His mission in this light. "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." (*Jn.* 10:10).

We are not alone in our concern. Tribal people all over the Philippines, who have seen the destruction of their world at close range, have cried out in anguish. Also men and women who attempt to live harmoniously with nature and those who study ecology have tried to alert people to the magnitude of the destruction taking place in our time. The latter are in a good position to tell us what is happening since they study the web of dynamic relationships which support and sustains all life within the earthly household. This includes human life.

A Call To Respect and Defend Life

At this point in the history of our country it is crucial that people motivated by religious faith develop a deep appreciation for the fragility of our islands' life-systems and take steps to defend the Earth. It is a matter of life and death. We are aware of this threat to life when it comes to nuclear weapons. We know that a nuclear war would turn the whole earth into a fireball and render the planet inhospitable to life. We tend to

forget that the constant, cumulative destruction of life-forms and different habitats will, in the long term, have the same effect. Faced with these challenges, where the future of life is at stake, Christian men and women are called to take a stand on the side of life.

We, the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, ask Christians and all people of goodwill in the country to reflect with us on the beauty of the Philippine land and seas which nourish and sustain our lives. As we thank God for the many ways He has gifted our land we must also resolve to cherish and protect what remains of this bounty for this and future generations of Filipinos. We are well aware that, for the vast majority of Filipinos, the scars on nature, which increasingly we see all around us, mean less nutritious food, poorer health and an uncertain future. This will inevitably lead to an increase in political and social unrest.

We See the Beauty and the Pain of the Earth

As you read this letter or listen to sections of it being read, scenes from your barrio may come to mind. In your mind's eye you may see well laid out rice paddies flanked by coconuts with their fronds swaying in the breeze. Or you may hear the rustle of the cogon grass on the hills behind your barrio. These scenes mean so much to us and are beautiful. Yet they do not represent the original vegetation with which God has blessed our land. They show the heavy hand of human labor, planning and sometimes short-sightedness.

For generations the hunting and food gathering techniques of our tribal forefathers showed a sensitivity and respect for the rhythms of nature. But all of this has changed in recent years. Huge plantations and mono-crop agriculture have pitted humans against nature. There are short-term profits for the few and even substantial harvests, but the fertility of the land has suffered and the diversity of the natural world has been depleted. So our meditation must begin by reflecting on the original

beauty of our land, rivers and seas. This wonderful community of the living existed for millions of years before human beings came to these shores.

The Forests

When our early ancestors arrived here they found a country covered by a blanket of trees. These abounded in living species –over 7,500 species of flowering plants, not to mention animals, bird and insects. These were watered by the tropical rains which swept in from the seas and gradually seeped down through the vegetation and soil to form clear flowing rivers and sparkling lakes which abounded in fish and aquatic life before completing the cycle and returning to the sea. An incredible variety of insects lived in the forest and were busy with all kinds of tasks form recycling dead wood to pollinating flowering plants. The community of the living was not confined to creatures who walked on the Earth. Birds flew through the air, their bright plumes and varying calls adding color and song to the green of the forests. Birds are also the great sowers. They contributed greatly to the variety of plant life which is spread throughout the forest. Finally small and large animals lived in the forest and feasted on its largesse. Our land born out of volcanic violence and earthquakes brought forth a bounty of riches. We stand in awe at the wisdom of our Creator who has fashioned this world of life, color, mutual support and fruitfulness in our land.

Our Seas

The beauty did not end at the shoreline. Our islands were surrounded by blue seas, fertile mangroves and enchanting coral reefs. The coral reefs were a world of color and beauty with fish of every shape and hue darting in and out around the delicate coral reefs. *Perlas ng Silanganan* was an appropriate name for this chain of wooded islands, surrounded by clear seas, studded with coral reefs.

Creation is a Long Process

You might ask: Why is it important to remember the original state of our land? First of all, it reminds us of how God, in his wisdom and goodness, shaped this land in this part of the world. It did not happen over night. It took millions of years of care and love to mould and reshape this land with all its beauty, richness and splendor, where intricate pathways bind all the creatures together in a mutually supportive community. Human beings are not alien to this community. God intended this land for us, his special creatures, but not so that we might destroy it and turn it into a wasteland. Rather He charged us to be stewards of his Creation, to care for it, to protect its fruitfulness and not allow it to be devasted. (*Gen.* 1:28; 9:12). By protecting what is left of the rainforest we insure that the farmers have rain and plants for the food that sustains us.

Our Forests Laid Waste

How much of this richness and beauty is left a few thousand years after human beings arrived at these shores? Look around and see where our forests have gone. Out of the original 30 million hectares there is now only 1 million hectares of primary forest left. Where are some of the most beautiful creatures who used to dwell in our forests? These are God's masterpieces, through which he displays his power, ingenuity and love for his creation. Humans have forgotten to live peacefully with other creatures. They have destroyed their habitat and hunted them relentlessly. Even now many species are already extinct and the destruction of species is expected to increase dramatically during the next decade as the few remaining strands of forest wiped out by loggers and *kaingineros*. What about the birds? They used to greet us each morning and lift our spirits beyond the horizons of this world. Now they are silenced. In many places all we hear now are cocks crowing. Where is the soaring eagle circling above the land or the colourful *kalaw* (hornbill)?

The Hemorrhage of Our Life Blood

After a single night's rain look at the chocolate brown rivers in your locality and remember that they are carrying the life blood of the land into the sea. The soil, instead of being the seed bed of life, becomes a cloak of death, smothering, retarding and killing coral polyps. Soil specialists tell us that we lose the equivalent of 100,000 hectares of soil one meter thick each year. We are hardly aware of this enormous loss which is progressively eroding away our most fertile soil and thus our ability to produce food for an expanding population. Any comprehensive land reform must address this most serious threat to our food supply.

Deserts in the Sea

How can fish swim in running sewers like the Pasig and so many more rivers which we have polluted? Who has turned the wonderworld of the seas into underwater cemeteries bereft of color and life? Imagine: only 5% of our corals are in their pristine state! The blast of dynamite can still be heard on our coastal waters. We still allow *muro-ami* fishing methods which take a terrible toll both on the young swimmers and the corals. Mine tailings are dumped into fertile seas like Calanqan Bay where they destroy forever the habitat of the fish. Chemicals are poisoning our lands and rivers. They kill vital organisms and in time they will poison us. The ghost of the dreaded Minamata disease hangs over towns in the Agusan river basin and the Davao gulf.

Recent Destruction Carried out in the Name of Progress

Most of this destruction has taken place since the beginning of this century, a mere wink of an eye in the long history of our country. Yet in that time we have laid waste complex living systems that have taken millions of years to reach their present state of development.

We often use the word progress to describe what has taken place over the past few decades. There is no denying that in some areas our roads have improved and that electricity is more readily available. But can we say that there is it real progress? Who has benefitted most and who has borne the real costs? The The poor are as disadvantaged as ever and the natural world has been greviously wounded. We have stripped it bare, silenced its sounds and banished other creatures, from the community of the living. Through our thoughtlessness and greed we have sinned against God and His creation.

One thing is certain: we cannot continue to ignore and disregard the Earth. Already we are experiencing the consequence of our shortsightedness and folly. Even though we squeeze our lands and try to extract more from them, they produce less food. The air in our cities is heavy with noxious fumes. Instead of bringing energy and life it causes bronchial illness. Our forests are almost gone, our rivers are almost empty, our springs and wells no longer sparkle with living water. During the monsoon rain, flash-floods sweep through our towns and cities and destroy everything in their path. Our lakes and estuaries are silting up. An out-of-sight, out-of–mind mentality allows us to flush toxic waste and mine tailings into our rivers and seas in the mistaken belief that they can no longer harm us. Because the living world is interconnected, the poison is absorbed by marine organisms. We in turn are gradually being poisoned when we eat seafood.

We Can and Must Do Something About It

It is already late in the day and so much damage has been done. No one can pinpoint the precise moment when the damage becomes so irreversible that our living world will collapse. But we are rapidly heading in that direction. Even now there are signs of stress in every corner of our land. As we look at what is happening before our eyes, and think of the horrendous consequences for the land and the people we would do well to remember that God, who created this beautiful land, will hold

us responsible for plundering it and leaving it desolate. So will future generations of Filipinos. Instead of gifting them with a fruitful land, all we will leave behind is a barren desert. We, the Bishops, call on all Filipinos to recognize the urgency of this task and to respond to it now.

As Filipinos we can and must act now. Nobody else will do it for us. This is our home; we must care for it, watch over it, protect it and love it. We must be particularly careful to protect what remains of our forests, rivers, and corals and to heal, wherever we can, the damage which has already been done.

The task of preserving and healing is a daunting one given human greed and the relentless drive of our plunder economy. But we must not lose hope. God has gifted us with creativity and ingenuity. He has planted in our hearts a love for our land, which bursts forth in our songs and poetry. We can harness our creativity in the service of life and shun anything that leads to death.

Signs of Hope

Despite the pain and despoliation which we have mentioned, there are signs of hope. Our forefathers and our tribal brothers and sisters today still attempt to live in harmony with nature. They see the Divine Spirit in the living world and show their respect through prayers and offerings. Tribal Filipinos remind us that the exploitative approach to the natural world is foreign to our Filipino culture.

The vitality of our Filipino family is also a sign of hope. Parents share their life with their children. They protect them and care for them and are particularly solicitous when any member of the family is sick. This is especially true of mothers; they are the heartbeat of the family, working quietly in the home to create an atmosphere where everyone is accepted and loved. No sacrifice is too demanding when it comes to caring for a sick member of the family. The values we see in our fa-

milies of patient toil, concern for all and a willingness to sacrifice for the good of others are the very values which we must now transfer to the wider sphere in our efforts to conserve, heal and love our land. It is not a mere coincidence that women have been at the forefront of the ecological movement in many countries. The tree planting program of the Chipko in India, popularly known as the "hug a tree" movement and the Green belt movement in Kenya spring to mind.

We call to mind that, despite the devastation which has taken place in our forests and seas, we Filipinos are sensitive to beauty. Even in the poorest home parents and children care for flowers. We are also encouraged by the growth in environmental awareness among many Filipinos. Small efforts which teach contour ploughing, erosion control, organic farming and tree planting can blossom into a major movement of genuine care for our Earth. We are happy that there have been some successes. Both the Chico dam project was suspended and the Bataan nuclear plant mothballed after massive local resistance. This year the people of San Fernando, Bukidnon and Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur defended what remains of their forest with their own bodies. At the Santa Cruz Mission in South Cotabato serious efforts are underway to reforest bald hills and develop ecologically sound ways of farming. The diocese of Pagadian has chosen the Eucharist and ecology as its pastoral focus for this year. These are all signs for us that the Spirit of God, who breathed over the waters, and originally brought life out of chaos is now prompting men and women both inside and outside the Church to dedicate their lives to enhancing and protecting the integrity of Creation. In order that these drops and rivulets will join together and form a mighty stream in the defense of life we need a sustaining vision to guide us.

Our Vision

We will not be successful in our efforts to develop a new attitude towards the natural world unless we are sustained and nourished by a new vision. This vision must blossom forth from

our understanding of the world as God intends it to be. We can know the shape of this world by looking at how God originally fashioned our world and laid it out before us.

This vision is also grounded in our Faith. The Bible tells us that God created this beautiful and fruitful world for all his creatures to live in, (*Gen.* 1:1-2:4) and that He has given us the task of being stewards of His creation. (*Gen.* 2:19-20).

The relationship which links God, human beings and all the community of the living together is emphasized in the covenant which we still see in the sky is a constant reminder of this bond and challenge. (*Gen.* 9:12). This covenant recognizes the very close bonds which bind living forms together in what are called ecosystems. The implications of this covenant for us today are clear. As people of the covenant we are called to protect endangered ecosystems, like our forests, mangroves and coral reefs and to establish just human communities in our land. More and more we must recognize that the commitment to work for justice and to preserve the integrity of creation are two inseparable dimensions of our Christian vocation to work for the coming of the kingdom of God in our times.

Christ Our Life (Col. 3:4)

As Christians we also draw our vision from Christ. We have much to learn from the attitude of respect which Jesus displayed towards the natural world. He was very much aware that all the creatures in God's creation are related. Jesus lived lightly on the earth and warned his disciples against hoarding material possessions and allowing their hearts to be enticed by the lure of wealth and power (*Matt.* 6:19-21; *Lk.* 9:1-6). But our meditation on Jesus goes beyond this. Our faith tells us that Christ is the center point of human history and creation. All the rich unfolding of the universe and the emergence and flowering of life on Earth are centered on him. (*Eph.* 1:9-10; *Col.* 1:16-17). The destruction of any part of creation, especially, the extinction of species defaces the image of Christ which is etched in creation.

Mary, Mother of Life

We Filipinos have a deep devotion to Mary. We turn to her for help and protection in time of need. We know that she is on the side of the poor and those who are rejected (*Lk.* 1:52). Our new sensitivity to what is happening to our land also tells us that she is on the side of life. As a mother she is pained and saddened when she sees people destroy the integrity of creation though soil erosion, blast-fishing or poisoning land. Mary knows what the consequences of this destruction are. Therefore as Mother of Life she challenges us to abandon the pathway of death and to return to the way of life.

Taken together the various strands of our Christian vision envisage a profound renewal which must effect our people, our culture and our land. It challenges us to live once again in harmony with God's creation. This vision of caring for the Earth and living in harmony with it can guide us as, together, we use our ingenuity and many gifts to heal our wounded country.

This Is What We Suggest

In the light of this vision we recommend action in the following areas.

a) What each individual can do.

Be aware of what is happening in your area. Do not remain silent when you see your environment being destroyed. Use your influence within your family and community to develop this awareness. Avoid a fatalistic attitude. We are people of hope, who believe that together we can change the course of events. Organize people around local ecological issues. Support public officials who are sensitive to environmental issues. Become involved in some concrete action. There is much that can be done by individuals to reforest bald hills and prevent soil erosion.

b) What the Churches can do.

Like every other group, the Church as a community is called to conversion around this, the ultimate pro-life issue. Until very recently many religions, including the Catholic Church, have been slow to respond to the ecological crisis. We, the bishops, would like to redress this neglect. There is a great need for a Filipino theology of creation which will be sensitive to our unique living world, our diverse cultures and our religious heritage. The fruits of this reflection must be made widely available through our preaching and catechetical programs. Our different liturgies must celebrate the beauty and pain of our world, our connectedness to the natural world and the on-going struggle for social justice. We would like to encourage the administrators of our Catholic schools to give special importance to the theme of peace, justice and the integrity of creation in their schools.

Since programs, however laudable, will not implement themselves, we suggest the setting up of a "Care of the Earth" ministry at every level of Church organization, from the basic Christian communities, through the parish structure and diocesan offices right up to the national level. This ministry could help formulate and implement policies and strategies which flow from our new and wider vision. The idea is not so much to add another activity to our pastoral ministry, but rather that this concern should underpin everything we do.

c) What the Government can do.

We ask the government not to pursue short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term ecological damage. We suggest that the government groups together into an independent Department all the agencies which deal at present with ecological issues. This Department should promote an awareness of the fragility and limited carrying capacity of our islands' ecosystems and advocate measures designed to support ecologically sustainable development. Obviously the Department should have

an important contribution to make to related Departments like, Education (DECS), Health, Natural Resources (DENR) and Agriculture. There is also a need to encourage research into the eco-systems of our land and the problems they face in the future. The Department should publish a state of the environment report for each region and for the country as a whole each year. Above all the Department needs legislative teeth to ensure that its policies and programs are implemented.

d) Non-governmental organizations have a very important role to play in developing a widespread ecological awareness among people. They can also act as a watch-dog to ensure that the government and those in public office do not renege on their commitment to place this concern at the top of their list.

Conclusion

This brief statement about our living world and the deterioration we see all around us attempts to reflect the cry of our people and the cry of our land. At the root of the problem we see an exploitative mentality, which is at variance with the Gospel of Jesus. This expresses itself in acts of violence against fellow Filipinos. But it is not confined to the human sphere. It also infects and poisons our relationship with our land and seas.

We reap what we sow; the results of our attitude and activities are predictable and deadly. Our small farmers tell us that their fields are less productive and are becoming sterile. Our fishermen are finding it increasingly difficult to catch fish. Our lands, forests and rivers cry out that they are being eroded, denuded and polluted. As bishops we have tried to listen and respond to their cry. There is an urgency about this issue which calls for widespread education and immediate action. We are convinced that the challenge which we have tried to highlight here is similar to the one which Moses put before the people of Israel before they entered their promised land.

> "Today I offer you a choice of life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life and then you and your descendants will live" (*Dt.* 30:19-20).

On the Occasion of National Migration Day

CBCP
Pastoral Letter
21 February 1988

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS in Christ,

The Philippines, more than any other country in Asia, has witnessed these past years an unprecedented exodus of its people to all points of the globe. It is estimated that, at present, there are three million Filipinos abroad: permanent migrants, overseas workers, seamen, and other kinds of expatriates. If each belongs to a family of five, then around fifteen million Filipinos are directly affected by migration.

Moved by the pastoral solicitude of the Church, we wish to address to you this message on the occasion of National Migration Day.

The most obvious cause for the big outflow of Filipino workers to other countries is economic. The search for work and a better standard of living, or even survival, pulls young people and couples from their places of origin. There is hardly a community or barrio in the country which does not have people abroad. The official and unofficial repatriation of money (roughly estimated at US $1.5 billion annually) from Filipino migrants around the globe has sustained families, put children

through school and, as the largest dollar earner of the nation, even saved the government during these times of economic crisis. It is, indeed, an opportune time, during this National Migration Day, to reflect upon the situation of our migrants, overseas workers and other expatriates.

We are aware of the many serious problems of morality, poverty, and injustice that affect people, especially women, who migrate from the provinces to the big cities in our own country. They are often exploited in the tourism industry. However, on this occasion we focus our attention on the plight of migrants and overseas workers.

Our reflection moves us, first of all, to thank the Filipinos abroad for the manifold sacrifices they have undertaken for us here at home. Their endurance in the face of adverse conditions, their determination to turn risks into opportunities, their courage in the face of real physical threats (for example, seamen in the Persian Gulf) and moral dangers are to be admired. The courage of these migrant workers has shown us how to believe in life and to hope against many odds.

Although much has been done by our priests, religious sisters, and lay faithful, we wish to humbly acknowledge before our migrants and overseas workers the limitations that beset the Philippine Church in its pastoral care for them and their families. But, as we become more and more a nation of migrants, we are training and assigning more Church personnel, clergy as well as laity, to this particular ministry. We appeal to the Major Superiors of Religious Men and Women to do likewise. The need for pastoral care is great and urgent. Although many good things come from migration, it is also attended by many evils, such as exploitation, broken families, moral degradation, loneliness and other psychological sufferings.

We are particularly concerned about some factors surrounding this massive migration in our midst:

1. Illegal recruiting agencies have preyed upon the gullibility of people desperate for work and any means of survival. How can we expect the rights of our Filipino brothers and sisters to be respected abroad if we do not put our house in order first? We urge our government agencies concerned to leave no stone unturned in stopping these exploiters from the "*trading of human being.*" We encourage our parishes and other local Christian communities to inform their people about the official legal channels whereby inquiries can be made and job placements obtained.

2. Over the last year, we have witnessed not only a record number of people leaving for work overseas but also an upsurge of cases of exploitation and abusive treatment of our workers abroad. We earnestly urge that our government, through its official representatives, take stronger and more effective measures in protecting the rights of our Filipino expatriates.

   We support the decision of Her Excellency the President to ban temporarily the deployment of Filipina domestic helpers abroad until protection for them is assured. This temporary ban of deployment should also apply to our Filipina entertainers with regards to countries where a considerable number of them are subjected to inhuman abuse and exploitation.

   As far as the countries of destination are concerned, we are mindful of the fact that the quality of ancient and modern civilizations is often measured by the degree of tolerance and compassion extended by the people to the stranger in their midst.

3. The actual poverty of the majority of our people leaves them little choice when faced with the option to migrate. With the last local elections, the democratic structures have been fully restored in our country. We exhort all

our people, in and out of government, to pray and work hard for the economic recovery of our country so that fewer and fewer Filipinos will be forced to leave our country because of poverty.

We appeal also to the churches of destination throughout the world to treat with compassion *"all strangers in their midst."* We are both aware and grateful for the fine work that has already been done by many of these local churches.

For every pain, there is also joy. For every sacrifice, there is a corresponding good. Migration of peoples, in whatever form or for whatever reason, has always foreshadowed the unfolding of greater design of God. On May 17, 1987, in his homily during the Mass for Filipinos in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope John Paul II told the Filipino overseas workers: *"Indeed, in Europe you are called to be the new and youthful witness of that very Faith which your country received from Europe so many generations ago."*

We exhort you, our Filipino brothers and sisters abroad, to live your Christian Faith wherever you are. In that way, like St. Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila, our migrant Saint, you are giving witness for Christ to all the world.

May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, who were migrants in Egypt, bless, protect, and accompany our migrants and their families.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference
of the Philippines:

† LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.
Archbishop of Caceres
President

January 29, 1988

Dominican Towns in La Union

EDILBERTO V. SANTOS

Visitation and the Royal Patronage

Why the Dominicans took over La Union — and why they stayed there for nearly two decades — can be understood better under two lights: (1) the Church law on canonical visitation; and (2) the Spanish institution known as the *patronato real.*[1] These two concepts are so complex that they could be thoroughly explained only by writing a book or, at least, a long article about each.[2] However, for purposes of this essay, a short, simple description will suffice.

One of the obligations imposed on bishops by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was that of making a thorough yearly inspection of the parishes belonging to their respective dioceses

[1] Hilario Maria Ocio, O.P., *Monumento Dominicano,* MS in APSR, section "Ministerios", vol. 1, no. 125.

[2] See, for example, W. Eugene Shiels, S.J., *King and Church: the Rise and Fall of Patronato Real* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1961); and H. de la Costa, S.J., "Episcopal Jurisdiction in the Philippines during the Spanish Regime," in *Studies in Philippine Church History,* ed. by Gerald H. Anderson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 49-62.

to be sure that they were being run properly.[3] Previous to 1545, however, Adrian VI had issued a bull (the *Omnimodam*, dated 10 May 1522) granting to friars in the new world some sort of independence from the jurisdiction of bishops. That meant, in practice, that, in the Philippines, the friars and Jesuits having care of souls, did not have to submit to episcopal visitation.[4] But around two centuries later, two other bulls were issued, this time by Benedict XIV, requiring the religious orders to let the bishop of the diocese make the visitation of the parishes which they were administering. The two bulls were the *Firmandis* of 6 November 1744 and the *Quamvis* of 24 February the following year.[5]

Given these conflicting pieces of legislation, there were frequent controversies between the diocesan bishops and the religious orders. The latter claimed that the secular priests, being the proper subjects of the bishops, should be the only ones who should be visited.[6]

Another source of headache for the missionaries was the Royal Patronage of the Church in the Indies. The *patronato* prohibited the religious superior in 1795 from removing or transferring any of his men from a parish without first informing the Governor-General of the reasons for the removal or transfer. That, of course, was tantamount to forcing the superior to share with the government confidential matters which should be known only by the order. Another stricture was that, when a parish became vacant, the religious superior had to present the names of three of his men to the Governor-General, who would then choose one to take over the parish but not unless the candidate was first granted canonical institution by the local

[3] *Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini* (Neapoli: Joseph Pelella, 1859), tit. IV, V and VII.

[4] Letter of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina to Pope Clement XIII, Manila, 15 Kal. Nov. 1768, in *Documentos importantes para la cuestión pendiente sobre la provisión de curatos de Filipinas* (Madrid: Imprenta de "El Clamor Público," 1863), pp. 5-14; and Leon Lopetegui and Felix Zubillaga, *Historia de la Iglesia en la America Española* (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1965), p. 292.

[5] *Libros de Consejos de Provincia*, tomo 527, fols. 193 and 195.

[6] Letter of Archbishop Sancho, *ibid.*

Ordinary. It was a case of the government making the final decision on a matter which was essentially ecclesiastical.

This, then, is the background against which the eighteen-year apostolate of the Dominicans in La Union should be viewed.[7]

THE BEGINNING

On the feast of St. Dominic, 4 August 1767, the newly-installed *Archbishop* of Manila, Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina, announced to the religious superiors that he was going to make a visitation of their parishes.[8] The following day, the Dominicans in a session of the Council of the Province specifically held for this purpose, decided to obey him, and, in return, they were given two "rewards", the first one being a set of ministries left behind by the Jesuits who had been recently expelled by the Spanish monarch from his Empire.[9] Since these parishes were in the Visayan Islands and, therefore, very far from Manila, the friars who were assigned there suffered the crippling disadvantages of being isolated far from their fellow Dominicans.[10]

The other so-called reward was a set of parishes in the Ilocos region which had just been removed from the jurisdiction of the Augustinians for their having refused to accept the visitation and to abide by the rules of the *patronato*.[11] The Domi-

[7] *Libros de Consejos de Provincia, ibid.*, fols. 117v and 195v-199.

[8] Aside from obeying the demands of the visitation, the Dominicans obeyed the royal decrees on the secularization of parishes. On orders of Archbishop Sancho, they gave the native secular priests their parishes in Binondo and Parian, both in Manila; and also those in Bataan. This was in fact a punishment for the reluctance of the Dominicans to accept the royal patronage. See Joaquin Fonseca, O.P., *Historia de los Dominicos* (Madrid, 1871), vol. V, p, 37; and Ocio, *Monumento*, nos. 125-6.

[9] These ministries were: Iloilo, Guimaras, Mandurriao and Molo, in the island of Panay; and Ilog, Kabankalan, Himamaylan and Guiljungan, in Negros. See Pablo Fernandez, O.P., *Dominicos donde nace el Sol* (Barcelona, 1958), p. 286.

[10] Ocio, *ibid.*

[11] Elviro J. Perez, O.S.A., *Catálogo Bio-bibliográfico de los Religiosos Agustinos de la provincia del Santísimo de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas* (Manila, 1901), pp. 266-70; and Ocio, *Monumento, ibid.*

nicans, after having been pressured by the Governor-General himself, agreed (on 28 June 1772) to take over the said ministries.[12]

THE PASTORS

In a letter addressed to the Governor-General, dated 1 July 1772, the Dominican Provincial, Fray Andres Melendez, gave the list of the priests he was sending to the Ilocos. They were: (1) Vicente Tejada, Vicar of San Juan Nepomuceno in Cagayan; (2) Jose Rodriguez from the Santo Domingo Convent; (3) Francisco Favie, from the University of Santo Tomas; (4) Jose Fernandez, from Maunan in Cagayan; (5) Bartolome Artiguez from Pandoyocan (now Villasis) in Pangasinan; (6) Francisco Rodriguez, from Mangaldan, where he was up to then the assistant parish priest; (7) Juan Alonso and (8) Francisco Panadero, both from the Santo Domingo Convent.[13]

Some of these missionaries left the Ilocos later, and others were assigned to take their place. A few stayed in their parishes to the end. Among them were Frs. Francisco Favie, Jose Fernandez and Alonso Martinez. In 1782, Fr. Artiguez volunteered to open the mission of Batanes, a venture which was not easy. Among those who went to the Ilocos after 1772 were Jose Arritegui (to Balaong), Jose Giner (also to Balaong), Pedro Madico (to Aringay), and Manuel Barbera (to Caba).[14]

THE PARISHES

The La Union towns which were accepted by the Dominican provincial chapter of 1773 were: (1) San Cristobal de Bangar; (2) Santa Catalina de Namacpacan; (3) San Nicolas de Balaoang; (4) San Miguel de Bacnotan; (5) San Juan Bau-

[12] Ocio, *Monumento*, nos. 125-7.
[13] Another priest, Fray Juan Sanchez, went to La Union in place of Francisco Rodriguez who had taken ill the meantime. (MS in APSR, section "Ilocos," vol. único, doc. 2, fol. 53).
[14] *Ibid.*, fol. 54.

tista; (6) San Fernando; (7) San Pedro y San Pablo de Bauang; (8) Santa Lucia de Aringay; (9) San Juan Bautista de Caba; (10) Santa Monica de Agoo; and (11) Santo Tomas.[15]

These towns were formed into a Provincial Vicariate which was entrusted to Fr. Vicente Tejada and, in 1777, to Fr. Jose Arritegui who resigned the post soon after. On 12 November that same year, the Provincial Vicariate was suppressed and the towns that had made it up were annexed to the Vicariate of Pangasinan. The above-mentioned Ilocano ministries were considered a heavy burden by the Dominicans, and, so, they did all they could to give them up.[16]

THE END

In 1778, the Dominicans decided to give the above-mentioned parishes back to the Augustinians, who were hesitant at the start to receive them due to lack of personnel.

Then, on 31 October 1789, the request was repeated, and, this time, the Augustinians had to give in, because a large number of missionaries of their order had just arrived. They agreed to take the parishes back provided they did so through the governor-general and the bishop, because it had been through these two offices that the parishes were taken from them. This condition was promptly satisfied. And so, on the first day of December 1790, the towns of La Union were officially given back by the Dominicans to the spiritual administration of the Augustinians.[17]

[15] Ocio, *Monumento,* nos. 130-1; and *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium,* etc., Manila, 1877, vol. II, p. 474.

[16] Ocio, *ibid.*

[17] MS in APSR, *ibid.*, doc. 7, fols. 302-3; doc. 11, fols. 315; doc. 12, fol. 312. In order to round off this historical description, we ought to state that in, or about the year 1782, the Dominicans had formally surrendered to the Augustinians the curacies of Bangar, Namacpacan and Balaoang, all within the province of Ilocos, keeping for some years longer those which fell within the jurisdictional boundaries of Pangasinan. Santo Tomas was made into an independent parish under the Dominican administration, that is, in 1778 (Cfr. *Ocio, loc. cit.*, and: *Acta Capitulorum Provincialium,* II, pp. 527-528). For greater details, cfr. the recent article of Father Frederick Scharpf, SVD, "Dominicans in the Parishes of La Union, 1772-1790", in *The Ilocos Review,* Vol. 19, 1987, pp. 154-160.

Homilies FOR JUNE AND JULY (1988)

HERMAN MUELLER, S.V.D.

CORPUS CHRISTI
(June 5, 1988)

Ex. 24:3-8
Heb. 9:11-15
Mk. 14:12-16, 22-26

1. In the Ancient Near East there were often kings who would make a covenant with subordinate kings. The great king would state what he all had done for the subordinate kings, and the subordinate kings would promise undivided allegiance to the great king. The vassal kings must not oppress one another and stop all disputes among themselves submitting the cases to the great king for judgment. They would promise military support to the great king and trust in the great king. The treaty was written down and placed in the temple and was periodically read to the people. Gods were called upon as witnesses; curses and blessings were invoked for non-observance respective for observance of the treaty. A sacrifice and a meal followed.

2. a. The Old Covenant on Mt. Sinai is in many ways similar to such a suzerainty treaty. God pointed out to Israel how much he had done for them: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You have seen how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (*Ex.* 19:4-6). With these words God offered a covenant of unlimited friendship.

b. Israel accepted God's promise and responded: Everything the Lord has said, we will do (*Ex.* 24:3).

c. But for a Jew, words were not enough. The treaty was sealed by a sacrifice. That would happen in different forms: The covenant partners could mingle their blood together by cutting each other on the arm. Or the two parties passed between the divided halves of an animal to be sacrificed. On Mt. Sinai Moses took the blood of the Sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people (*Ex.* 24:7). And he said: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his" (*Ex.* 24:8).

d. And almost always the covenant-making would be concluded by a covenant meal. Here on Mt. Sinai Moses, Aaron and seventy elders go up to Mt. Sinai and they were eating and drinking and saw the Lord (*Ex.* 24:11).

3. The New Covenant of the New Testament contains all these elements in a higher degree.

a. God made us his people by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. God inaugurated the new covenant by Christ's blood.

(1) Christ's blood expiated for us. We are washed clean by his blood. As in the Old Testament the high priest once a year on the Atonement Day entered the holy of holies, sprinkled blood of a sin-offering goat on the propitiatory and before it to atone for the sins of the people so Christ went after and through

his death once and for all into the heavenly holy of holies, making us clean from sins by offering to the Father his bloody sacrifice on the cross. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (*Heb.* 9:22). As a priest by nature offers sacrifice so Christ offers a sacrifice. But since his sacrifice is perfect he does not have to renew it. Eternally he holds to the Father his act of sacrifice forms the core of every Mass. It is not a new sacrifice.

(2) Christ's blood makes us "blood-related." Moses took the blood of the young bulls and placed it in large bowls. The one half he splashed on the altar, with the other half he sprinkled the people. Thus people became "blood-related" with God as it were. The one part sanctified by the altar sanctified also the other half and thus the people sprinkled by it. This is even more true with Christ's blood. The new covenant is established by Christ's blood. We become his people, "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" in the words of God in *Ex.* 19:6.

(3) A sacrifice was offered, blood was used in the covenant ceremony to show the seriousness of obligation. The obligations are bloody serious. This was especially what the covenant partners wanted to express when they cut a sacrifice in half and put the one half of the sacrificed animals on the one side and the other half on the other side, and then they marched between the halfs expressing this way: "Should I not be faithful to the covenant, would I not keep the obligations then the same should happen to me what happened to the animals which have been cut in half. I want to be faithful to my covenant obligations."

Christ did not hesitate to accept the Father's will and offer himself as perfect sacrifice. Participating in the eucharistic sacrifice must also mean for us that we are willing to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. In the words of Paul it means: "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship" (*Rom.* 12:1). Our daily life and duties are a continuation of the morning sacrifice.

(4) The sacrifice of the covenant makes us *one with God and Christ* and one with one another. This is contained in the idea that we are "blood-related", but even more in the symbolism of the one loaf: "Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf," St. Paul tells us in 1 *Cor.* 10:16-17.

b. The covenant was completed by the *banquet.*

(1) After God had completed the covenant with Moses on Mt. Sinai he ordered Moses to come up to the mountain with the seventy elders, They did so. *Ex.* 24:11 adds: "They saw God: They were eating and drinking." It is man's desire to see God. But nobody can see God here on earth. Moses tried once and asked God: "Do let me see your glory!" (*Ex.* 33:18). God could only answer: "When my glory passes I will set you in the hallow of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face is not to be seen" (*Ex.* 33:22-23). In other words, man can see God's glory as reflected in creation, but his "face", that is, God as he is in himself, mortal man cannot see. But here after the conclusion of the covenant it is mentioned: "God did not smite these chosen Israelites" (*Ex.* 24:11), namely those who went up to the mountain to see God by eating the covenant meal.

To go to the eucharistic banquet means in a true sense also to behold Christ's face and go on living. Certainly, it is not a seeing face as it will be only in heaven. But it is a seeing in faith. If only our faith would be a little more lively! To go to the eucharistic banquet means to be with Christ, in his presence as Moses and the seventy elders were with Yahweh on Mt. Sinai.

(2) A banquet means eating in order to *grow.* That idea is not explicitly expressed in the banquet on Mt. Sinai. But it is one main meaning of the eucharistic banquet. Our divine life which we live since baptism has to grow by eating the eucharistic food.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
June 12, 1988

Ez. 17:22-24
2 *Cor.* 5:6-10
Mk. 4:26-34

We have now returned to the Ordinary time. My vestments are green, not purple or white or red. The great seasons of heavy liturgical emphasis on the key events of our redemption: Lent, Eastertide and Pentecost, are over. Special seasonal decorations have been removed altogether or set in less conspicuous places in the church. And now it is time to talk of the growth of trees and seeds and bodies and souls.

In the first reading today we hear the Prophet Ezekiel speaking for God on the select shoot of a noble cedar. This "tree" is an allegorical devise referring to a Davidic King who fits mysteriously into God's plan of exile and return. Who is this tree? It is the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. Every "bird" that will live under it is every man or woman who through faith takes shelter in Him.

St. Paul in the second reading uses very different imagery to speak of individual human life and death, of essential beatitude and, by implication, of Purgatory after death. Though the passage is linguistically and doctrinally obscure we can at least glean from it an apostolic doctrine of personal responsibility, of good intention and the inevitability of Divine Judgment, all viewed with a benign possitivity refreshing to our ears.

It is the Gospel of today's Mass, however, which attracts the greater part of our attention. Here in Mark Jesus Himself with obvious allusion to Ezekiel's Davidic cedar speaks in terms of planting in general ("a secret process") and of a humbler plant. But He, thus, underscores a more startlingly dynamic process than mere growth could be. A mustard seed is the

seed of a wild, supposedly useless shrub. The ministry of Jesus was considered wild, "out of line" and beyond their control by His Jewish enemies of all parties and hues. But when the seed, the wild cast-off, was planted — when Christ died and was buried — it grew (in Resurrection power) into a great tree. The "secret process" of all God's planting took place, more dramatically than ever. And now we have the Catholic Church, her branches extended thoughout the world sheltering the "birds" of the true Israel, all men and women of Gospel faith.

We have all been planted as the trees and crop of God. All of us are subject to His Judgment on basis of our acts. But all of us can and should grow from that near-nothingness of our insignificance to the great domesticated shrub, fruit of however wild a seed as we may be. In, with and *as* Christ we can, one with the Church, shelter the world.

In all this complex imagery we see God at work. The Father, Who exalted Christ through the Spirit, at Christ's plea gives us in the Spirit the grace of growth. May this growth be long and sure and, mustard clump or lofty cedar, may each of us stand forever, alive in the presence of the Divine Planter. For, thus, through Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists He has ever taught us that it is His Will that we should stand. (Fr. Roman Carter, O.P.)

TWELFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
June 19, 1988

Job. 38:1, 8-10
2 *Cor.* 5:14-17
Mk. 4:35-41

1. Our modern picture of nature is different from that of the ancients. Science is much advanced and we can predict the weather quite well. And each time somebody was taken

by surprise by a storm and drowned or suffered some great damage, it was only — so we think — because somewhere along the line something went wrong, which next time we can eliminate.

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

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

2. Jesus has delivered a long sermon of parables. It was the first time that he taught at length. He was sowing the seed, the word of God. There were many different kinds of hearers and Jesus could only wonder how many listeners would be like rocky ground, thorns and thistles or busy paths, or finally deep fertile soil that produces hundredfold fruit. He had spoken about the seed that grows quietly overnight so that a farmer does not have to do anything but wait. And he had spoken about the dynamic power of that word. It is small like a mustard seed, but it will grow into a big majestic tree, called the kingdom of God. And now Jesus was tired, dead-tired. With a good conscience he could sleep well, entrusting his listeners, especially his disciples to the Father. Soon he would speak about confidence in God the Father in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not worry. Nobody can add a moment to his life-

span by worrying. Pagans worry. You have a Father in heaven. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things you need will be given you besides" (Cf. *Mt.* 6:25-33). This he practiced now himself and his sound body slept and did not notice that a storm was brewing, that the cold currents, passing from the west were sucked down in vortices of air, or by the narrow gorges that breaks upon the Lake of Genesareth. And suddenly the storm fell with full force on the ship and tossed it so that the waves were breaking over the boat and it began to ship water badly.

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

4. Jesus gets up and addresses first the sea and the wind: "Quiet! Be still." And the wind falls off and everything grows calm. That long-drawn "calm" in English imitates a little the Greek description of the great calmness: "and there was a *galēne megalē.*" It is a word of power and authority as only Christ can speak, being God himself. As in the beginning heaven and earth were created by a powerful word of God (cf. *Gen.* 1) and this in the last analysis was the word of the Word of God, the Logos (cf. *Jn.* 1:3) so now order is restored by another powerful word of the Word of God. What a picture of contrast: Here the frightened disciples and here the calm Jesus restoring calmness to the sea with a word of power.