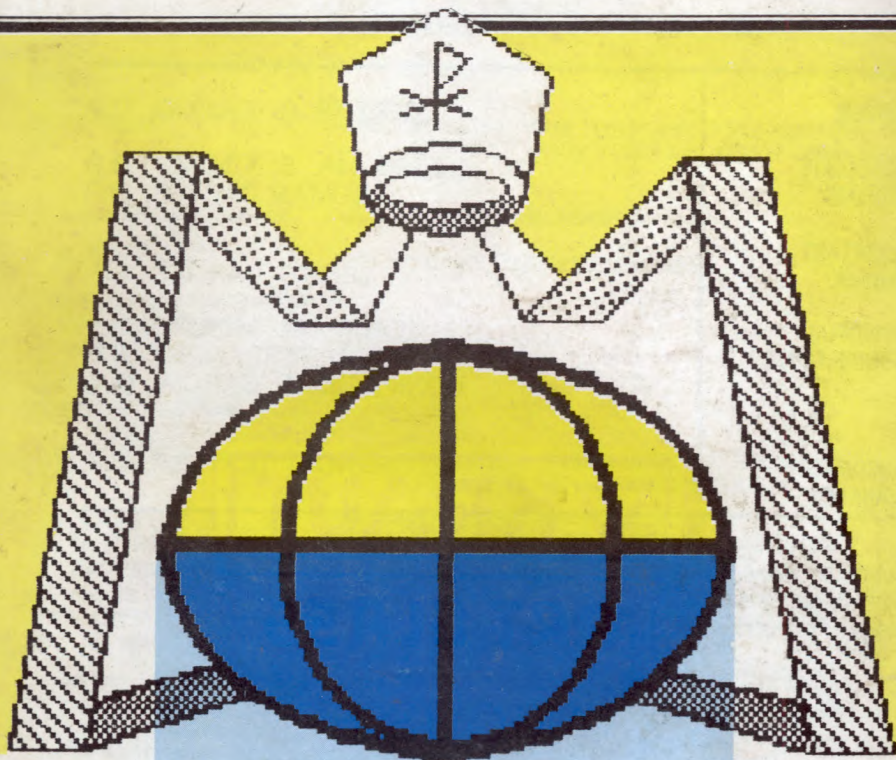


BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN BULLETIN



SPECIAL ISSUE

**FIRST CONGRESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS
OF ASIAN SEMINARIES**

VOL. LXV, NOS. 714-715

MAY-JUNE 1989

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE PHILIPPINE ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW

EDITOR	VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.
ASSOCIATE EDITORS	JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P. ROMAN CARTER, O.P.
ASSISTANT EDITOR	BENITO VARGAS, O.P.
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS	JESUS MA. MERINO, O.P. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P. BONIFACIO S. GARCIA, O.P.
BUSINESS MANAGER	FLORENCIO TESTERA, O.P.

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, the Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published bi-monthly by the Santo Tomas University Press and is printed at UST Press, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946.

Subscription Rates (Effective January 1988):

Philippines:	One Year	Per Copy
Newsprint	P 85.00	P 15.00
Bookpaper	P100.00	P 17.00
Foreign:	US\$ 25.00	US\$ 6.00

Subscriptions are paid in advance. **For the Philippines:** Payment should be made by postal money order, telegraphic transfer or check with bank clearing in Manila **only**.

Communications of an editorial nature concerning articles, cases and reviews should be addressed to the Editor. Advertising and subscription inquiries should be addressed to the Business Manager. Orders for renewal or change of address should include both old and new addresses and will go into effect fifteen days after notification.

Articles herein published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editorial Staff.

Address all communications to:

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS
University of Santo Tomas
España, Manila, Philippines
Tel. No. 731-31-01 local 251

SPECIAL ISSUE

EDITORIAL

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | 263 THE MAKING OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS OF ASIAN SEMINARIES |
| <i>Agostino Card. Casaroli</i> | 267 APOSTOLIC BLESSING |
| <i>H. D'Souza, D.D.</i> | 268 ENDORSEMENT FROM FABC |
| <i>First Congress of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries</i> | 269 STATEMENT |

WORKING PAPERS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Constant Bouchaud, S.S.</i> | 271 MISSIONARY DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN ASIAN SEMINARIES |
| <i>Venancio Calpotura, S.J.</i> | 281 DISCERNMENT OF MOTIVES: THE FOUNDATION OF SEMINARY FORMATION |
| <i>Sr. Teresa Joseph Patrick of Jesus, O.C.D.</i> | 298 EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUALITY: POINT OF CONVERGENCE |
| <i>Stephen Lo</i> | 340 CONVERGENCE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUALITIES IN AN EXPERIENCE |
| <i>Alex Meñez</i> | 351 SPIRITUALITY OF WORK |
| <i>Thomas Green, S. J.</i> | 360 THE "HOW" OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION |
| <i>Anton Weber</i> | 370 THE UNITY OF PRIESTS: A WAY TO HOLINESS |
| <i>Guy Pigeon, P.M.E.</i> | 384 THE PERSON OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR |
| <i>Guillermo Tejon, O.P.</i> | 392 AN EXPERIENCE OF KENOSIS |
| <i>Camilo Gregorio, D.D.</i> | 422 A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON THE MARIAN VIRTUE OF CHASTITY AND PRIESTLY CELIBACY |
-

ADDRESSES

Jaime Card. Sin

428 ADDRESS TO THE CONVENTION OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS OF SEMINARIES IN ASIA

Bruno Torpigliani, D.D.

436 HOMILY AND CLOSING ADDRESS

DIRECTORY

442 SPEAKERS AND DELEGATES

HOMILETICS

Pastor Ybañez

452 HOMILIES FOR JULY AND AUGUST 1989

**THE MAKING OF THE FIRST
CONGRESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS
OF ASIAN SEMINARIES
FEBRUARY 15-23, 1989**

The Seed

AMONG THE RECOMMENDATIONS in the Acta of the Rectors who were in the First Congress of Rectors of Asian Seminaries last March 1988, was the decision that "a similar meeting of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries be held." And so, hardly has the excitement of the flurry of activities of the Rectors' Congress died down when His Eminence Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, D.D., Archbishop of Manila, informed us that we should begin making preparations for another meet, this time, for spiritual directors, for 1989.

The Germination

Although we found the announcement by the Cardinal a little too soon, we were nevertheless gratified that he announced it to us when he did, mainly because the many difficulties encountered in the preparations of the Rectors' Congress which were largely due to time

constraints, were still fresh in our mind. As it was, an early date would at least give us enough time to prepare for such an Asian summit.

And so, before the end of March, we had the first draft of the program, which included among others, the topics, the speakers and the venue. On April 7 we sent a letter to Cardinal Sin, giving him the tentative program for the congress; and on April 8, we received his approval of the program.

The Executive Committee

An executive committee was created with Msgr. Francis de Leon, Rector of San Carlos Seminary; Fr. Paul Bernier, S.S.S., Director of St. Eymard Scholasticate; Fr. Maximilliano Rebollo, O.P., Spiritual Director of the UST Central Seminary; Fr. William Abbot, S.J., of San Jose Seminary; Fr. Victorino Torres, C.M., Rector of the Vincentian Theologate; and Fr. Ruben Elago of Fil-Missions. These same priests served also during the Congress as members of the steering committee with three other delegates namely: Fr. Robin Andrews of Malaysia; Fr. Joe Mathias, S.J., of India, and Fr. Joseph Bui Duc Tien, a Vietnamese working in Australia.

The Funding

At the behest of Cardinal Sin on April 8, 1988, we drafted a letter seeking the financial help of MISSIO, to support this worthwhile undertaking. The Archdiocese of Manila completes what is lacking.

Speakers and Reactors

To make the Congress truly Asian in character, the committee chose speakers and reactors who have exposures all over Asia, from Australia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Letters were immediately sent informing the speakers and reactors of the Congress and of their designation. In general, the response was most encouraging, that except for a few, most of the designated speakers' replies were enthusiastic and supportive of the Congress.

One bishop who initially accepted the designation of speaker had to beg off. With the draft of the program having been finalized, this presented a little problem to the committee. But with some prayers, the solution to this problem presented itself to us, for no less than the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples had sent a representative in the person of Fr. Constant Bouchaud, S.S., to take over Msgr. Rosales' place.

Among the speakers in the Congress, a nun, in the person of Sr. Teresa Joseph Patrick, was featured. However, being a Carmelite of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, her lecture on "Eastern and Western Spirituality: Points of Convergence" was video-taped and projected on a screen during the Congress.

Prayers for the Congress

Many are praying for this Congress: laymen, seminarians, sisters, contemplative nuns, priests and bishops.

What is worth noting is the prayer of Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

I am unable to attend due to some other responsibilities. However, I shall be with you and the young people in prayer in a special way that God's blessings may abide with you all during this Congress. My gratitude is my prayer for you all that you may grow more and more in the likeness of the Christ through love and compassion and so become an instrument of peace.

Fruition

With the exception of the very few, the delegates were at the Canossa House of Spirituality during the first day of the Congress (Feb. 15). A number of them were requested to be reactors to the

papers to be presented. Others were asked to introduce the different speakers. Almost all gladly accepted their given tasks.

The speakers expertly delivered their talks. After the reactions to each speech, there was an open-forum where everybody freely asked questions, made rejoinders and presented related difficulties. A deeper sharing took place during small-group meetings in the afternoon. The whole body were informed of what transpired in the small-group meetings during the general assembly in the afternoon through the rapporteurs.

The making of the final statement was rather smooth. A committee of four made the final draft which was presented to the general assembly during the penultimate day. The draft underscores three needs of Asian seminaries, namely: the designation of special coordinator who sets the tone of spirituality in a house of formation; the need to integrate spiritual formation with all the aspects of priestly formation; and the on-going spiritual formation of young priests. The delegates in order to answer these needs gave concrete recommendations.

Finally, we are publishing the main papers delivered during the Congress. The reactions being put in a more orderly style by Fr. Paul Bernier, S.S.S. will be published in the forthcoming book entitled *Pathway . . . to Priestly Sanctity*.

VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.



STATO DELLA CITTA DEL VATICANO

TELEGRAMMA

APOSTOLIC BLESSING

ON THE SIGNIFICANT OCCASION of the First Congress of Seminary Spiritual Directors of Asia taking place in Manila from 15 to 23 February 1989 the Holy Father asks you kindly to convey to the participants his warm greetings and his encouragement in their delicate and demanding ecclesial task which is of the utmost importance for the Church in their respective countries. He commends this meeting to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer whose quiet and prayerful presence at Pentecost clearly reflects the role of the spiritual director, listening to and discerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Church's future priests and aiding their growth in discipleship and holiness of life. In the joy and peace of Christ, His Holiness willingly imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

+AGOSTINO CARD. CASAROLI

10 February 1989

**ENDORSEMENT
FROM FABC**

16 Caine Road
Hongkong
G.P.O. Box 2984

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

EMERGING FROM THE FIRST Congress of Rectors of Asian Seminaries it was decided that there should be a similar meeting of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries. Cardinal Sin has taken the initiative to prepare the First Congress for Spiritual Directors for Asian Seminaries.

I am happy to recommend the project.

+ H.D. SOUZA
*Archbishop of Calcutta &
Secretary General, FABC*

October 24, 1988.

STATEMENT

*First Congress of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries
February 15 - 23, 1989, Tagaytay*

WE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE First Congress of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries, express our gratitude to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) for realizing this mutually enriching gathering of spiritual directors for Asia. We acknowledge with gratitude the invaluable help extended by MISSIO, and the University of Santo Tomas.

We have become more conscious of our serious role in the preparation of future generations of priests within the Asian context. We have also realized with joy that we have each other's support in our community ministry.

Some Needs of Asian Seminaries

1. The spiritual formation of seminarians necessitates a special coordinator who sets the tone of spirituality in the seminary. He should see to the direction of the seminarians, and plan the deliverance of regular spiritual conferences that would help them to internalize faith and values.

2. Due to the lack of spiritual directors in seminaries, the art of spiritual direction needs to be integrated more into the whole priestly formation.

3. The increasing crises of young priests have called attention to the need for ongoing spiritual formation of the years immediately following ordination.

Recommendations

1. Whereas the First Congress of Rectors of Asian Seminaries has recommended that "an intensive spiritual formation program for all spiritual directors be facilitated," we suggest that FABC commission a team before the 1990 Synod of Bishops, to draft this program for implementation.

2. We recommend that the following aspects be integrated into the spiritual formation program for spiritual directors, as well as for formation in the seminaries:

- a. Inculturation within the context of each local Church;
- b. Adaptation of spiritual formation to the Asian condition of poverty and suffering leading to a life of biblical kenosis;
- c. Convergence of inter-religious spiritualities leading towards inter-faith dialogue;
- d. The positive use of media for formation purposes;
- e. The integration of all components of formation towards interiorization and not merely external compliance.

All these aspects must not be treated as optional or additional courses but as the moving force that animates the whole formation program.

3. We further urge that the FABC organize or sponsor regular congresses of spiritual directors.

We entrust our ministry and our seminarians to the care of Mary, Mother of priests.

MISSIONARY DIMENSION OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN ASIAN SEMINARIES

FIRST OF ALL, ALLOW me to express my gratitude to you for this invitation: I am happy to have this opportunity to share with you our experiences and to reflect together on spiritual formation. I know how very important your ministry is for the future of the Church. I would like to seek out with you, in the light of the teaching and directives of the Church, the best ways for providing the candidates to the priesthood with a deep and solid spiritual formation.

I was asked to give a talk on the missionary dimension of the spiritual formation in the seminaries of Asia. With this view I intend to speak on the spiritual formation for a missionary Church. What are the particular needs in Asia? This question forms the basis of the work of this convention.

With regard to (priestly formation) spiritual formation in seminaries, we have many documents in hand: those of the Council *Optatam totius* and *Ad gentes* (#24-26), and the documents of the Congregation for Catholic Education, particularly the *Ratio funda-*

mentalis and the Letter of 1980. More recently, precisely in April 1987, Cardinal Tomko has sent important "Guidelines on the Formation in Major Seminaries" to the various rectors of seminaries in connection with propaganda. Pope John Paul II has spoken many times to bishops and seminarians concerning the spiritual formation so necessary for a missionary Church.

In this light, I wish to organize my reflections around the following themes:

1. the missionary spirit as an essential dimension of the spiritual formation of future priests;
2. the aims of this formation;
3. some means of attaining this formation in seminary, with the cooperation of the local Church.

In conclusion, the role of the spiritual director.

I. The formation of a missionary spirit as an essential dimension of priestly formation

The formation of a missionary spirit is an essential dimension of priestly formation for a missionary Church. We could consider this topic in the light of the Church's mystery and the priestly ministry.

1. Pope John Paul II, in his recent address to the bishops of South Africa, said: "The Church exists for evangelization," quoting the exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. He observed that the "primary task of each particular Church is to evangelize, so that all things can be restored in Christ. The Church is the sacrament of salvation, and so "she is impelled by her own Catholic nature to preach the gospel to all people."

We know the very large extent of this evangelization: we have to preach the gospel to all peoples, but also to evangelize the whole of life, in its personal as well as social dimensions. In the light of the council, the Pope often speaks of the evangelization of culture: "that is an evangelization of your customs and traditions, your art, your music, all these things

should be purified and enriched by the light and power of the gospel."

2. This evangelization is the work of the entire community. All the members of the Church are involved in it, according to the vocation of each member of the body of Christ. The unity of the Christian community in faith and love is in itself a revelation of God's presence and love. The whole Church is missionary.
3. Priests are especially involved in this evangelization. The primary task of priests is to preach the gospel to all people; their first ministry is the ministry of the word of God. They have to preach with authority the word of God to the Christian community, which they nourish with the bread of the word and the eucharistic body of Christ. They accomplish this ministry so that the members of the community might become aware of their apostolic vocation and duties and be able to testify to their faith as true witnesses of Christ.

They are also sent to non-believers, to people who do not know Jesus Christ, as savior, by their words and their life. They have to preach the gospel so that it can enlighten all the dimensions in life.

Some priests are prepared for a particular missionary work. But it is necessary that all priests be formed to an apostolic and missionary spirit, and for a pastoral work with a missionary dimension: "The spiritual gift received in ordination prepares them for the universal mission of salvation 'to the end of the earth' (Act 1, 8)."

4. The task of the seminary is to form priests with this apostolic and missionary spirit. The aim of the entire formation is to prepare true pastors after the example of Jesus Christ the priest, pastor and prophet. The new Code of Canon Law is asking that "*per formationem spiritualem alumni . . . ad spiritum missionalem efformantur*" (c. 245, par. 1). This formation to an apostolic and missionary spirit is not a particular part of priestly formations: it is the fruit and dimension of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is the work of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual life is the whole life with the presence of animation of the Holy Spirit: the spirit leading to Christ, his

Church, the apostles, the spirit of Pentecost who "causes Peter, Paul and the twelve to speak and inspires the word they have to utter" (Ev. Nun. #75). In this perspective the Pope said to the bishops of South Africa: "The years of seminary formation provide an excellent opportunity . . . to instill in future priests an enthusiasm for evangelization."

That is our conviction; but what is necessary for this formation? and how can we give this formation in the seminaries?

II. The aims of this formation

What are the aims of this formation? For this reflection I would like to present five points.

1. It is clear: we have to form holy priests. The end of this formation is the "perfection of charity, so that the candidates become in a special way another Christ" (R.F. #44). This perfection of charity, especially of pastoral and apostolic charity, is the holiness of a priest. The Pope said recently: "Between holiness and evangelization, there is a direct link: holiness in the Church is the holiness of priests. Pastoral skills, the capacity to communicate and a strong academic education, are necessary for all priests, in every ministry, especially for evangelization. But without this holiness, there cannot be adequate communication, for the missionary work requires communication in faith with authentic witness of life: "Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones cannot replace the gentle action of the Holy Spirit, and the witness of life has become more than ever essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching" (Ev. Nun. #75-76).
2. This witness is not complete without an "experience of God": a deep, living and loving knowledge of God in Christ, of his mercy, of his love.

This experience is not accomplished in one day. It is a long journey, as in formation itself.

It needs a lengthy experience of prayer, as a dialogue with God, true contemplation in silence nourished by the meditation of Scripture and accompanied by a life of humble service.

Two conversions are often necessary:

A conversion of a true faith in Christ "servant of God". In the beginning the apostles followed Jesus with generosity as the powerful Messiah; after a long time they realized that Jesus was the servant of God "who came not to be served but to serve and give his life" (cf. Mt 20:28). Many candidates to priesthood have to make the same journey, until they discover and accept their life and action the paschal mystery of death and resurrection, the mystery of the cross with its fecundity. "We are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake . . . so death is at work in us but life in you" (2 Cor 4:11-12).

Another conversion is necessary: from the consciousness of a "vocation" as a generous project of life to availability to the will of God. The fruit of this conversion is, in a sense, an attitude of obedience, not only as a conformity to the ideals of the institution, or to the expectations of the formators, but as the loving acceptance and accomplishment of humble service under the authority of the bishop, possibly in another country.

3. For missionary service, the Church needs priests of great human and spiritual maturity: they have to make decisions, to bear responsibilities. This maturity implies interior unity and consistency: for example, the maturity of a man who not only says prayers, but is also a man of prayer with a personal prayer life; not only a man with ideals, but with deep internalization of values — a man dedicated to Jesus Christ and his Church at all levels of his persons, at the level of his effectivity itself.

The formation to chastity in priestly celibacy is an important dimension of this formation; the document of the Congregation for Catholic Education, "A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy," places much emphasis on this formation in an apostolic perspective: "For the consecrated person who

has chosen celibacy in order to live and communicate ecclesial charity in the most heartfelt and unique way possible, continence without apostolic love is a contradiction (#16). This chastity requires asceticism, self-renouncement, a life of prayer with deep love in Jesus Christ. It is not negative: gradually, with sound and spiritual discretion, the young men should be asked and guided to experience and show... a love that is sincere, human, fraternal, personal and offered to God after the example of Jesus Christ" (R.F.#48). This maturity implies an integration of the dynamism of the person in his love as a disciple of Christ and a pastor dedicated to the people of God, to the mission.

4. The missionary priest is a man of dialogue, able to listen and hear, to understand and speak with prudence and openness, in through communication. For that he has to understand different cultures and human or religious experiences. For missionary service, "with special care, the candidates should be prepared for dialogue with non-believers" (R.F.#96). It is an important part of the spiritual formation, with the experience of silence and faithful presence to God and to every person.
5. The missionary priest is a man of "vision" of faith. He needs a sound academic education. But he should not only have ideas, he should be able to understand and evaluate in the light of the mystery of Christ human realities and the events of social and cultural life. Mission requires a capacity "to judge events by the light of the gospel and to interpret accurately the various circumstances and exigencies of human life which contain the true 'seeds of the words hidden in themselves' and demand to be illuminated by the light of the Gospel" (R.F. #58).

A true inculturation requires this deep sense of the mystery of Christ, which transcends all cultures and is able to purify and accomplish each of them. This faithful understanding is particularly necessary for the task of inculturation, with the integration of cultural values of high religious cultures, in absolute fidelity to revelation and the teaching of Church.

Finally, the missionary priest should love Jesus Christ so ardently that he desires that all people come to know him

and love the Church, both particular and universal, "*universale salutis sacramentum*" (Ad gentes #1). He should love the people for which he is part with a sincere esteem after the true value of the culture and tradition and a spirit of solidarity with the poor.

III. Some means of attaining this formation

This formation, as we know requires a long journey, which begins with the first call of God and continues after ordination. Formation is not achieved with ordination, and the first years of pastoral life are very often decisive for one's whole life: on-going formation is particularly necessary during this time. But what are the paths of this journey during the years of formation in the seminary? The Holy Spirit is forming the priest in his spiritual life and missionary spirit. But what is the task of the formators, individually or as a team?

1. This spiritual formation is not primarily the result of a separate training; it is the fruit of the entire seminary formation. All components of the formation contribute to this spiritual, if they are well integrated. Intellectual formation should prepare a man of deep faith, with a wide vision in this light. Pastoral experience, in the light of missiology, with faithful supervision, can be an important initiation to priestly life and the ministry of the spirit. The study of scripture nourishes prayer and forms the ministry of the word. But also studies in philosophy open the mind to different visions, with discernment.

The center and core of this integrated formation is the spiritual formation which permeates all the components. The spiritual director should work in cooperation with the rector for unity of the entire formation program.

2. Community life is another important means of this spiritual formation.

The atmosphere and life-style of the seminary will contribute to this spiritual formation if it is an atmosphere of prayer, silence, but also openness and truth. "The most

effective instrument is an atmosphere of truth . . . the atmosphere of a seminary will contribute to the mature development of the candidates in the measure it will be warm with true relationship" (Guide to the formation in priestly celibacy, #72). The community should contribute to the formation by means of true relationship between students and between students and superiors individually or as a team: "here the students as members should get used to putting aside their own will, and with common purpose and effort seek the greater good of their neighbor" (R.F. #46). The community is forming the presbyterium and its unity: "in the seminary, the spirit of priestly fraternity should have its beginning," John Paul II said recently. The *Ratio Fundamentalis* concludes: "the community puts into practice great apostolic virtues" (R.F. #46).

A firm discipline in this climate of trust and confidence is also great factor to maturity: there is no self-control without this discipline of life. The sense of responsibility requires that discipline and a progressive cooperation with superiors for the organization and animation of seminary life.

3. Liturgical and sacramental life constitutes the most important way to form priests as men of God with a missionary spirit, with the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the contemplation of the Eucharistic presence of Christ and the regular frequentation of the sacrament of penance. The celebration of the Eucharist opens the hearts to all people in a deep communion with Christ offering his life. The practice of the sacrament of reconciliation and virtue of penance is an experience of God's mercy, of which the priest is both minister and witness. The liturgy of the hours forms to pray with the Church for all people. I would emphasize the practice of silence, but also the regular - daily if possible - reading of the word of God in scripture, and the writings of the spiritual tradition: this *lectio divina* is one of the best means for this formation to a life of prayer - the great missionary mark of a man of prayer.
4. I would say that spiritual direction is a very important means for the spiritual formation of a missionary priest. It appears to be centered on the subject and thus not to be open to others or to a wide vision of human realities. But, in fact, spiritual

direction is practically necessary for the formation of a deep personal faith. Its fruit is a personal experience of God, of his presence and the interior action of the Holy Spirit. The internalization of values is also the aim of this dialogue with a guide. It paves the way to a good training in the discernment of the will of God and the "signs of the times."

Each seminarian ought to have his spiritual director chosen from among the priests approved by the bishops of this ministry. The dialogue, which should be frank and sincere, is confidential. The director will listen patiently, but also speak truly without weakness.

5. The seminary is open to the whole Church, it should form apostolic priests with the cooperation of the local Church, the pastors and other priests, but also the Christian communities, with lay people. The seminarians should know and love their particular Church with pastoral and missionary work and also the universal Church. They must "develop their ability to form right relationship with men of different sorts" (R.F. #51). The lifestyle of priests, their apostolic spirit, the organization of the pastoral and missionary work, have a great influence on seminarians. The rector and spiritual director have to work with the priests and presbyterium itself for the formation of true pastors with an apostolic and missionary spirit.

In conclusion, I would emphasize the important and often decisive role of the spiritual director. It can be viewed on three levels:

1. The level of conscience. The spiritual director receives seminarians for spiritual direction: but for this personal service, they may ask another priest approved by the bishop for this ministry. The spiritual director explains to the seminarians the meaning, aims and demands of spiritual direction. But with the other priests involved in this ministry, he has to guide a common reflection, while respecting the forum of conscience, and give orientations for the coherence and unity of this formation, in complete accord with him.

2. The level of the spiritual animation of the community. Organizing the spiritual, and particularly the liturgical life, giving lectures and possibly a course in spirituality, the spiritual director, in cooperation with the rector, gives to the spiritual life of the community its orientations and its ability to form true apostolic and missionary priests.
3. The level of the integration of all components of formation. In open cooperation with the rector and in dialogue with the superiors and professors, the spiritual director has to insist on the necessary unity of the formation.

The last document of the Congregation for Catholic Education treats of the place of the Virgin Mary in the intellectual and spiritual formation. The seminaries should promote a deep and doctrinal devotion to the mother of the redeemer and of the Church, in the light of the mystery of Pentecost. Mary is the model of pastors in their pastoral charity - the model of the spiritual formator, who has to form, under the work of the Holy Spirit, a servant of the unique priest and of his Church, conformed to Christ, sent by the Father and in that sense, "another Christ".

CONSTANT BOUCHAUD, S.S.

DISCERNMENT OF MOTIVES: THE FOUNDATION OF SEMINARY FORMATION

"We now come to the question of utmost importance. Which of the signs of priestly vocation is most characteristic and indispensable so as to merit the special attention of those engaged in the selection, instruction and formation of young seminarians? The answer is unquestionably a right intention" (Pope Paul VI).

THE CENTRALITY OF THE question of the right intention becomes obvious when seen within the context of the priestly vocation. The signs of vocation which Pope Paul VI alludes to can be gleaned from its very structure.

The initial entrance into the priestly vocation is God's call. This invitation can be heard, not only by listening to the person's history, but also to God's personal interventions in his life. The interaction of the historical and the mysterious constitutes the individual's initial "attraction." This attraction is tested through time and experience.

Gradually, the attraction becomes a desire. This response to God's call is the second element of the second vocational structure which specifically deals with motivation. It is at this point that the question of the "right intention" emerges, since the vocational motivation of the person is replete with conscious and unconscious elements. Thus, a main part of the formation process in this phrase is to make conscious that which is unconscious, so that the individual may have enough freedom to make a mature life decision.

The second element of the person's response is the basis of the third structural element of the priestly vocation - commitment. If the motivational factor is deficient, the commitment can easily be shaken: however, if the motivation is clear and well rooted, the commitment can be unshakable. This element of commitment, together with the right intention, needs to be focused more and more, not so much on an institution or on work, but on Christ Himself. Christ becomes the central motivating factor. The spiritual motive for commitment is initiated by him and is oriented towards him. Christ is both the subject matter and the object of the motivation.

The fourth factor in the structure of the priestly vocation is the element of transformation. A drastic change happens in the person's personality functioning. He is now challenged to live a life beyond the instinctive into a life of self-transcendence. He is to leave behind the ego-managing self, to be led by the Spirit. He has to die to himself, in order to live. This transformation is possible only if the person's motivation is based on his realistic potentials and is oriented beyond himself. Self-centered motivation cannot sustain a transcendent life.

The last factor in the structure of vocation is the element of mission. The desire, commitment, and transformation of the individual called by God to the priesthood must contain an intention of service. The priesthood is not oriented towards self-fulfillment, but towards service to others, to the point of self-sacrifice. Thus, the explicit motivation of the individual called to the priesthood must have, not only a spiritual, but also an apostolic dimension.

The very structure of vocation, therefore, shows the importance of having the "right intention." Prescinding from God's initiative, man's response demands a continuing discernment of and growth in his motivation for the priesthood. An insight into the

dynamics of motivation and how it pervades the different phases of vocational growth can certainly help the spiritual director set up a good formation program.

A Study of Motivational Orientations

Categories of Motivation Orientation. In order to gain an insight into the content and dynamics of vocational motivation, it will be helpful to understand the categories of motivational orientations used by Fr. Roger Champoux, S.J., the Director of Our Lady of Peace Guidance Center:

1. Commitment Orientation

This is the ideal motivation. The applicant is relatively mature and oriented towards self-giving, thereby making it possible for him to make a free response to the Lord. His motivation is predominantly spiritual and apostolic. He is able to live a transcendent life, allowing him to grow in his commitment to Christ and to manifest in his life the fruits of the Spirit.

2. Function Orientation

The applicant is motivated by his search for self as much as by his faith. He is caught between the drive for self-fulfillment and the attraction of self-giving. This ambivalence betrays areas of unfreedom within his immature self.

The initial predominant reaction of such an applicant is one of resistance; there is a strong reluctance towards total commitment because he as yet feels incomplete. He focuses on the secondary aspects of life such as security and self-fulfillment since he feels unable to handle responsibilities of freedom.

The discernment of such an orientation is difficult. A judgment has to be made on whether (a) the applicant has enough faith, so that with the help of grace and other human aids there is hope that these self-centered desires will gradually give way to the promptings of the Spirit, or

(b) the resistances are such that the faith slowly recedes to the background making the applicant seek his own security.

Whatever the case may be, serious formation is necessary to determine if the presence of faith and a genuine call are enough to bring about the conversion of the person.

3. Status/Escape Orientation

There is a great possibility that a person with this orientation does not possess a true vocation. Most probably, such an applicant is rather immature; his identity is not well formed or integrated. Since he is not too aware of his needs, inconsistencies in both his attitudes and behavior can be easily observed.

An applicant with a status orientation seeks self-aggrandizement to cover up his own basic insecurity. An applicant with an escape orientation, on the other hand, seeks protection from threatening life situations by entering the protective walls of the convent or the seminary.

On the conscious level, these applicants can appear very sincere, with a strong facade of faith; yet, unconsciously, they are primarily motivated by their insecurities. Those who cannot face the possibility of not having a vocation belong to this category.

It would be prudent to keep such applicants out of the seminary because they are usually much more trouble than help. Inconsistencies in behavior and attitude will characterize their search for identity and security. They may show either an over dependence or a rebellious attitude towards authority: they may not be able to cope with loneliness and stress; they may be rather impulsive. Since there is insufficient human maturity, they may need psychotherapy. One must bear in mind, however, that the seminary is a house of formation and not a therapeutic center.

Comparative statistics. Father Champoux, using the psychological test results of local candidates who applied to the priesthood through his Center, made an unpublished study on "Priestly and Religious Maturity." Applying the categories of motivational orientations described above, he came up with these interesting comparative statistics:

	Priests in the U.S.A.	Candidates tested in Manila
Maladjusted	9%	22%
Immature	78%	70%
Underdeveloped	66%	40%
Developing	18%	30%
Adequately Mature	7%	8%

The *maladjusted* are those whose vocations are strongly influenced by their own personal problems. They have very little capacity for genuine freedom because they are always conditioned by their conflicts and needs. These are persons who would probably fall in the status/escape orientation category.

Within the range of immaturity, there are the underdeveloped and the developing. The *underdeveloped* are those who are not maladjusted, but who have serious problems. Unless help is extended to them, they will be unable to grow beyond a certain point of maturity. However hard they try, they will keep falling back on their maladjusted behavior.

The *developing*, on the other hand, are those candidates who have problems but who are able to move ahead, with a minimum of human help, together with prayer and God's grace. These are the more hopeful candidates who may eventually respond with a greater

commitment to God's call. These applicants, therefore, fall into the category of the functionality oriented.

The *adequately mature* are those who possess a commitment orientation. They have enough interior freedom to respond to God's call and enough capacity to live a life of dedication to others. This potential makes it possible for them to be slowly centered on Christ and to accompany Him on this mission.

Implications of Vocational Motivation

Having looked at the centrality of the question of "right intention" within the context of vocation and having studied a bit of its content and dynamics, perhaps we could present the following postulates:

1. Motivation, very much like the vocation it supports, is not a static possession but a dynamic life process. It can grow, it can also die.
2. Vocational motivation is founded on faith and is nourished by it. Faith allows the individual to transcend his selfishness and move towards a total self-giving. Thus, vocational motivation must always contain the element of the spiritual.
3. Since the priesthood is a life form which is at the service of the Kingdom, vocational motivation must always contain the apostolic element within it.
4. On the human level, conscious motivation is not enough, since this is strongly influenced by unconscious needs and desires. It is important that these unconscious elements be recognized consciously, so that greater interior freedom is experienced in finally deciding one's own life form.
5. Formation, therefore, must help the candidate become aware of his motivation, face his inconsistencies, accept his real self before God, allow the Spirit to slowly transform him, and help him discern his particular mission in life. All through this process of formation, the

vocational motivation deepens, making it the foundation for further formation.

With these assertions it is the further goal of this paper to propose how vocational motivation can grow and become the foundation of seminary formation, it is with this perspective that I propose a three-fold formative assessment within the structure of the seminary.

Three-fold Formative Assessment

Within the context of motivational growth and assessment, it is rather difficult to justify the existence of minor seminaries. If the goal of high school seminarians is to develop fully human Christian individuals, the very structure of such seminaries, at present, hinders the attainment of such an objective.

During the early adolescent phase, growth towards maturity demands: (a) close contact with the parents, especially with the father, to enhance the seminarian's personal identity; (b) a healthy relationship with the opposite sex, which will help the seminarian become aware of his own sexuality and develop his own socialization process; and (c) activities which will involve him in the service of people outside the family and community in order to challenge him beyond his own likes and dislikes, and to make the apostolic life not just a dream but a reality.

To make them "*pari-pari*" at this early age will be a great block to real freedom of choice later on. Thus, what is needed in early adolescence is a firm foundation of the person's personal, sexual and social maturity, which will stand him in good stead in later life decision.

The pre-college seminary is not really a time for serious discernment. Rather, it is a time for upgrading, in order to be able to look at the candidate's abilities and potentials for the priesthood.

The candidate, in order to enter deeply into the discernment of motives, must not only have the intellectual potential and emotional stability needed for the priestly life; he must also be grounded in the spiritual life. Language facility is likewise important, so that the

candidate can communicate interior movements so essential to discernment.

The stress in the pre-college seminary, therefore, must not only be on intellectual upgrading. Care must also be given to laying a good basic foundation for the spiritual life, on which later vocational discernment will depend.

From these observations, we can conclude that the assessment of motivation is not a one-time task, but a continuous formative process. This three-fold assessment is properly entered into at the college level.

First Formative Assessment - College Level

The process of growth in motivational maturity in the college seminary comes in two steps. In the preparatory stage, chronologically late adolescence, it is quite difficult for the seminarian to make a life decision, since his identity is not yet well set and his emotional life tends to fluctuate quite rapidly. There is a need for him to settle down and lay the basic foundations for a good vocational assessment.

Thus, in the first two years of college, the following factors should be monitored well:

1. **Health:** The principle is that the person should have health adequate for the demands of the priesthood. Health is a complex thing because there is an interaction between the physical and the psycho-emotional life of the individual. Many illnesses have, at least, a psychological basis, and may be relevant to look at from the perspective of motivation. Psychosomatic diseases are good indicators of conflictual motivation.
2. **Intellectual capacity:** Among many candidates for the priesthood, there is a discrepancy between their verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests. The candidate must have adequate intellectual potential for the seminary studies, since very little formation will happen if he is constantly struggling with his studies.

Overachievers and underachievers may be influenced by emotional factors, aside from their cultural and/or scholastic environment. Some emotional factors which influence intellectual performance are family situation, social relationships, emotional stability, moodiness, and basic reality orientation.

3. **Spiritual and moral qualities:** The candidate's knowledge of the faith must be verified. Basic Christian life (that is, prayer, scriptures, sacraments and apostolic service) is a must. Basic Christian virtues such as honesty, loyalty, truthfulness and responsibility, should be present since they are a necessary foundation for a life of grace.

Special problem areas to look out for in the candidates are drugs/alcohol, chastity, virginity, homosexuality, depression and suicidal tendencies.

4. **Emotional stability:** Maturity is not related with age, not equated with holiness, not the same as happiness, not the absence of conflicts or problems, not the same as mental health. Emotional maturity is the person's ability to handle data and impulses coming from both the heart and head, to integrate them.

In the last two years of his college life, the seminarian enters early adult life, where he is faced with new questions and challenges regarding a more permanent way of life. This second stage of motivational growth in the college seminary may demand not only counseling but spiritual direction, as well, so that motives can be assessed to determine the individual's formative or non-formative aspects in the pursuit of his life call.

The director, in order to ensure the individual's motivational growth, should constantly check his perception of the seminarian according to the following criteria:

1. **How a person behaves towards the self:**
 - (a) Openness, as against defensiveness;
 - (b) Flexible control over one's reactions, needs and emotions;

- (c) **Personal value commitment; and**
 - (d) **A certain predictable or consistent behavior.**
- 2. **How a person relates towards others:**
 - (a) **Capacity to love affectively and effectively;**
 - (b) **Capacity to relate with peers;**
 - (c) **Capacity to relate with opposite sex;**
 - (d) **Healthy attitude towards authority; and**
 - (e) **Leadership ability.**
- 3. **How a person relates to reality:**
 - (a) **Sound judgment or common sense;**
 - (b) **Involvement with work; and**
 - (c) **A sense of humor.**

The object of the assessment at the college seminary level is for the individual to come to a tentative decision regarding his vocation. Should he so decide that this life call is towards the life form of priesthood, this tentative decision will now be subjected to reality testing - both outside and inside the seminary. Thus, we now come to the second formative assessment.

Second formative Assessment - Regency and First Two Years of Theology

Towards the end of adolescence and in early adulthood, the seminarian has to resolve three basic issues in order to come to a more definitive life direction. These issues could not have been resolved earlier: nor can they be resolved in the seminary.

If these issues are not resolved at this stage, they will strongly influence the behavior of the seminarian during Theology, and especially in his early life as a priest, resulting in a vocation crisis. I feel that the object of the regency is for the seminarian to face these issues and come to a certain resolution regarding these.

1. **Self concept: The basis of maturity is self-knowledge.**
It is important for the seminarian to obtain this

experiential self-knowledge, especially if he comes from a minor seminary. By working for a year or two outside the seminary, the seminarian with supervision and regular processing, may come to a better understanding of his strengths and weaknesses.

If the seminarian enters Theology without a clear self-concept, his tendency would be to boost his self-esteem by defensiveness. The reason why there is so much immaturity in Theology is that most of the seminarians are unable to face themselves as they really are. One of the most prevalent difficulties of priests later on is a low self-image, which is compensated by taking on more and more work.

2. Intimacy and sexuality: It is at this stage of development, as a person finishes college, that the issues of intimacy and sexuality become real to the seminarian. It is therefore not surprising that theologians have their sweethearts during their course of studies in Theology.

Seminary life accepts the validity of a vocational decision, but then builds a lifestyle which effectively precludes the resolution of the intimacy struggle. The seminary system is not conducive to the confrontation and resolution of this central aspect of the seminarian's affective life.

The option for celibacy is a free choice only when the intimacy struggle has been confronted and worked through. If this area is not faced, very often, the intimacy struggle returns to the person as a priest, and he may regress into adolescent behavior a few years later after ordination.

3. Authority: This is an important area, especially in our authority-centered culture. The seminary rector is an all too powerful figure who dominates every aspect of the seminarian's life, especially his future. It may then be profitable for the seminarian to leave the seminary structure for a while and be exposed to

different authority figures. This will give him the opportunity to determine and manage his freedom so that he develops a healthy attitude towards authority.

The ability to balance compliance and autonomy is at the heart of obedience. If this issue is not faced, very often, authority hang-ups emerge when the seminarian becomes a priest. This will manifest itself in strained relationships with his bishops and/or parishioners.

Only when these issues have been recognized and faced can a spiritual direction within the context of the theologate and one's vocation, be meaningful.

Assessment of Internal Vocation. In the first two years of Theology, spiritual direction can then center on assessing the internal vocation of the theologian. On discerning the call itself, spiritual direction as clarification comes into full use.

In this process, the spiritual director helps the seminarian look deeply at two factors of vocation.

1. **Attraction:** Attraction is necessary for a vocation. God speaks to the seminarian through the Bible, through the Church, through the needs of people, through events, through friends and superiors - but these find an echo in the core of the person, his will may be mediated by the Church, by a friend, etc., but he will somehow touch his heart, and make grow the attraction which is like the echo of the word spoken through this mediation.

Attraction is the heart of the vocation because it is there that a response grows within the individual, in answer to what God is telling him through all these events that comes to his life.

When a person is attracted to the Gospel way of life and to the secular priesthood, this attraction will have to be discerned. This is the proper task of the

first two years of Theology. In this stage of discernment, there is a double task of (a) presenting this particular way of life in the Church objectively, slowly and simply, and (b) helping the person to discern his response to this.

The initial attraction of a young man who knows nothing about life may be purely sentimental, or may be a wish to escape from a troublesome situation, or an attraction to something else that has nothing to do with the secular priesthood. We have to discern the person's motives to make sure that he responds to the spiritual and apostolic aspects of a commitment to the Church.

2. **Concrete Explicitation of Motivation:** Motivation is like the foundation of the attraction. The basic question of motivation is: What moves your heart? Is this movement really the work of the Spirit in response to the charism of the secular priesthood? Or is it the movement of the little devils in your life? What are the dynamics, forces and dynamisms that activate this attraction in you?

The motivation, together with the attraction, is the core of the vocation. In this regard, the spiritual director becomes a co-discerner. Discernment is now in process.

The spiritual-apostolic motives are prayer and service. It is unfair to accept people who do not have the right intention. We do not expect a change of motives, but we can expect a purification of motives if the motives are right, although ambivalent. However, when the right intention is not present, we have no right to brainwash the good intention into them.

Freedom is necessary in the decision for the priesthood, and it presupposes clarity of motives. What we are trying to find out is: What is God saying to this person within his heart? The free response of the person will then be the core of his commitment.

Proper motivation plays an important role in perseverance. It is crucial then for the seminarian at this stage to concretely explicitate his "right-intention" for the priesthood.

Third Formative Assessment - Spiritual-Pastoral Formation Year and the Last Two Years of Theology

This last stage of formative assessment is more definitive. Through the formal structure of the spiritual-pastoral formation year (SPFY) and the unstructured processes of the last two years of Theology, the seminarian looks for an affirmation from God of his decision for the priesthood and a transformation of his motivation. The activity of God is now central in this formative assessment.

Spiritual-Pastoral Formation Year. The SPFY is usually scheduled after the second year in Theology. The program reviews and summarizes the different formation processes that have been happening, asks for a deeper commitment to the priesthood from the seminarian, and acquaints him with various aspects of his mission as a secular priest later on.

One way of looking at this process is from the point of view of a more formal structure of discernment, as described by St. Ignatius of Loyola:

1. *Parecer:* The initial process demands a deeper insight into the self. The seminarian has to take stock of his weaknesses and strengths in order to understand the patterns of movements within himself.
2. *Mirar:* The seminarian must look, not only into his conscious understanding of himself, but also into unconscious motivation. He must be helped in doing this so that he can see in what way they are of help to him and in what way they can be transformed.
3. *Sentir:* The seminarian must undergo a period of intensive prayer in order to put "the mind and heart of Christ." His vocation is not a career, but a living out of his relationship with Christ. He is asked to re-

assess the call of God and his response, which opens him up to a deeper commitment.

4. *Juzgar*: Having internalized this deeper commitment, the seminarian is then exposed to the life of the secular priest, allowing him to concretize his life mission.

The various lectures and activities during this year of intensive formation can fall logically into this pattern. In this way, motivation is looked at deeply, and is hopefully transformed by the person's encounter with Christ and his growing desire to serve the Kingdom.

Last Two Years of Theology. Continuing spiritual direction should emphasize two elements at this stage of formation before the priesthood:

1. The Christ motive: Christ is the Alpha and the Omega; he is the beginning and the end of the vocation. The bishop, at the rite of ordination, can say: "May Christ, who began the good work in you, bring it to its completion."

Thus, the seminarian, during the last two years of Theology, should be constantly aware of this one basic dynamic in his life in whatever form it touches him - the all-pervasive presence and activity of Christ. This presence and activity he will participate in later, for he will share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

2. The apostolic motive: During the time of formation, the seminarian should be aware, not only that the priesthood is not for his own fulfillment or praise and glory; he must now also consciously deepen the more positive dimension of his motivation. He must fall in love with the people he is to serve.

Only then can he be compassionate in their weakness, be supportive in their strivings, and be joyful in their strength. Most of all, in the loving services of his people he must decrease, and Christ increase. This is

the basic orientation of the apostolic motive - to bring all things under Christ.

Whether the seminarian be at prayer or in activity, these two basic motivations should be present so that his priesthood is constantly renewed:

The Motive of Christ

In any discussion on priestly motivation, we always come back to the primordial example of Christ. Since childhood, there was only one motive that pervaded his whole life: to do the will of his Father. The expression of this motivation took on various forms, but the one thread that bound all of these together was the humble service to his people.

Despite the clarity of Christ motivational orientation, we find in his experience a three-fold assessment which gave definite direction and expression to the general movement of His life towards the Father.

1. At Christ's baptism, the Father's affirmation of his Son's motivational orientation is heard clearly. The Son is now the New Moses who is ready to lead the New Exodus. He comes to the realization that he is the Messiah whose identity must now be proclaimed to all the people.
2. At Christ's transfiguration the Father's affirmation of his Son's motivational orientation is again heard clearly by his Son's three apostles. The Son comes to the realization that to be the Messiah, he is to die for the salvation of his people. From Galilee, the place of miracles and parables, he sets his face "like a flint" to Jerusalem, the place of death and liberation.
3. At Christ's passion, the Father's affirmation of his Son's motivational orientation is muted, but it will burst forth at the Resurrection, when he claims his Son from the dead. At the agony in the garden, Christ realizes that his life orientation demanded the dying

tomorrow His motivation, the Father's will, allows him to endure the new expression of humble service - to die on the cross.

At the heart of the three-fold motivational assessment proposed within the seminary structure are three basic experiences of Christ with his Father, which flowed out as unique expressions of service to the people he loved.

Thus, over and beyond the technical descriptions of such assessment processes is the real, on-going religious experience of the seminarian and his God, which elude description. There is only silence. And in this silence, God speaks. His is the final assessment.

VENANCIO S. CALPOTURA, S.J.

EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUALITY: POINT OF CONVERGENCE

THE SUBJECT OF "Eastern and Western Spirituality: Point of Convergence" is to be viewed in the light of the objectives set down for this congress. It therefore has to be related to the issue of spiritual direction in Asian seminaries. I have no illusions at all that what I will say here can be new to you. It is you, in fact, who are most familiar with this terrain of spiritual direction - having done this for years.

When I looked into my own meager resources of this experience, by way of relating it to the topic assigned to me, I immediately realized that my own personal experience of it could hardly matter, really. On the other hand, perhaps having had spiritual direction from a Jesuit priest (Fr. James P. Moran, S.J.) for thirty-two long years (until his death and my entrance to Carmel) can perhaps enable me, with God's grace, to give a profile of the nature of his direction. But again, what a whale of a difference is there between directing seminarians and a lay-woman. That immediately cautions you to anticipate insights that may only be obliquely meaningful in your work.

I have therefore decided to gather insights largely from my long experience in the past of "listening" to seminarians (even as a lay-woman) and to sisters and priests, whenever they came for "unburdening"; or for them merely to get another person's point of view. As a cloistered contemplative nun now, the requests have been more specific and direct: they especially relate to problems on one's prayer and faith-life, parish and communal commitment to living the gospel and their own intra and interpersonal problems either with parish leaders or in their own religious communities.

Another source of these limited observations comes from my readings which have been providentially directed to just this very area - but readings not only on prayer and the priesthood, but also especially two literary classics that provide case-study possibilities of the relationships of spiritual director/directee. I refer to Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (Fr. Zossima and Alyosha) and George Bernano's *Diary of a Country Priest*, among others.

I personally believe that all I can hope to do in this paper is to highlight the teachings of both St. Teresa and St. John of the cross on the ways of the spirit of human soul. I believe that spiritual direction so-called is essentially a process of spiritual discernment and grace-filled glimpses into the mystery, not only in each person but also in the very process of encounter. I realize that what I can share here are insights that can be most tentative, groping, and more like gentle wonderings into this largely unknown and delicately veiled process that will always remain ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit.

The contextualization called for in the topic assigned to me, I can only consider as "givens" with which we are all familiar because their unending analysis has already literally done them to death. We can presume to say, we know them only too well - living this milieu daily, so to speak. I beg to presume, therefore, that we can, indeed, take for granted the framework of contextualization called for. Except perhaps to share with you this one valid but nevertheless startling statement made by Dr. Subhash Anand in his latest *Vidyajayoti* Indian Journal of Theological Reflection, July/88) article where he said: "The consumer man is very much a beast. Modern man is a beast in search for humanity. What can destroy man's humanity is not atheism but consumerism."

If that applies to the east, specifically Asians, it is equally true of the west.

The Emerging Global Spirituality

The first point I propose to consider on this subject assigned to me is the fact that the 21st century which begins eleven years from now, will definitely make the creeping (as yet) planetary consciousness more and more possible. Already there has been a good enough amount of literature on "global spirituality." In passing, I simply wish to mention that the last chapter (of our 2-volume work on *The Asian Religious Sensibility and Christian Spirituality*) I wrote in 1977 bears exactly this title of "Global Spirituality: East-West" [vol II, pp. 965-993].

Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's *Divine Milieu*, the *Phenomenon of Man* and all his other works have vibrantly and vividly supplied both the vision or goal and the planetary explanation of the process of Christogenesis and or amorization of the universe. His vision is most comprehensive and provides space for the expansion of horizons which a plurality of religious and secular faith makes necessary. In a recent article on "Planetary Hospitality: An Approach to Peace" by Dr. Harry Cargas (in *Living Prayer*, Sept/Oct 1988) the point is stated thus: "Religious leaders of various backgrounds have stressed again and again the unity of all humankind and the path to that cosmic consolidation is through the responsibility of the individual . . . what we need is sense of sharing, a sharing of our home in the broadest understanding . . . our hearts, our spiritual insights, our intuitions of responsibility. After all God is our home. We dare not fail to share that mission."

It was Rudyard Kipling who said: "east is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet." Kipling was no prophet and happily so. Because the twain are already meeting. As has been the very common observation that has now been accepted as a fact, the western intellectuals and especially the youth, have come to the east purportedly seeking the life of the spirit. And of course it need not be said that Asians have always looked to the west as the land of

opportunity, of progress, if not of adventure. In a recent paper I wrote "In roads to Ecumenical Mysticism," I have pointed out that the *thirst for the Spirit* - the longing for what is beyond one's self - is a universal, because human, attribute. And people will go (whether east or west) where they think they can find it. The meaning of any human life inheres in this *quest* syndrome. And this is where the point of relevance for our seminarians comes in.

The second point I should like to make, therefore, is that not only the spiritual but also the academic formation of our Asian seminarians must be pitched to this goal. It must be clothed with this vision; even as it must be concretely contextualized in the present, gripping and most painful realities of third world countries, that must bear the brunt of the almost desperate efforts of richer countries to maximize their on-going rates of progress and immeasurable material security, with very little concrete concern for the third world and even fourth (the world of utter misery and degradation) world countries.

The range, breadth, depth, height, and length of this spiritual and academic imperative requires a new kind of *consciousness*: global or planetary consciousness. Yes, there have been frequent popular mention of "altered states of consciousness" or "heightened consciousness" (whether drug-generated or labored over, or as mystical gift in prayer). This particular kind of habitual consciousness, however, we may wish to call *Verbum Christo* consciousness universally human planetary consciousness. It is in identifying the elements of this consciousness of east-west emergence that I will later wish to isolate a few areas.

The third general statement or basic perception that can be made on the subject of convergence of east-west spirituality is this: the commerce of traffic of words, in this highly fluid and complex intermingling of cultures, makes possible the conscious or unconscious common use of terms whose original meanings are often lost sight of. It is this that fortunately facilitates (though unsystematically) and hasten the onset of inter-religious discourse. The word "salvation" for example, which has a definite Christian meaning (which accepts the original sinfulness of man and acknowledges the saving power of Christ's resurrection) is also being used by some non-

Christian religions even when they do not acknowledge a personal God nor Jesus.

Uchiyama Kosho Roshi, writing on Dogen Zen as religion, says "a genuine religion is one of unconditional compassion or limitless love by which every person can be saved and gain spiritual grace" (Dogen Zen published in Kyoto Soto Zen Center, Hahujusha, Tokyo, 1977, p. 178). Anne Wilson in *Living Prayer* (Sept/Oct 1988) "Many Mansions" mentions her Japanese "godmother" (Mrs. Arukawa) confiding to her that when still Buddhist (before the conversion to Catholicism) she regularly observed the "customs of rising to greet the morning sun with prayers that made it a Catholic observance." She explained it thus: "The sun is the perfect symbol for the Trinity. God the father represents uncreated light, God the Son, the light of the world and the Holy Spirit is the enlightener" (cf. Anne Wilson, "Many Mansions," *Living Prayer*, Sept/Oct, 1988).

The same is true with enlightenment, wisdom, awakening, liberation, compassion, adoration, self-surrender, self-renunciation, etc. One can use this term to explain certain ideas held by different non-Christian religions. Eventually one realizes, they all seem to be talking about the same realities (without labels) - all centered on the individual as he relates to the God he acknowledges as his creator; to the universe or reality that seems to be the whole earth for him; and to his fellowmen who can be just plain other. Then too when that individual realizes he belongs to a group, he and his community or nation as they relate to others come in. Then all other sub-realities of existence, like the meaning of suffering progress, change, fulfillment, life and death, and all the virtues and vices become consequences of his perceived basic or primal relationships to God, the universe and to other men.

Daisetsu Suzuki, writing in 1957 on "Meister Eckhart and Buddhism" says that the more he studies both, the more "I grow firmly convinced that the Christian experiences are not after all different from those of the Buddhist. Terminology is all that divides us and stirs us up to a wasteful dissipation of energy. We must however weigh the matter carefully and see whether there is really anything that alienates us from one another and whether there is any

basis for our spiritual edification and for the advancement of a world culture (*Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist* by Daisetsu Suzuki, Mandala books, Unvium paperbacks, 1979).

The Problems of Words and Consciousness

Let me discuss further for a while here to develop briefly in a general and oblique way, the nature of training one's consciousness. Because we are forced to admit that whether one is Christian or professes other religions, if one desires to worship or connect himself with one he calls God or the Absolute, the first imperative is *attention*. Ordinarily this is taken to mean largely attention to the one or to God whom he is addressing or wants to be connected with, and, therefore, attention to what he is doing. This is what St. Teresa puts down as number one rule when one desires to pray: know whom you are addressing (God) and know who you are; and be conscious of what you are doing: the very act of prayer, which to her is a loving conversation.

But non-Christian or Asian religions also make imperative this highly important element of attention and more rigorously termed, concentration or single-pointedness. However we term it, the imperative in all is a control or discipline of attention which is a function of consciousness.

I will not, however, develop this further because it is not the act of prayer or worship I am concerned with here, but the type of consciousness the modern world seems to exact from all right-thinking or reflective persons which is in fact the only way we can sense meaning in present-day existence.

We earlier mentioned "heightened, deepened, or expanded and even altered consciousness." And it is the way of subtly training our seminarians' consciousness that is the very purpose of this digression.

So we begin not only with *awareness* but also more precisely, sensitivity. How do we train for sensitivity to one's surrounding? There are many and relatively easy ways, most of which are directed to taking time to appreciate the lovely aspects of nature (a leaf, a

flower, a tree, etc.). However, from such concrete objects, I now wish to draw our thoughts to sensitivity to *words*.

Why words? Because next to the beauty of nature which appeal to our five senses, is the beauty of Scripture: the imperative of interiorizing words which embody realities of mind and heart working on the imagination and will. Take the line of Psalm 32 "look to the Lord and be radiant," or "taste and see that the Lord is good." Jose Garcia Villa, our Filipino national artist (poet) would put commas after each word, to call our whole being to each word, as in *Look, to the Lord, and be radiant*. Each word is a universe of color, sound, smell, meaning, taste, texture. The point I am driving at is the rich potential in poetry as a means to sensitize consciousness to the *power* of words. *Words work*. Jesus said to the man with withered hands: "Be healed" - and he was healed. Or: "Fear not; it is I" and his disciples became men not boys. Or to Lazarus in his tomb: "Come out" and the dead man emerged. The power of words working on our whole psychic being commands life of it. I have explained this more fully in our Vol. II of *Asian Religious Sensibility and Christian Spirituality* which I here quote in part: "Everything he (Jesus) makes delivers the full power of his being; not one word more; not one word less. He is truly Verbum (Logos) incarnate. He delivers himself in his word."

In general however, we can say that east and west have met in today's solid and healthy preoccupation with exploring one's depth and knowing one's self from within as a prerequisite to a meaningful personal encounter with God or with absolutes.

East and west have met also in a common acknowledgment that the spiritualizing process must be grounded on the full and whole development of a person's natural capacities, interests and aspirations; and that the liberating transformation that can happen to a person must be affected through love borne of self-sacrifice.

How do we "train" seminarians for emptiness (dying to self) in faith and hope and love; therefore unto fullness in God (Christ crucified and risen)?

I should now like to focus on the individual and the community and the areas of convergence for a plenary consciousness. In the four religions we propose to discuss in particular (Buddhism, Hinduism,

Christianity and Taoism) we necessarily must consider the individual and the others which we choose to call "community" (please see sketch on next page).

All four religions stress the imperative of treating the other as being like one's self that what a person attributes to himself and recognizes as his need and aspiration is equally true to any other. The four religions may differ in their expression of such recognition or in the means they employ to give substance and meaning to that recognition but basically the recognition is acknowledged as valid.

Thus for example:

1. In Buddhism the primitive form admits of no concept of self but modern Buddhism posits that every person has a true original self. Where people can differ is that some persons are serious, very serious and will do everything to realize their true original selves; whereas others are indifferent to it and may even be ignorant of it. In fact if it is this kind of ignorance that Buddhist condemn and label as cause of man's suffering, the Buddhist, therefore, disciplines himself to zazen or meditation and the observance of eight-fold path through compassionate love and concern - and tries to achieve emptiness, enlightenment and its perfection in Nirvana or in the *boddhisatva* state (persons already fit for the pure land or Buddhahood but who choose to remain on earth to help others be enlightened or to "save" others).
2. *Hinduism* also posts that every individual has a divine life called *atman* a self. Through a long process of reincarnation and transmigration of souls, the *atman* — through self-abnegation or self-renunciation and through a life of *īṣṇa*, *dharma*, *prāna*, *bhakti* — *marga* or *yoga* — becomes *brahman* the universal self: the Absolute. The hindu also through this devotional life and meditation helps created the milieu and makes pervasive the light and fire of *Soccidananda* (*sat-it-ananda*) for others; in fact also, for others; in fact also the whole universe since the immanent — transcendent mystery called *brahman* is all in all: All is *brahman*: *atman* is *brahman*, the universal being.

The following chart tries to summarize these teachings, so all four religions can be compared.

Parameters	Christian-Catholic	Buddhist	Hindu	Taoist
VISION liberation salvation perfection	Victory over death/sin in Christ. Trinitarian life and spiritualization of faculties; being Christ to others - to union with God (transforming, liberating) thru freedom of the sons of God; empowered by Spirit	Fr. Habito makes Christianity and Buddhism alike - using gospel for truth of being. To be Buddha, Buddhahood is enlightenment Nirvana Satori - to realize one's original self - true self, pure being-ness & consciousness	To achieve/ to become Brahma. For atman to be brahman, to be ONE man. Absolute: Soccidaranda (life, light, love) - the Beyond.	To be one with TAO: Heaven universal, whole. Good is will of heaven.
SELF & GOD GROWTH	To be shaped by the Spirit thru gifts of Spirit in a holy life of increasing love-relationship with Jesus in the fiat of Mary. Self actualization in God, growth of natural to become supernatural: Wholeness/integration (body/soul/spirit).	Zen is experience now. No "self" but pivot of flux of several reincarnations for the original true consciousness thru <i>mu</i> for truth. Always beyond; more and more perfect thru breathing, concentration	Self is divinity - atman thru self renunciation, thru transmigration, reincarnation to become Self universal: the Absolute: Brahman	no "self" as differentiated from others, but is fully responsible to make Tao rule him. No distinction between self & others; all reality is good.

MEANS emptiness or nothing- ness. Kenosis	St. John of Cross' asceti- cism of mind & heart; empty self through openness in faith, hope & love; empower- ment of Spirit Trinity in- dwelling -- with God: to- tal surrender	Emptiness is fulness. Void is im- perative, so true self can surface up 8-fold path; 4-fold truth sub- conscious -- ground of being	thru self- abnegation to achieve full, pure trans- cendence: to be absorbed by the trans- cendent; to be lost in (ground of) Be-ing.	more of holy indifference; detachment; purity of heart; no distinction, no good or evil, but har- mony with heaven.
----------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

SUFFERING THE CROSS (ignorance)	Jesus crucified our pattern; made strong in his resurrection. Cross = royal road to per- fection. Jesus: die to self to be come another Christ.	Suffering (dukha) is caused by desire. Must discipline self to kill all desire & arrive at purity of consciousness.	Suffering is a given, the very means for one's growth & ma- turity. Purifica- tion, self renun- ciation, trans- cendence in immanence.	No Suffering no joy, no comfort. All and one are Tao. total accep- tance.
-------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

COSMOLOGY All creation has been re- deemed in Christ's resur- rection.	Soul directly created by God. Evolution of physical matter, on to psychical & full conscious- ness in man St. John of + God = forever moving, forever still, point of truth & glory.	Zen: all is as is; does not bother with cosmo- logy; modern zen believes in God, divine nature, life force, prayer: compas- sionate love, karima, yoga, bakti & jnana.	Universe and men are one in the Abso- lute; every thing is sacred. No idea of creator/cre- atures. All is divine of the absolute.	All is Tao- heaven. No sense of crea- tion, though supremacy of men who are Tao: totally one's self.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

COMMUNITY	the other = X Church = com- munity of Christ All become one in Christ	Compassion for others boddhisatvas Stay behind to save others
-----------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

3. *Taoism* identifies Tao as heaven or the will of God or the Absolute. It can seem clearer perhaps here to just quote Trappist Merton's translation of Chuang Tzu's poem or verse:

The Man of Tao

*The Man in whom Tao acts without impediment
 harms no other being by his actions.
 Yet, he does not know himself to be "kind" to be "gentle."
 The man in whom Tao acts without impediment
 does not bother with his own interests
 and does not despise others who do.
 He does not struggle to make money,
 and does not make a virtue of poverty.
 He goes his way with relying on others,
 and does not pride himself on walking alone.
 While he does not follow the crowd,
 he won't complain of those who do.
 Rank and reward make no appeal to him,
 disgrace and shame do not deter him.
 He is not always looking for right and wrong.
 Always deciding yes or no. The ancients said, therefore:
 The man of Tao remains unknown
 Perfect virtue produces nothing
 "No self" is "true self."
 And the greatest man is nobody.*

Through detachment, purity of heart or holy indifference (wu wei -- do nothing), by simply attuning one's self to Tao: perfect identification with the will of heaven, achieves tao, becomes tao.

One realizes from this very brief presentation that except for the incarnation of God as man in Christ Jesus who becomes the living personal God for Christians, all the structural concepts of the three religions mentioned earlier find their comprehensible perfection in

the Christian faith. And even where the three religions would prefer to call their absolute *total mystery*, our Christian faith also has its counterpart of this in our acknowledgment of the absolute mystery of the Godhead.

Points of Convergence

Where do eastern and western *spirituality* actually converge? One may briefly outline these areas common to both. The question can be translated into: what seems to be the common or universal preoccupation of the east-west spirituality?

1. Their preoccupation with the human person:
 - a. The dynamics of self-knowledge, self-discovery, self-growth.
 - b. The eagerness to discover what is universally human, true to all men and woman irrespective of race culture, religion, etc.
 - c. The deep and relentless concern for the dignity, self-worth and rights of the human person.
 - d. The universal and compassionate commitment to help the less fortunate, the oppressed, the exploited and the marginalized.
2. Their preoccupation with the universal problems of freedom, justice and peace:
 - a. The growing recognition of "people power" vs. dictatorships and all types of manipulation of people's interests and aspirations.
 - b. The growing universal hope for a better world: a global culture where each particular local culture will find its legitimacy.

- c. The common commitment to a renewal or radical change in societal and institutional structures that perpetuate wrong values and institutionalize greed and oppression.
- 3. Their preoccupation with interiority and the things of the spirit and with transcendental mystery:
 - a. The universal hunger for God and a thirst for prayer.
 - b. The growing recognition that only self-sacrifice or total self-giving or *compassionate* love in the concrete is the solution to unabated wars.
 - c. The gradual recognition or deep concern of man's cosmic betrayal resulting to *ecological tragedy* of today's world.
 - d. The universal fear of nuclear suicide of the human race.
 - e. The universal acceptance of the integrity of each religious system and the healthy pluralism of cultures.
 - f. The common acceptance of the truth that hedonism, materialism, and consumerism degrade man and make him closer to a beast than to a son of God.
- 4. Their preoccupation with a universal expectant hope that the 21st century will be for all peoples who are willing to accept their share of universal cross of suffering (for one's self and for others), a century of prayer, penance and peace: a contemplative age.
 - a. Therefore their educational systems' preoccupation with *values*: aesthetic, a humanized and humanizing science, a training in the humanities.
 - b. Their recognition of the need for world leadership in moral and spiritual unity among peoples.

Given this brief and cursory summary of the areas of spirituality common to east and west, how do we provide our seminarians with 1) a training and 2) continuing *direction* along these parameters of sociological concern that will be their framework, so to speak of pastoral ministry?

For us Christians, we have to recognize that a deep and personal knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, of the gospels, and especially of the beatitudes is imperative. Consequent to this is the training for *kenosis*: an emptying of one's self for others. Or, as St. John of the Cross puts it: "the cross is the royal road to perfection" - a Christian view of suffering, accepting "Christ crucified and risen" as our daily model, achieved most humbly through the *fiat* of Mary.

Following this, should be a real *personal*, self-oblative love of the holy Mother Church who in history expresses the mind of Christ, and nourishes our growth towards the perfect manhood of Christ, through her sacraments: principally at the Eucharist, following our baptism into the priesthood of Christ and into the sonship of Jesus.

The newer *thrusters* which today have yet to receive a stronger emphasis in spiritual formation and direction are:

1. A deeper understanding, knowledge and appreciation of the theology of the blessed Trinity.
2. A stronger commitment to *truth*: the truth of *one's being*: the truth of the *moment*; the truth of the *process* of individual, communal, and global growth of consciousness towards a global aspiration of solution.
3. A deeper understanding, appreciation and the integration into one's faith life of the *cosmic Christ* and necessarily of the cosmos.
4. A greater commitment to helping form *conscience*, especially through the sacrament of reconciliation and direct moral but inspired instruction.
5. A fuller knowledge of the *nature of prayer* — its stages, its integration in one's total, daily life; the ways of the spirit (God) in one's soul and spirit-life and the cultivation of

their *love for prayer* as a basic and crucial foundation for a full wholesome *faith-life*.

6. A total commitment to living out the paschal mystery in one's life; and therefore a more thorough grounding in liturgy, especially on the holy sacrifice of the mass.
7. A thorough training in interpersonal relationships, the dynamics of dialogue and all types of peace - making activities aimed at individual and communal fulfilment of God's image in every man.
8. Overall, needless to say (since this is the matter of congress), a more profound and adequate knowledge of the respect for Asian or eastern non-Christian contemplative prayer and faith life.

At this point, I'd like to emphasize more strongly one factor I've already briefly noted down in our contextualization scene: the problem of our ecological environment. It is in the very design of God that our efforts at providing adequate theological and spiritual formation to our seminarians should be further challenged and enriched by an evolving theology of the earth. This comes alongside the current preoccupation, likewise with Zen, pranic healing, heightened and cosmic consciousness.

I should think I'd go too far afield to deal with each of these. Moreover, we can safely say that all of us have already read much about these. My concern has been to show how east and west have already come together in our common preoccupation with these factors as they affect the well-being of men.

However, more precisely and more limited, I'd like to highlight the significance of these factors as related to our specific concern: the processes of spiritual direction.

Convergence and the Process of Direction

What seems necessary is to recognize the *convergence* and the subsequent logical synthesis of these happenings; and make that

perceived synthesis of insights, yield *direction* and the desired *quality* of spiritual discernment and growth.

I should like to single out one concrete demand. Thus, it does seem that if we must fully understand and appreciate the cost of our redemption in terms of Christ's passion and death, we must have a clear and as adequate an understanding and appreciation of the almightiness, the immensity, grandeur, mystery and utter beyondness of God. We must not only be overwhelmed and awed at his majesty and power, and inexpressible, inconceivable, unutterable greatness; we must also know thereby our own nothingness, utter dust-ness before such a God! We must feel ourselves utterly expendable; we could have been nothing - nothing at all, not even dust nor dirt - we truly count for nothing!

And both and at the same time we must know, understand and believe that this utter majesty and power - this great impersonal power is a person; wears a human face, and has a human heart! And even more staggering and mind-boggling: that this almighty power created me - me of my own kind: single, original, unique me - out of gratuitous love for me! And seeing that I cannot save myself, to rejoin him in eternal life, this almighty God chose to become man for my sake: to redeem me! What can we really savor of this *kenosis*, not only the word who became Jesus; but as true and incomprehensively real and personal, of the *kenosis* of the Father, who emptied himself by uttering himself out totally in the word? For the *verbum* is the Father's knowledge and love of himself. In this is the Father's *kenosis* in the Son. But to approach an understanding of this, we must first fully understand the *kenosis* of the *verbum* in Jesus: the total self-emptiness of the Son of God in his total loving obedience to the Father - unto the cross!

Only then in realizing the utter generosity and love of the Father can the seminarians experience the depths of sin they allowed themselves to commit or to indulge in. One measures the depth of tragedy by the height from which the tragic hero has fallen. The greater the person, the fuller the love he has for you, the greater one's sense of wretchedness and sin the penitent feels and for having disappointed such a great lover!

If we are to hold up this ultimate pattern of sanctity or holiness to our would-be priests, we will have to find out in their personal lives (their own "case histories") whether they have had experiences of self-giving or self-sacrifice that had truly hurt them, even as they felt joyous or liberated in having done so. We will have to help them go through their past to draw up such personal experiences of self-oblation-and at each stage, to assess the *degree* of self-denial, of joyous and voluntary self-giving. For how else can they truly understand Jesus' self-sacrifice (and all the personal qualities characterizing such an act) unless they have personally known the nature of that act, even in a very elementary way? As has been so glibly said again and again - "grace builds on nature".

For example, St. John of the Cross talks about solitude. This factor is not very Filipino. By nature the Filipinos are gregarious. Even among the contemplatives (religious orders given to pure ministry of prayer and contemplation, in which life, silence and solitude are twin-pillars), I dare say very few come up to the stage in holiness of life and contemplation where they find solitude an imperious master or compelling thirst of their soul, enough to make them hope for a possible hermit life. But to want to be a hermit in an order that is also cenobitical is to choose the easier way. The goal of life for any Christian (whether religious or lay) is to know the demands of a truly deep interior life - a union sought with God; to make God the center of one's life and to be constantly aware of the Trinity in dwelling. For this solitude becomes a need for any Christian: moments when one can rest awhile in the depths of one's soul.

The problem of training seminarians to become aware of their need for solitude, for a truly authentic prayer-life, must reckon with a prior problem; one which is true of all peoples who have been colonized. This is the problem not only of national identity (what is it to be Filipino?) but more crucially of one's *personal* identity. But knowing one's self and being stoutly affirmed in his self-knowledge and self-worth, cannot be presumed of our seminarians. The common problem cited by formators is the inability of the subjects to know themselves partly because of the colonial encrustations of the national sub-conscious. Add to this problem of a western educational orientation compounded by the problem of language and a pervasive secular and materialistic, as well as a youth culture that is *chaotic in*

its values - torn between the fascinations of freedom bordering on license and the call to compassion and heroism.

I think it can be helpful at this point to drop the labels "spiritual director" and "directee." Very often we think of the persons involved in this relationship as assuming such roles. This defines precisely the roles they are expected to perform. To carry on or discharge obligations incumbent on such roles is (oftentimes one-way) a "giver-receiver" relationship. This has become a bit institutionalized through years.

We know, however, that each partner is a unique, original person in whom the Spirit abides at all times. And when he becomes aware or conscious of the movements of the Spirit in his soul, if he is enlightened or has reflected much, he then allows or gives the Spirit full freedom to govern him. He provides inner space to the operations of God in his soul. He then becomes a conscious listener, a sensitive partner to the Spirit. This is true of the spiritual director and also of the directee.

With this recognition accepted as a premise: that the partners in the encounter both work with the Spirit, or more precisely, with Christ, it will be easier to perceive the process of discernment, affirmation or confirmation and eventually transformation.

The process of discernment happens in both the director and the directee - not only when they come together for the exchange or the sessions: but even before such an exchange or session take place. It is imperative therefore that each partner be able to view himself both subjectively (necessarily) and also objectively.

One can, of course, say that a person's perceptions of himself cannot but be subjective - since it is he looking at himself. How then can he view himself objectively, without recourse to another person's perception of him - to a perception of himself based on an outside source?

This is where we want to use St. Teresa de Avila's analogy of the being of Christ as a mirror. She simply suggests that we hold up Jesus Christ in his humanity before us. Then we look at ourselves by holding up the mirror of Christ as our model. How conformed are we to the image before us? That process becomes objective, in so far as the

image we see ourselves held up against Christ conveys to us a knowledge of how God sees us, presuming of course that we know Jesus quite intimately.

The first requisite therefore for both partners - director and directee - is to have a common appreciation of the sacred humanity of Jesus. Of course the spiritual director is naturally expected to be more spiritually mature and experienced in living out Christ's life in his own person. The spiritual director's assessment of his capability or competence as director is therefore crucial. At this point, we may well ask ourselves (if we are directors): "have I already fully experienced in my own life the length, height, breadth, depth of Christ's love for men?" In other words, have I really known, in my own life, the demands of love? Have I experienced my own powerlessness and misery - and thus known the inexhaustible mercy and compassion of the loving Father through Christ? Have I known true self-abnegation: experienced a dying to myself - the very kenosis of Christ?

Sharing from Priests Formators

It does not follow, however, that one who has not come to such depths of experience cannot direct souls. No, this is not a prerequisite. But we contend that one who has had this full range of total self-giving, which Christ lived out on earth, will be a more deeply understanding, clearly discerning, more capable spiritual director.

At this point, I'd like to quote Fr. Ben Carlos, S.J.'s "message" in *Petros* (a pamphlet published by the Archdiocesan Holy Apostles Seminary after their thirty-day retreat). What was clearly evident is that the seminarians, through the Spirit had been led by the director to experience not only their miserliness, their sinfulness; but (because of this) also, therefore, the loving forgiveness of God. They had been led to experience in their own persons, the cost in love and blood of their salvation and continuing growth in love of God.

Gleaned from *Petros* are these expressed results of the retreat (from the seminarians):

1. They had an experience of the tremendous love and mercy of God in their concrete life-history; they realized the truth themselves as "loved sinner."

2. These they gained by gazing intently on Jesus and experiencing him personally.
3. They learned to face, and confront their sins (sinful attachments, pride, selfishness, fear, withdrawal of earlier surrender, etc.) and gained renewed confidence.
4. They discovered they have remain united to Christ in his paschal mystery.
5. They realized Jesus has to become the driving force in their lives and thus continue the work of the risen Christ.

Two priests - formators, responding to the writer's questionnaire, have shared their experiences as spiritual directors.

From Fr. Franco Mendiola, F.M.M.:

I. Discernment and problems:

1. *Discernment regarding*

a. the nature of a true call

- 1) uncertainties or lack of faith
- 2) lack of religious experience or biblical acquaintance in reading people and events as religious signs
- 3) unfamiliarity in the ways of divine love

b. knowledge of themselves

- 1) lack of knowledge of the biblical God (for me, it is God - knowledge that leads to true self-knowledge)
- 2) limited social interaction
- 3) limited responses

c. emotional and psychological maturity

- 1) lack of scientific knowledge of behavior
- 2) lack of local tests and norms
- 3) too many variables

- d. spiritual maturity
 - 1) - spiritual retardation
 - 2) lack of knowledge of the gospel and other spiritualities
 - 3) lack of creativity and imagination
2. *Problems in openness*
 - a. certain personalities (e.g. the rigid)
 - b. upbringing
 - c. quality of self-esteem (e.g. sensitivity to judgment by others)
3. *Problems of truthfulness and the factors affecting it*
 - a. value-judgment
 - b. low ego strength
 - c. character neurosis (i.e. a moral defect)
- II. *Concerning a spiritual direction relationship, it is:*
 1. Successful - when objectives are fulfilled, e.g., client is committed;
 2. Terminated - when client drops before any enlightenment
 3. Not necessary - for the advanced
 4. Useless -
 - a. with an obsessive client who cannot break away from intellectualization
 - b. with a highly resistant client (especially, the prejudiced, those who had mal-experience of spiritual direction in the past)
 - c. wrong motives (especially when spiritual direction is imposed as a requirement)
- III. *Ideal conditions for a wholesome program of spiritual direction:*
 1. Spiritual director should have a professional knowledge of the gospel
 2. Spiritual director should have the human qualities needed in formation
 3. No generation or cultural gap

4. Personality type of spiritual director clicks with client
5. Spiritual director should be an authentic spiritual example (spirituality is life; so too with other formators).
6. Spiritual freedom
7. Science of psychology helps
8. Specifically mutual trust
9. Generosity

Fr. Ruben Elago of Fil-mission society, explicitly calls his knowing of one's self from within a befriending of one's past: the acceptance of one's whole past history and the consequent seeing of himself as a whole, integrated and growing person. It is for this that we must develop in our seminarians a love for the truth, a courage to face and accept one's whole existence. For these habits of soul, the need is prayer most of all - the desire to see oneself as God sees us.

As he says: *In terms of my accompanying the journey of each seminarian, the problem that always strikes me is:*

1. Their capacity to "befriend" their past. They are so bogged down with all kinds of hang-ups: authority, family, work relationships, guilt-feeling and traumas - all directed vs. life.

2. Consequently, they have little sense appreciation and affirmation of their self-worth. I thought that my first job is to restore and sustain their self-worth so that life could really be alive for them and challenging again.

3. Formation then becomes a process of just healing them.

4. In short, I feel there *has to be a process of integration*. They have to be made whole and total as persons; physically, spiritually, etc. Only then can I dig deeper into letting them discern and appreciate their life - vocation ministry.

I consider a director-directee relationship successful when:

1. God is the focus in the dialogue.
2. There's an amount of freedom by both parties.

3. Openness, sincerity and honesty.
4. No exclusivity or attachment.
 - a. Both roles have to be defined - director is just there to accompany, lead, motivate and support.
 - b. There has to be regular meeting or dialogue
 - c. At some point, the directee has to be challenged.
 - d. There's an active "listening" on the part of the director.
 - e. When content of relationship or dialogue involves whole aspects of the person: psycho-sexual affectivity, spiritual struggles.
 - f. In the end, there has to be a recognition that it is the *Holy Spirit* who is the one forming.
 - g. Vulnerability and transparency are positive signs of a good relationship.
 - h. No inhibitions, not threatened anymore apart or outside from the points above; the director-directee relationship if not successful, can be terminated, etc.

Much of the "success" of the director-directee relationship depends on the quality and maturity of the person of the formator. I went through real process of integration myself. My psycho-spiritual (modules) courses that I took at Emmaus under Ben Calpotura, S.J., have helped me a lot. In a way, I had to be stripped first of my own ideals - selfishness and all kinds of brokenness before I could appreciate the beauty and wonder of priestly life. My relationship and friendship with the seminarians have helped me grow and mature and more be grounded in the truth about myself and the reality outside myself. Indeed the work in formation is a real grace of conversion. Never in my life did I realize that priestly life is a life of fidelity not of success!

Fr. Enomiya Lasalle, S.J., who has been prominent in a Christian appreciation of Zen, and who himself conducts an ashram or Buddhist sitting center, asserts that it is easier to come to understanding of the spirituality of other religions through contemplative prayer when engaging in the actual prayer itself, that it is through a study of doctrines. In his essay "The Spirituality of Non-Christian Monasticism," he dwells quite comprehensively on Buddhism. He explains how *zazen* and *zen* can help Christians but only as a technique of silencing the body and mind and of concentration - discounting the value for Christians of belaboring the events of imageless, thoughtless beingness or pure consciousness. Fr. Lasalle remains convinced that in the higher stages of prayer, God works in the soul: and in it is God who brings the worshipper gifts of contemplation according to his will.

Fr. Bede Griffiths, O.S.B., likewise maintains that "western psychologist rarely go beyond the level of the dream consciousness and repressed emotions; but in the east - in Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist yoga, they have penetrated to the depths of the psyche and discovered its original ground." Explaining this further, he says:

One plunges deep into the past of humanity and of the whole of creation. I bear within my mind, the whole world . . . I am physically and psychologically linked with all the world around me.

I would not go so far, because in true Christian mysticism one's ground of being is made even more transforming. However, on the matter of cosmic Christian consciousness, we can readily admit that this has not yet become a significant input in our formation programs. One other great lack we can admit, not only of our seminarians but also of college students in general, is an inability to be attentive and to concentrate with all one's power on whatever it is they are doing - whether reading, writing, or working on something. This is largely because silencing the body and one's faculties has not really been acknowledged as a prerequisite for conscious awareness. As we had earlier said, this is less properly oriented, seminarians may equate silencing techniques to a prayer of quietism, denounced by St. Teresa in her time because quietism as technique is not prayer.

Christian "*kenosis*" and Buddhist - Christian *emptiness*

Another very important element in both Christian and non-Christian Asian prayer is the crucial element of emptiness. Again unless our seminarians equate emptiness with the process of *kenosis* or Christ's self-emptying, they can conveniently relate emptiness with plain quietism of mind and body; this can develop into mental sloth. Or, as some modern psychologists now advocate, a descent into one's subconscious is a way of emptiness discarding one's illusory self. This again is just a technique.

The *kenosis* of Christ as a way of spirituality is directly related to self-sacrifice or an oblation of love; or a deepened sense of mystery which becomes the very presence of God in one's depths. It becomes the hallmark of a holy and virtuous, totally surrendered life.

It is ultimately in this sense that Buddhist emptiness which is fullness or "emptiness infinite" becomes not negative but positive spirituality.

But in terms of actual prayer experience, both Christian and Buddhist impressions of "imageless" and "thoughtless" contemplation are legitimate. The difference lies in the process of achieving that state. The Buddhist claims simply through silencing the mind and body and sitting still for hours intent on one's desire to see his original self, one achieves pure consciousness: an enlightenment experience. On the other hand, the Christian whose act of prayer is necessarily directed at God (seeking his face), knows that he does not *labor* (like the Buddhist) to achieve that state. Rather, he knows that gazing long and lovingly at Christ (whether in one's heart, or through the use of a crucifix or picture or by adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament) God may or may not bring him to an experience of his presence (imageless, thoughtless, purely a presence of "touch") in his soul as St. John of the Cross describes it. It is always a gift for a Christian.

Emptiness in Zen is the prelude to enlightenment or Satori - a coming to one's own true self - achieved through discipline of mind and perfect stillness, until one comes to pure consciousness of being. The discipline of Zen is to *just be* - whatever it is one finds one's self doing. It is presence to full consciousness of one's being: it is to be or

be totally absorbed in the reality or being of the moment. If one is eating, the very act of eating is the very reality and consciousness of the person of what he is doing, which is eating. So that, we can say, the eater and the eating and the eaten are one: pure act, our being. This is fullness but it is also emptiness - the void is presence. Some Buddhists dramatically term it "emptiness-infinity."

We can say it is the Christian counterpart of living in the very presence of God: the sacrament of the present moment; the total acceptance of the truth that one is be-ing in being. It is the acceptance of all things: the actual total reality; a surrender. It is to allow one's self to be carried along by the universal being: "the divine milieu" (as Fr. Teilhard calls it) or to be totally one with Christ in the Spirit: At the union of one's will to God's will. Fr. Raimondo Panikkar, the foremost authority on Hindu-Christian dialogue terms this the "prayer of being."

This also can make clear what St. Paul means when he says (2 Tim 2:8, 11-13): "You may be unfaithful; but God is always faithful. He is always faithful for he cannot disown his own self." Here St. Paul is referring to the truth that all reality is God and he cannot but be God. He cannot disown himself.

St. John of the Cross renders the same thought more explicitly saying that God cannot love anything less or lower than himself - again, implying that all is God. One is, of course reminded of St. Therese's favorite assurance "all is grace;" the All is the very life of God.

This brings to the fore, once more, the ultimate nature of this total reality. He is immutable, unchangeable reality (therefore impliedly fixed and static and complete) but is yet motion, pure activity. T. S. Eliot calls it the forever moving yet forever-still point: pure being in motion. Trappist Thomas Merton calls the milieu as constituted of billions upon trillions of these "pure points of truth," "pure points of glory" and calls it heaven and is everywhere: the "divine reality or milieu" of Fr. Teilhard.

A Christian-Buddhist statement summarizing this is that "reality, the very life of God, IS!"

Therefore, if we are to help Christian brethren achieve this emptiness or purity of being which is not emptiness but fullness of his presence, are not our teachings on presence, in dwelling Trinity, God-within, repose in the abyss, or total surrender and/or loving abandonment, etc. - are not these more facilitating for contemplative beingness or prayer than importing techniques from Zen or Yoga?

The Cost of Christian Discipleship: Kenosis

What we Christians must really totally accept and live out in our lives is a self emptying like that of Christ: his kenosis. In our inner selves, to be crucified and risen in the spirit: to accept trials and sufferings that must be in the spirit, with the same loving obedience of Christ to the Father's will: to live out the paschal mystery.

This can be difficult for seminarians and even for priests. The old Adam in each of us takes long in dying. But limiting ourselves to our seminarians, we can say that most are not habitually aware or conscious even of their own beingness. Their knowledge of self is superficial and desultory. Not reflective as a people, much less self-reflecting; we are not habitually, totally conscious of what we are doing. Even less is our people's concern for, nor even understanding the truth of their being (*ang katotohanan ng kanilang katauhan*) for what has gone into their being.

It is imperative, therefore, that one knows God in a most personal and friendly way so that he can hold up Christ Jesus as the model he must imitate. But, again, here is where *values* come in. The acceptance of a personal God will exact of such believer, a willingness to be like Christ, to act like Christ, to love, to heal, to forgive, to work like Christ.

This is the crux of his whole issue of kenosis. When a seminarian enters to prepare himself for the priesthood, does he really, deeply know what he has said *yes* to? Does he see this as a *radical departure from his old ways*? They may or can be "good" ways, he maybe a good-enough Christian to want to become a priest, to serve others; but does he fully understand that being good that way is not enough? What

will be asked of him is a *death to self*; to be emptied of his own will; to obey like Christ unto the cross: the crucifixion of his spirit at every moment in obedience? Does he fully understand what this will require of him - that like silver he will go through a crucible, seven times refined? How is he to know that his yes has to come from his very depths, if he does not even know what his depths are? It is in this area for recollection in one's depth, in silence and solitude, aided by a compassionate and competent spiritual director that seminaries must concentrate, in their academic and spiritual formation programs. It is not only a honing in psychology, but it is also and even more so, a constantly deepening and personal interiorization of Christ's redemptive cross made one's own.

It is obvious that a choice for this *gospel radicalism* or the beatitudes is an imperative. Seminarians must be helped to mature in their acceptance of this inevitable and logical expectation. One may not go to the extreme of an experience recounted about a Hindu sannyasi who became so totally transformed from his youth to this radical and permanent option, by his actual experience of getting into a coffin and allowing the real experience of death overcome him - to the point where he experienced dying to all, and leaving this world for the other life - and from this experience so deeply understood what death to self would ask of him.

Yet, it is not alone a dying to self. The spiritual directors are called upon to help seminarians experience the growth of the Spirit in their souls. As one constantly though gradually dies to his own self - for love of God and in imitation of Christ Jesus, he is most certain to experience a closeness to God, a growing intimacy with God in the depths of his soul: Presence that fills the void created by that death to self. But again, unless the seminarians are guided toward greater sensitivity to the movements of the Spirit in their souls - which moments of prayer and reflection in silence and solitude, they must be habituated to - the gains of self-sacrifice and acceptance of sufferings can be lost to them and they can simply become stoic and abnormal, or resentful, angered, and aggressive.

This makes so very obvious the need for spiritual directors to be highly competent and holy. As St. Teresa so memorable said about her own needs (and those of her nuns) for a suitable spiritual director, she would always prefer one who is both learned and holy. But if she

must choose (when both qualities cannot be had) she would prefer one who is learned. One must not be surprised at this, for St. Teresa believes that the Holy Spirit ultimately is the director of souls. What therefore a spiritual director can lack in holiness, the Holy Spirit can himself work it out on his soul. But the discernment he needs, the objectivity which the perception of God's will demands, requires learning especially in the *truths of the faith* and the ways of the Spirit on a soul. It is good to remember that the great Teresa was 52 when she met John of the Cross who was only 25; she eventually made him her spiritual director and director also for the nuns.

St. John of the Cross on Spiritual Directions

At this point, it may be good to let St. John of the Cross speak directly to us about directors. To them he says:

These spiritual directors should reflect that they themselves are not the chief agent, guide and mover of souls but that the principal guide is the Holy Spirit, who is never neglectful of souls and that they are instruments for directing them to perfection through faith and the law of God, according to the spirit God gives each one.

Thus the director's whole concern should not be to accommodate souls to his own method and condition, but he should observe the road along which God is leading them and if he does not recognize it, he should leave them alone and not bother them. And in harmony with the path and spirit along which God leads them, the spiritual director should strive to conduct them into greater solitude, tranquility and freedom of spirit (Living Flame 7:46).

Chiding spiritual directors who have little or no experience of solitude, St. John of the Cross says:

Since these spiritual directors do not understand what recollection and spiritual solitude is, nor its properties, they superpose or interpose anointing from a lower spiritual exercise . . . thus not understanding the stages of prayer nor the ways of the spirit; these directors are not aware that those acts they say the soul should make, and the discursive meditation they want it to practice, are already accomplished, since the soul has

already reached the negation of the senses and of meditation and has come to the way of the Spirit, which is contemplation (Living Flame 7:43-45).

In even harsher language, he continues:

These spiritual directors, not understanding souls that thread the path of quiet and solitary contemplation, since they themselves have not reached it and do not know what it is to part with discursive meditation, think these souls are idle . . . these directors do not know what spirit is. They do a great injury to God and show disrespect toward him by intruding with a rough hand where he is working. It cost God a great deal to bring these souls to this stage and he highly values his work of having to introduce to them into this solitude and emptiness regarding their faculties and activity, so that he might speak to their hearts, which is what he always desires . . . Yet these directors work, so that consequently it does not allow room for God's work and ruins and effaces through its own activity what he is doing.

Comparing one's guidance or direction of souls to an artist working on a canvass with great refinement and delicacy, St. John of the Cross lambastes a "spiritual director who happens along and who, like blacksmiths, know no more than how to hammer and pound with the faculties . . ."

And so he speaks further:

If you are only a hewer, which lies in guiding the soul to contempt of the world and mortification of its appetites; or a good carver consists in introducing it at holy meditations - and know no more, how can you lead this soul to the ultimate perfection of delicate painting, which no longer requires hewing or carving, but the work that God must do in it? (L.F. 7:43 and 58).

For these and many other typical characteristics, St. John of the Cross' exhortations on allowing a latitude of freedom to souls already past discursive meditation, may not readily apply - since the prior need for seminarians like this is a solid understanding of faith: a personal and reflective knowledge of the gospels and personal commitment to grow in the love of God. Nevertheless, since we are really

(Catholic guides) meeting their needs? Or, Buddhist gurus and Hindu sannyasis or Taoist masters are eager for dialogue with us -- are we adequately prepared? More than this, can we authentically witness to the truth of God at work in our own souls?

At this point I would like to mention Fr. Ruben Habito, S.J.'s helpful little book on "Total Liberation." It is a good enough introduction on Zen-Christian dialogue written especially from an Asian Christian point of view. We can say the same of its companion volume that Sr. Elaine has made (Sisters of Mercy) *Teaching Zen to Christians*. I regret however that Sr. Elaine has made a mis-evaluation of St. John of the Cross' works. Quoting even Fr. Anthony de Mello as having agreed with her on this matter, makes her error doubly regrettable, as she says:

John of the Cross defines contemplation as the emptying of all our spiritual and sense faculties. I have never been able to find this method for reaching this state of consciousness in his writings. To my knowledge, it is not contained in his books, and if there was an oral tradition it has died out. In one conversation I had with Fr. Anthony de Mello, he was of the opinion that the inquisition rampant at that time might have had something to do with the disappearance of the texts.

This is lamentable. First, because *Ascent to Carmel* and *Dark Night* are the most comprehensive text on apophatic theology, the discipline and annihilation of the sensory and spiritual faculties -- not to achieve a level of consciousness as the goal but to allow space for God -- but to be filled with God. All the writings of St. John of the Cross (including necessarily and climactically *The Spiritual Canticle* and *Living Flame of Love*) point succinctly, precisely, and lyrically on this exaltation of the soul to be transformed to become like God through the royal road to perfection which is the cross.

These and many other passages on spiritual direction point to St. John of the Cross as a master of souls. Of course, one can validly say all these statements were made in the 16th century spirituality with its emphasis on "contempt of the world," "mortification," and the "path of contemplation is solitude." It must be pointed out, however, that the stages of prayer, the ways, and nature of the spirit -- the life and the ways of God with a soul remain the same, no matter what the

historical times are. For the things of the soul and Spirit, the faculties and powers of man being universally human as well as eternal and loving preoccupation of God, who does have a solicitous and gratuitous love for every soul he has created -- all these are timeless and unchanging.

Yet, it is most reasonable to assess realistically the quality of our seminarians' equipment for the priesthood, vis-a-vis the demands St. John of the Cross makes on spiritual directors. Offhand and briefly, one can reasonably assert that in general, our seminarians do not have an adequate enough humanistic training (an education to humanities to ripen their reasoning and creative faculties). By and large, they come to the seminaries needing even solid and adequate catechetical education; therefore we can expect even less of the greatly needed basic religious experiences (a personal relationship with Jesus). It can also be reasonably argued that most of them come armed with only a pietistic orientation and a prayer -- life largely made up of popular devotions. This does not even reckon with those who come with a massive dose of religious distortions.

St. John of the Cross teaches, however, that the Cross or what he calls the "thickets of suffering" must be accepted and gone through, to achieve pure joy, which comes from pure wisdom, which in turn comes from pure suffering. This he terms sufferings united to those of Christ, in total surrender. They are sufferings (whether caused by one's sins or are God-given and purificatory) which are accepted in peace and hope because they are a participation in the sufferings of the Mystical Body and are redemptive for all mankind.

St. John of the Cross explains that it is this process of uniting one's self with Christ in suffering that brings one to his depths or ground of being and makes necessary the annihilation of one's intellectual and spiritual faculties through this act of faith, hope and love, where this kind of darkness (which is a mystery to the soul) becomes as clear as day and made totally acceptable. The soul thus gains *wisdom* because he begins to be filled with God's own presence. When this response of the soul becomes habitual, then the soul becomes totally transformed to become another Christ. This is why St. John of the Cross calls the cross "the royal road to perfection" -- the way of contemplative living which is always liberating and which makes of

us children of God enjoying the liberty of spirit granted to those who have thus been transformed.

Perhaps we can afford to take a second look at the nature of the relationship between a spiritual director and the directee for some suggestions on a course in direction.

As we have earlier said here, there are no clear lines; no norms, no rules. It is a relationship that God himself effects in both. The ways of the human spirit (on the natural level) and of the Holy Spirit are vastly different. Even more uniquely different is the specific relationship between the Holy Spirit and one particular soul. Granting there are universals of both the human spirit (any human being) and the spirit of God which we can refer to in a general way, yet the particular operation of grace in one person is at all times singular and original.

This is exactly the difficulty one faces in speaking of the qualities or nature of spiritual director-directee relationship, which essentially is always tri-dimensional, with God (as mystery of life, light and love), as the cementing and effectuating bond between them. Any meeting or session of the two persons involved is always an encounter with God: relationship is always a graced encounter, shrouded in their depths with the mystery inevitable in the workings of the Holy Spirit on the body/soul/spirit of each person.

But since our concentration now must be on the spiritual director, I will dare suggest just one of many ways to help the director feel more adequate in responding to the needs or the challenges they face. This way is quite unorthodox, but I speak from personal experience in making this recommendation.

Since personally experienced reality is the crucial factor in knowing one's capacities and wealth of being; and since the range of possible human and actual situations to be experienced is necessarily limited, I suggest an approach to real though vicarious experiences through an aesthetic orientation to reality: a habit of a long, loving gaze at beauty, goodness or truth: an experience of beholding, leading (with its spiritual sense of quest and desire for union) to adoration. And I humbly propose among others, a training in the humanities, principally.

The psalms comprehensively contain the vast range of human emotions and are mostly addressed to God. Exploring one's depth and going beyond the ordinary range of human perceptions, struggling to reach out to this God one can rightly fear but also tenderly seek out, one can truly find the psalms most instructive for disciplining of one's faculties. They can also provide existentially the venue for the experiences of the spirit.

Let each work become a global reality of thought and feeling. Take the psalms which can be experienced personally. Psalm 138 for example, can be used to explore the experience of one's personal relationships to God. Note some of these lines:

*O Lord, you search me and you know me
You know my resting and my rising
You discern when I walk or lie down.
All my ways are open to you.*

*Before ever a word is on my tongue
You know it O Lord, through and through
Behind and before You besiege me
Too wonderful for me this knowledge
Too high beyond my reach . . .*

*For it was you who created my being
Knit me together in my mother's womb
I thank you for the wonder of my being
For the wonders of all your creation . . .*

*O search me, God, and know my heart
O test me and know my thoughts
See that I follow not the wrong path
And lead me in the path of eternal light.*

Ps. 138 and 139:1-18

One can, in a classroom for example, ask the students just to take the first line thus:

- a. How do they understand the Lord's searching?
- b. What is to be "search into" by the Lord?
(explain this through sharing personal experiences).

- c. Then, in what sense have these first two stanzas been true with you?

Since the imperative is to taste or savor the quality of an experienced reality, then aside from poetry, one can profitably also use novels, short stories, plays and even films to exercise (dilate/contract; cultivate, explore) the faculties of the soul; will (and the range: height, breadth, depths of human emotions), intellect (understanding and reason), and memory (imagination, visualization, etc.). The important thing is to enable the directee to experience (though vicariously) all the ranges of love, hate, anger, sorrow, joy, fear, guilt etc., and to see the situation as happening to him -- since in his actual pastoral ministry he will have to relate to and transcend, to "direct" all kinds of human situations.

More important also is that the usually minimal, if not adverse, effect of advice or counsel or exhortation is supplanted, if not made necessary, by an obviously more objective yet more penetrating and enduring, experience, that is a training in feeling and understanding. (Illustrate by using one example of each). It is in this course (6 months) that a creative teacher and a selective reading list (for analysis and discussion and reflection) are most needed.

As I earlier mentioned, I'd like to cite one concrete instance of such material. In fact I would humbly recommend this literary classic to be included in some courses on formation for spiritual directors.

I refer to George Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*. It can be very insightful to work out a case study of both the young priest assigned to an outlying village, his first assignment since ordination, and of an older, veteran priest of the diocese Msgr. Cure d'Torcy. This latter, though not "assigned" as his spiritual director, actually acted as such throughout the novel (he paid him "domiciliary visits" as he called them). But the quality of their relationship can only be savored by reading the novel. Characterizing each of them and the nature of their friendship as priests cannot do justice to either of them nor to the author, Bernanos.

While an objection can be raised that his is a French novel, it must be stated also that the contextualization of the story is the most relevant today and anywhere. The psychological complexity of the relationship, the religious, social, cultural, economic and political

milieu of France in the 19th to the early 20th century is really much like ours. However, both characters are deeply human and are both immersed in their priestly commitment; they speak most vividly and probingly to our young and older priests today, anywhere.

Since the setting is in a village or parish, the novel also depicts unchanging patterns of parish (vis-a-vis priest or flock) responses from day to day - - much like what parishes in our cities or suburbs can be today.

But I also wish to offer another equally profitable case-study for a formation course. This time the setting is in a monastery in Russia from Dostoevsky's classic *The Brothers Karamasov* and in particular the director-directee relationship between Father Zossima and Alyosha.

Since we are truly concerned with what transpires in each person's soul - - tracing the ways of the human spirit and of the spirit of God in the director and the directee, it really matters little whether the setting is in a diocesan seminary or in an Orthodox Russian monastery. In both, it is the great universals of human spirit that hold sway. And these universals are true to all. These are the attributes and aspirations of people the world over, through the ages. They are what make people human, no matter what the race, religion, culture.

I have humbly suggested in all I have written my feminine intuition that Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, St. John of the Cross, and Fr. Thomas Merton together render very well this thrust of our contemporary consciousness toward convergence.

In fact in a little paperback *Nuclear Suicide or Adoration?* which we wrote on Sr. Elizabeth of the Trinity on her beatification in 1984, we dealt (Part I) on the Asian spiritualization process towards Christogenesis, which is taking place in all religions. We use Fr. Teilhard's five cycle of consistency, convergence, energy, spirit and person. Culture and civilization can be characterized generally as being in one cycle of the other according to the progress they have made in the *life of the spirit*. For example, we can say that our present preoccupation with the "convergence of eastern and western spirituality" is a recognition of the observable phenomenon that there have been enough currents of convergence in both spiritualities, to be able to hope that the next stage in mankind's progress is toward the cycle

of energy of the life-giving dynamic of vital centers of power, directed at the spiritual progress of men. This can take the form of a more universal appreciation of human life in people and the ecological life of nature; a celebration and gratitude for *life per se*. At this point it is good remember Jesus' admonition to the young man: "If you want to enter into *life*, keep the commandments" (Jn 17). This is unchanging. Already we acknowledge a universal thirst for peace, a universal abomination of war, and the preservation of our natural resources - all to promote, vitalize and preserve and enrich LIFE.

The next two cycles, when life shall have been more vigorously applauded and fittingly celebrated, will be the cycle of the *spirit*; and after this cycle of the *person*: Jesus: the mystical Christ: all being one in the PERSON.

While it is true of cultures and civilizations, it is also even more true of individual human beings. Each person can chart for himself, whether in his ongoing life-span he has been able to emerge from the cycles of 1) consistency (which to him can be the ordering of his life through his value system); 2) convergence (the growing integration of his body, mind and spirit unto wholeness); 3) energy (his vitality and exercise of his powers for a fuller celebration of life); 4) spirit (his growing maturity and deepening in the life of the spirit - how more truly deeply spiritual he has become, powered by his spiritual vision) and 5) the cycle of the person (whether in fact he has allowed Jesus Christ to transform his life through the Holy Spirit to enable him to achieve union with Christ: for the trinity to become the center of his life.

It is when we can have more and more people in the country, culture or civilization who are ruled by the *spiritual values* (whatever be their religions) and living out a self-oblation life for others, that we can sense more sensitively the progress all mankind is making toward the omega point - the parousia.

Fr. Bede Griffiths, Benedictine monk who now runs Shantivanam (the Benedictine ashram or prayer-house left by Fr. Jules Monchanin and Fr. Henru le Saux, also a Benedictine) has been in India for more than thirty years and has published significant works on Hinduism and Christianity. His more recent work *The Marriage of East and West* explains more succinctly his ripened insights on eastern and western prayer styles. One may consider this statement

as expressive of the quality of his tentative conclusion: "The age of western domination is over and the future of the world lies not in western Europe and north America but in Asia and Latin America." Summarizing his theology of east-west convergence, he says: "But if east meets west at the deepest level of human consciousness, it will be an encounter between two fundamental dimensions of human nature - male and female: the male representing the dominant, aggressive masculine rationalist mind of the west; and the feminine intuitive, passive and receptive, mind of the east" - this latter he acknowledged as having largely "shaped the culture of Asia, Africa and tribal peoples everywhere. The eastern Churches have retained something of an oriental character but are still dominated by the Greek mind.

As he had earlier said: "Greek culture under the direction of Rome permeated eastern and western Europe and built up a unique culture in which the genius of Greece and Rome blended with the Semitic culture of the Christian religion. But at the renaissance, this harmony was lost, the dominant aggressive culture of the west took charge . . . and remains in a state of permanent imbalance . . ." All the Christian Churches, eastern and western have to turn to the religions of the east - to Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism; the subtle blend of all these in oriental culture and to the deep intuitions of tribal religion in Africa . . . to evolve an authentic form of religion.

In a most humble way (considering I am no scholar in this field) my feminine intuition anchored in my Asian roots but greatly benefiting from the western education, will not allow me to go so far and definitively so. I think the history of western mysticism - of the early Church fathers and the tribe of Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, Tauler, Suso, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and other mystics and too, mystical poets who have beautifully demonstrated a cosmic or nature mysticism in the Christian tradition, points more challengingly and fruitfully to a needed return to the roots and traditions of western mystical tradition and there see the God-given harmonious, natural blending of both the male and female powers of the universal human person. Nothing less than a global (east-west) phenomenology of culture can assure our continuing growth towards a oneness in mind, heart and will for our universal fulfillment.

Prayer of our Being

The exhortation of the Lord, later repeated by St. Paul to be always vigilant, to pray ceaselessly, has ever been taken literally by the contemplative souls of all times. In the east, as well as in the west, the Christian ideal is continual prayer.

The hesychasm of the Oriental Church is something more than a simple method; it is one of the traditional efforts for carrying out the exhortation of the Lord without abatement. Synchronized with throbbing, the prayer of the heart permits the contemplative to live praying. Breathing is just the other side of prayer - and vice versa.

Apart from this predominantly anthropological aspect, though note merely psychological, another tradition of continual prayer exists in a diffused way, which we would call ontological. It underlies most of the theories and practices of prayer.

When St. Augustine speaks of love as weight - *amor meus pondus meum* - when St. Gregory the great is pleased to describe the burden of flickering - *mutabilitatis pondus* - when St. Bernard speaks of the constitutive tension of the realm of inauthenticity - *regio dissimilitudinis* - when St. Thomas writes on the dynamism - *desiderium* - of nature as well as of grace, to cite only a few of the fathers and doctors of the west (this would be even easier in the east), they start from this conception of continuous prayer as an underlying presupposition. W. R. Inge also wrote that "the essence of mysticism ... is just prayer." I shall try to describe in brief this Christian prayer.

Prayer is something more than action. Prayer as an action is actualized by something anterior to and more internal than action. The act of praying is rather the effect of praying as a habit, as mode of being, although an inverse repercussion may take place later; the act of praying may reinforce the life of prayer. But this is not all. Prayer is more than a mere habit, a contingent manifestation of our mode of being. It is not a simple disposition of our nature, of grace. All of this is certain, but it is neither the whole nor the profound truth.

Christian life as life, as Christian existence, in itself is prayer. And I would say the same for any human life - but I am restricting myself to the Christian tradition. The Christian being at the same time just and sinner - *simul justus et peccator* - exists in this very tension between the weight of love and the burden of sin, between the

aspiration of the spirit and the desire of the flesh, as it is put in the favorite expression of Pope St. Gregory and the medieval monks echoing St. Paul. In other words, prayer is the awareness of our own itinerant being, the experiential discovery of our pilgrim being, of our state of wayfaring; it is the recognition of the ontological urge of our own existence, already and not yet fully - as much as we also belong to the "place" of our origins. Moreover, prayer is the personal and somehow incommunicable experience that our itinerant condition is to some extent no longer so, because it has been surpassed, conquered by one who has triumphed over death. The second death has no more power over us (John the Evangelist). It is all in one, that "touch" (St. John of the Cross) which let us realize that the way and the goal have already met within us, that we are, to be sure, pilgrims, but coming back, returning as it were from where we have yet never been "before" - although we "were" and are there. Going, returning and being - being-coalesce. Prayer is the sharing of the divine life within us.

For a life of constant prayer, a Christian need not add anything to life. It is enough to remove obstacles. The genuine aspiration of our being, the authentic dynamism of our own existence, our essential thirst for the divine cannot emerge if we are attached to creatures, if our love is "curved" as the school of St. Victor would say. It is just the same comments of St. John of the Cross, to be attached by the heavy chains (of vice) as by the thin thread of a spider. Unless the soul breaks it she cannot fly. In a word, we do make ourselves free from the burden of dissimilarity if we are not possessed by humility, i.e. by truth. We cannot possess truth, as St. Thomas reminds us, but truth can possess us.

To pray is to emancipate oneself; it is a real liberation. It comes to unfastening the strap, to detaching oneself from all contingent events, to throwing the ballast of sin over the edge of our creatureliness. To pray is to aspire, but it is neither psychological desires nor sentimental caprice, nor the fickleness of the sinful creature; it is rather the same aspiration of the entrails of our being, the very ontic inclination that constitutes us, the gravitational force of our existence. To pray is to live, to reach the level of the specific Christian life. Prayer is this dynamism which is inserted in this heart of a being that has yet to reach its real being, it is this tearing up that makes us cry out in the ineffable groans (as St. Paul says), because we are still not

God, because we have not reached the divine yet, because we are still at a good distance and possibly we may stumble on the way. To pray is to love, as love on this earth is urge by our existence. To pray is to hope, because our shortsighted being moves only by hope. To pray is to suffer, because of the divine impact in the painful passivity of suffering, produced by the call of the mystery that uproots our attachments, which we feel are part of our being. To pray is to live, inasmuch as the genuine Christian life is the movement of our entire being towards the infinite divine light.

Constant prayer, then, is not interrupted as in breathing, but is continuous like being itself. Any Christian "act" (*actus humanus*, not *hominis*) is prayer. Prayer is the authentic attitude of our being. Life is desire, aspiration, movement and longing. God is the end and prayer is the way. But the way would be no way if the end were not there. It is the goal that makes the way. A no-thoroughfare is not a way. When our being is no more than our "desire of God" (in double sense of the genitive, objective and subjective) and is not corrupted by the pseudo-ontic crust of sin (not defiled by the *conversio ad creaturas*, by falling down to things) our life, then, is prayer.

I am not repeating traditional sentence - although I would prefer to speak of aspiration rather than of desire. We pray inasmuch as we are. (Thus the complete powerlessness of man in respect to praying: we cannot pray beyond what we are - and we cannot be beyond what we pray). We are, on the other hand, as much as we pray. (From that comes the omnipotence of the praying soul. We can do and be everything our prayer is - and our being is.) Christian prayer is constant: it has no more hiatus than those of our own being. It is not only the heart's respiration, it is the palpitation of our own being, the incessant rhythm at the beat of which we are divinized, the highs and lows of the ravishing love to the sound of which we sing the same chords of our being the *sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* of the creation and of the Trinity.

SR. TERESA JOSEPH PATRICK
OF JESUS, O.C.D.

CONVERGENCE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUALITIES IN AN EXPERIENCE

WHAT I HAVE TO OFFER TO you is about the convergence of eastern and western spiritualities in my own experience within a spiritual context of inter-religious dialogue for the past twenty years.

This experience consists of personal life-experiences, participation in collective life-experiences, observations and readings confirmed by the latter.

I intend to share with you in the areas of

- (1) the means and process of communication;**
- (2) the quest for God;**
- (3) the effort in this quest;**
- (4) other considerations such as suffering, nature, unity and emptiness.**

I shall then conclude with a few personal reflections.

I have to define the range of this experience, which I cannot do without touching upon something personal.

I was not a born Catholic. My parents were Chinese, therefore have their mentalities formed by a tradition made up of the influence of the three main religions in China, namely Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism.

Ever since I was baptized, however, I always have had a strong desire to be made an instrument for letting the brothers of other religions know Christ, and at the same time, of having the Church on the whole discover the immense spiritual and religious wealth in these religions.

My involvement, then, with the Focolare Movement, becoming one of its consecrated members, introduced me to a wide range of contacts, dialogue and life-experiences, wherein I have never ceased to perceive the convergence of the two spiritualities. These include a formation period during which I was a lone easterner, formal contracts with people of other religions, collaboration in inter-religious youth activities, teaching experiences in the course of dialogue, service experiences in bishops' meetings and sharings with religious in the same interest field.

My first conclusion of these experiences is that while they reveal convergences of the spiritualities, they also bring to light the possibilities of mutual enrichment, perhaps also as a consequence of the convergence. Obviously, this is to be augured at all times. In my personal experience, pluralistic interactions and exchanges do give rise to an enrichment in cultural, a religious and spiritual personality, and this takes place in the defined as is proportionate to my capacity and experiences of being able to participate in, share with, and assimilate other traditions — cultural, religious and spiritual.

1. The Means and Process of Communication of Spiritualities

Here I have been confronted with considerations for the representation of the object of belief, the respect for the inspired Word, the

language used, the problem of translation, and the ultimate and supreme need for witness.

The basic starting point in representing a spirituality would be the object of belief. Since many of the eastern spiritualities are concerned with an impersonal Being, while the western ones direct themselves to a personal God, there are obvious and immediate differences in the communications of the two categories of spiritualities. Whenever there is an effort to overcome such differences with explanations, one can easily blame the other for over-speaking, simply because the categories for getting ideas across are not there, or are not easily found.

However, it is joyfully right here that I, among many for sure, have discovered valid "ways and means" for "getting across to each other."

The first would be the going back to the original "word," whether it be "divine," "inspired", or of the founder of a particular belief or religion. We can certainly see this in the deep respect sacred books enjoy in general and how they apparently, though in different manners, point to the same truths.

Notwithstanding this common characteristic, there is always another, which the cloud language casts over attempts to express mystical experiences with the object of belief. In order to perceive each other, those of different spiritualities, should "return to what words leave unspoken," as Heidegger suggests.

But for a communication of spiritualities between the East and the West, the spoken word is inevitable at times, and therefore translation is necessary. Here, I have experienced that some kinds of religious experiences are bound to the historical and cultural setting of a particular religion and defy at times, any possible, not to say exact translations. To capture these other spiritualities, one needs to live them out, not in the same way the original author lives them out, but in a spiritual manner, to the utmost possible depth, according to one's religious tradition.

It is, then, in the realm of authentic spiritual experiences with the Divine or the Absolute Being that the eastern and western spiritualities find and meet each other, not so much in the mutual

book-knowledge of each other. In speculations they easily drift apart, but sincere witness of true interior life always gets across, for two persons communicating with each other through witnessing, even, and above all, without words, will definitely succeed in being each transparently similar representation/explanations of the particular object of belief and veneration. It is here that the invocation of the Holy Names draws and uplifts. Christians may say, but above all, live out that "God is close to us, he is in our lives; the Holy Spirit-infused love penetrates our being and is incarnate in us." Buddhists are aware, but usually make others become aware, of the Buddha being "the source of spiritual life in us;" and Taoism boasts of the "man of Tao." All this necessarily demands a silence to oneself in order to be untarnished "life-expressions" of the spirituality of one's own belief. Silence and life therefore. Silence: in order to be genuine condensation of life, as all sacred books are.

2. The Quest for God

The manner of relating with the Personal God, and the manner of approaching the Absolute Being.

Although the word "impersonal" is quite generally used to describe the Absolute Being, some founders of religions do betray expressions not devoid of a vaguely "personal relation" with the Absolute Being.

A. You and I, as Christians, believe in God's love, and try to do God's will in order to love him in return, and we do this concretely by loving him visibly and practically in our neighbors.

An experience of mine with a Buddhist, one atomic bomb survivor at Hiroshima, has it that he had experienced an immense love of God-Buddha for him. He felt he was loved and accepted with his suffering, and, that he could thus accept his fate, and begin to "love" (perhaps to have compassion for) other people as a good Buddhist.

Taoists and Confucianists both about doing the will of heaven, though that sounds vague to some; Confucius said, "If you cannot

serve man, how will you ever credibly be able to serve the Spirits?"

My father was a convinced Confucianist, and quite a diehard one at that, though he was very open to the idea of reading Christian sacred books, which he had done. In one experience with him, I was clear in expressing my faith, and concrete about my love and constant with my concern for him; it turned out that he accepted, became convinced of, and understood my faith. In the end, he also embraced my faith.

It is quite clear that one can find some points of convergence in the above.

B. Though followers of eastern spiritualities adhere to the idea of an impersonal Absolute Being, I have been able to observe that they strive to attain their object of belief/veneration. Though we cannot say that they technically seek a personal relationship with the impersonal Absolute Being, there is always a strong inclination towards it, and a description of this inclination often makes use of images usually only applied to personal relationship. We can surely quote Lao Tsu who allegedly said, "I cherish being nourished by my mother's breast." Sakyamuni used the fable of the deer and its mother to depict the deep compassion to be had.

In the daily life of the adepts of these spiritualities, my observation is that they turn to their gods as if they were real persons, who they believe, also answer them. We may say that there is the presence of animistic belief in their practice of religion, be it Taoist or Buddhist. But the demarcation line is never all that clear. Perhaps, without an incarnate God, their Absolute Being appears too much beyond reach or grasp so that they do not dare at all describe a kind of personal relationship with it.

Let me turn again to the Taoist. In the Tao Te Ching, we read that the Tao cannot be spoken of, yet it is said to be everywhere, available as a master, and can be acquired. Taoists also talk about the Tao inside you. Buddhists talk about Buddhahood, Buddha nature, almost the presence of Buddha within them, and they believe in this and strive to be aware of this presence, and acquire such nature.

It is my belief that though many eastern spiritualities spring from an impersonal Absolute Being, the followers of most of this do

in some way love and are capable of returning love. *And we find each other in love; in this our shared quest for God.*

C. I have also noticed a clear awareness of the presence of God of the Absolute Being in the Community. This is so in the Sanghas. I have also seen the members of the Risscho-Kosei Kai discuss with their superiors, and show deep respect for them, almost as if they carried grace, (in Buddhist terms, of course), and as if they were presences of all the Lord Buddha, himself. They discuss things among themselves, too, and respect decisions thus taken. These instances definitely find parallels in western Christian spiritualities.

In fact, the tendency to strive towards holiness in the collectivity may be an emphatic inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Fellow Human Being is at least a useful occasion commitment. The Buddhist Satta renders service to the still suffering transient beings, including humans; the man of Tao helps other realize Tao, the Christian saints always link God to man and man to God; the Confucian sage is a public servant. We can quote many sayings from the sacred books, too.

3. The Effort in the Quest for God

While western spiritualities may appear more active or aggressive, they share a lot of aspects in their quest for God with the eastern spiritualities in the attainment to the Absolute Being. This can be seen in monasticism. Both categories of spiritualities would advocate detachment effort without ado, striving without desire, putting up an all-out effort as if everything is dependent only on ourselves and then leaving everything to God as if everything depended upon only him. We often hear Chinese say, "What counts more is to cultivate not so much to harvest." Or, if a more religious saying is desired, "We must aim at going beyond this phenomenal world of changes, beyond this realm of worldly affairs."

I have certainly acted for years only with this mentality, and after some years of spiritual community experience in the West, by comparison and contrast, I have found that the Chinese and many Easterners abide with such a mentality.

Another thing that I have observed is a common emphasis on living the present moment, working with what it has to offer, for anything outside of this is beyond possible reach, and striving to such, is definitely futile.

Christians tend to orientate or dedicate consciously their actions moment by moment to God. They listen to the voice of the Spirit within themselves. It is in this way that they can also build up their union with God.

Buddhists strive to be mindfully aware of their acts in every single moment, and they gain merits for that.

Confucianists believe and adhere to the fact that haste only alienates or deviates one from the proper course of things.

Taoists with their "non-ado" clearly never bother about what is beyond the present.

Not to be ignored is a trend to make concrete life-experiences and to share them afterwards with others.

Buddhists of my acquaintance always relate their day-to-day experiences to each other and to us in our joint meetings, even with a certain insistence, with an aim, perhaps of demonstrating, the pedagogical efficacy of the Dharma being a summary/synthesis of the enlightenment experience of the Buddha, as a result of their "Relationship" with the Eternal Buddha, and as milestones of their becoming in the course of time the embodiment of the Buddha.

I would not hesitate to mention this as one point of convergence to the collective spirituality present in the spiritual movements in the Church today. After all, we may also say that the Christian scriptures are an account of the true relationship of God with men, of his incarnation, and of the life of the Blessed Trinity. Naturally, we have more to it; at least, our lived-out experience of the Gospel represents, to a certain degree, a way of the entry of Christ, into our soul.

I have found similar trends in Confucianists and Taoists, too. Apart from the fact that this trend was originally initiated in their canons, although to a lesser extent.

Naturally, it is not surprising at all that in prayer life, there is much in common between the eastern and the western spiritualities.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of an inclination to interiority, to ecstasy, to the life of the Spirit, in both camps. What is more notable are the exchange visits of monks to the monasteries, during which they somehow attempt to make similar experiences of prayer. I feel that Christian mystical prayer can easily be compared with Zen Buddhist meditation, because both seek a quiet, recollected inner state of spiritual depth, naturally with the difference of the efforts to arrive at a link with the object of mysticism. (Christian prayerfulness through silence arrives at union with God.)

At any rate, all seek to go deep down within the self to listen to the "voice." In this process, Buddhists talk about the silencing of the self to reach Nirvana, Taoists mention and practice the polishing, and the forgetting of self, in order to reach out to "wuwei" and to attain Tao. Confucianists regulate their desires so as to eventually know the will of heaven and act accordingly, as fully as possible.

I was more than once struck by the ritual prayer of Shinto elders, which drew attention of the faithful to the voice of nature and thus come to a certain silence as a result, which I experienced.

4. Other Considerations:

Suffering

In eastern spiritualities, which extend easily right down to the daily life of the masses, the attitude towards suffering is often one of submission, acceptance, tolerance and perhaps of utility. Suffering is taken as something that qualifies one in life (the Chinese saying goes this way: "Only when one has undergone the greatest of sufferings, can he be qualified as a superior man."), a possibility for accumulating merits (Buddhists, Pure Land Sect), and as something that has a vicarious function. Perhaps, that is the reason why suffering, unless and until unbearable, is easily kept to the individual only. To an easterner like me, in my early spiritual experiences with the westerners, a little suffering would be mentioned, talked about, and very often "causes alarm."

Easterners may seem to try to "eliminate" or avoid suffering, but they also attempt to "purify" it, not only pessimistically, but also

constructively. I had once dialogued with a Buddhist who said "his suffering was transformed through the love of God-Buddha into love for his neighbors," and more significantly, "the Crucified and Forsaken Christ in your experience, is something we can accept expressed in Christian words, and the most important thing in life."

Christians transform suffering into love because it is in suffering that they encounter the forsaken Jesus in the maximum expression of his love for them; while some Buddhists, in their own words, "purify suffering into compassion," "like the sorrow of Mary."

There is a common attitude of offering one's suffering for others, whether out of compassion or of love for others.

A Catholic bishop-scholar once said that both Christian and Buddhist suffering lead to self-emptying; but while Buddhist arrive at nothingness and do not go any further, Christians reach the nothingness of Jesus Christ and go beyond it, with him, onto the Resurrection.

Nature

Eastern and western spiritualities further come together in their consideration of Nature.

It is taken as a masterpiece of God, a dwelling-place of the gods (in Shinto), and a master from whom we can discover the action of God, and from whom we can learn.

That is why the Taoists are lost in this the utmost manifestation of the Tao, and say that we must "return to nature." In Chinese characters, nature literally means "self-so," after which the Tao models: Tao is the only entity that models after itself. This consideration may recall such phrases as "I am who am," and the expression of St. Augustine: "self-same."

Taoist paintings often depicts man immersed in nature: they represent the in-experience of the man of Tao, and unfailing offer chances of reflective meditation.

I need not mention the experience with the Zen Buddhists. They actually start their whole story with the episode of Sakyamuni looking at a flower and showing a smile.

Unity

With time, there seems to be a greater convergence of goals. Both spiritualities have witnessed greater openness towards society, so that religion in both the East and the West render more and more social services. I have observed this both in Hongkong, with Mahayana Buddhism, and even in Thailand, with Theravada Buddhism. This occurs to such an extent that at times, there seems to be a little insistence on a particular explicit religious motivation. In my opinion, this is a good sign showing a common concern to strive towards unity.

A Buddhist friend of ours has said, "All humanity should be united so that history can be made 'supernatural,' which will be achieved when people are enlightened about their deepest self, their ultimate reality." In him and in many others, there is a common conviction that each, based on his own experience, can work together with the others for the goal of a more united world.

And then, "unity is not a political task, but a spiritual one and this requires a revolution in spirituality, where the ego-centeredness becomes other-centeredness."

These observations of our friends perhaps indicate that there is an extended goal of spiritualities, that of working for unity.

Emptiness - The Feminine Figure

A joyous discovery in my experience with non-Christians is the presence of a feminine figure nearly everywhere to whom devotion is due.

There is the "god of the valley" in Taoism, and Buddhists speak most often of emptying oneself, of being a "womb" of the spiritual life. They are interested in the idea of Mary being empty herself, and the

desire of many Christians to be filled, like Mary, with a new life and to give birth to that new life in the world.

Reflections and Conclusion

This rough and hasty presentation may contain many, if not all of the facts which are already over-familiar to you. Perhaps my attempt has been only that of presenting them collectively to you.

The convergences are indications of commonalities on which we could work together, please forgive my probably undue enthusiasm for inter-religious dialogue.

For the convergences, meantime, are sufficient to show that God in his own bountiful goodness has always disseminated truths in the heart of humanity, even outside the visible boundaries of the institutional Church, in a manner known only to his Divine Wisdom.

Where convergence takes place, I would say that there is already the beginning of an ongoing deeper revelation of the reality the Christ-event is the totality of human experience: "I am the way, the truth, the life." As a Christian, I feel that I have to be the incarnation of the Christ-event in order to enhance the continuity of this revelation in both time and space.

Besides, the divergences may only be a matter of form, which, I believe, in the fullness of time will disappear. Further, knowing our differences only facilitates a more profound and sincere meeting.

For missionary purposes, may I venture to say that today, as yet, we may have to plant the seed-word, but not so much the humanly cultivated seedling, rich with forms that can easily and perhaps must necessarily be eliminated to keep to the purity of the Good News-Witness.

STEPHEN LO

SPIRITUALITY OF WORK

SOME MONTHS AGO, a group of priests and a seminarian from the Focolare gave a recollection to the Benedictine monks of San Beda in Manila. Not many know about this retreat. I am sure this is the first time it is ever mentioned in public. But I would say it was an unusual event. Because not very often, if it was not for the first time, are diocesan priests asked to give a retreat to religious, and to a supposedly spiritual group, at that.

This morning I am asked to talk on the spirituality of work. I think this theme is best expounded by a Benedictine. It is with hesitation, therefore, that I accepted this task. On the other hand, I am happy to have been given this responsibility. Because it is a recognition that we diocesan priests can also talk about other matters beside secular things: that we have also spiritual experiences to share.

And this in fact is what I will do. My talk will not be a treatise on work. There are many materials about this theme. What I will share this morning are the experiences on work of four years in the Formation Year Program. In other words, how the seminarians in the FYP have been helped to mature, spiritually or humanly, by manual labor.

The Formation Year Program started in 1985. From the initial stage, work was conceived to be a fundamental or integral part of the program. Why so?

The Pedagogy of Work

Why manual labor is an integral part of the Program and how work helps in the seminarians' formation.

1. *Work, a participation in God's original design for creation*

Work is an essential component of human life. Pope John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens* says: It is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth (#4). In other words, work is a constitutive condition of human nature. And this is so, not as punishment for sin, (as is often believed), but as a necessary way of reflecting the divine image. For when God manifested himself for the first time, in the Bible, he did so as creator, i.e., as worker. In working, therefore, man comes close to the original design of God for him - a worker like God himself. When he sent his Son into the world, he chose a laborer as his foster father. Work, we can say, is God's original design for man and was part of the formation program of Jesus in Nazareth.

When I was appointed director, among the things I conceived to be part of the "structure" of the program was manual labor. So the Program uses work as an integral tool of formation. For God himself had designed work to the natural predisposition of the human condition.

2. *Manual Labor, a way to identify with the poor*

The Philippines is economically a poor country. A good percentage of our people live on the poverty line. There is need, as our bishops have always emphasized, for the Church to have a particular love for the poor, who compose the majority of our people. The Church, in fact, must not only be for the poor but be a poor Church.

And so seminary formation must have among its fundamental direction the formation in poverty. The seminarians must learn to live a lifestyle of simplicity and be trained in the spirit of sharing. And so in the formation Year we do manual labor. It is our way to identify ourselves with the poor and live their normal daily experience. It is part of the formation in the life of poverty.

What work do we do? For one, we go to market. Here early in the morning, begins the first formation process of the day. Just to wake up or not is, in fact, already a major decision. (For some, a decision more serious than becoming a priest). In the implications, one enters into the business environment with all the implications. And one is confronted with poverty. We have been offered a refrigerator, either donated *gratis et amore* or at a low price, but we have opted to do without one. Because the daily market experience is an indispensable and more enriching source of formation.

We also cook our meals. We have common laundry. And we do other household chores. Most Philippine seminaries do not put a premium on manual work as a formation tool. In fact, many seminarians find seminary life comfortable. There is a little bit of manualia, like house-cleaning, but this is taken either as a burden or as a recreation; sometimes, it is given as a form of punishment, or it is considered as a minor work schedule which is easily dispensed with. In the FYP, manual work is an indispensable part of the daily *horarium*. It is presented as a way to value manual labor because it is one way to go back to their roots, since most of our Filipino seminarians come from manual-laboring families.

(Note: Manual labor, of course, is not the exclusive or identifying condition of poverty. In other countries, it is a good paying job. But in the Philippines, manual work is the typical description of the poor man's condition.)

3. *Work, a way to personality integration*

God created man a unified being. He is created one with God, one with nature, one within himself and with others. But because of the envy of the evil one, division (*demonein* in Greek) broke this

original unified harmony. So we observe universal phenomenon of dichotomized existence.

One way to bring back the original design of unity is through the approach of St. Benedict's *ora et labora*. When a monk tills the soil, he becomes one with nature and this wonderful intimacy he chants in the liturgy (which in its Greek etymology means work). Anything the monk does is a work for God. The Divine Office, in fact, is considered, in the Rule of Benedict, as the monk's work *par excellence*.

The phenomenon of fragmented behavior is also observable among seminarians. He is one personality in the chapel, another in the classroom and during apostolate. He behaves differently before his superiors and when he is with peers. The FYP emphasizes that life is integral and man is a unified being. What integrates man and his human actions is love. Whatever act when done in love is a single movement of response to God who is love. So the seminarian is taught to work out of love. And learning to do things in love he recovers the constitutive unity of his personality.

4. *Manual work, a formation in collaboration and solidarity*

There is a tendency among secular priests to be individualistic. Even the so-called "spirituality of the secular priest" seems to emphasize his individualism as the difference with the religious who lives in community, his capacity to live alone and by himself. Seminary formation also tends to reinforce this concept, but the sign of the times is solidarity and interdependence, and the definition of the Church is *communio*. John Paul II, in fact, emphasizes the concept of interdependence to its intercontinental dimension which, he said, must be accepted as a moral obligation. "We are responsible to one another and to all" (SRS #3).

The FYP aims to train seminarians towards the mentality of unity and collaboration. Manual work is one medium. It is always emphasized that the aim of our work is not so much efficiency as to develop the capacity for team-work. To this end, they are divided into groups and the group is changed many times so that they can relate with as many diverse personalities as possible.

5. *Work in the FYP - an expression of our inner transformation*

Our formation house is an old building, a little bit dilapidated. At the beginning of each formation year, I compare our work in the Formation House with the rebuilding of St. Francis of the chapel of San Damiano. It was, he realized, symbolic of his reformation on the Church. So it is with us in the formation year. As we clean the house, we are in effect also transforming ourselves.

6. *Work, a formation process in emotional maturity*

One of the difficult chores in the Formation House is the kitchen assignment. This covers the marketing and the preparations for the three meals. An added feature to the already burdensome task is our cooking "apparatus" which, according to the observation of a German-seminarian visitor is very primitive. Wood is used for the fire and once fire is started the whole kitchen area becomes fiery hot. Because of the heat, the diverse personalities and the consequent ways of doing things, and other irritants, trivial or otherwise, identifiable or imagined - all these and many more cause to heat their emotions and overpower their supposedly theological minds. So there is friction. How the seminarians are able to resolve and manage their conflicts is a challenge to their emotional control. Work indeed puts them in a situation where their capacity to handle a crisis is put to test.

It has also been observed that growing up children who are exposed to work mature faster than those whose parents keep them from hardships and pains of life. As "surrogate" parents, we seminary formators perhaps may also be overly protective. We should teach the seminarians to appreciate the value of sufferings and difficulties for these are crisis situations which are crossroads for growth decisions. Pain or dying, after all, is the principle of being; it is the climate or environment that nourishes faith (Jn. 12:24). This is true in the supernatural life as it is true and valid as a biological, psychological or spiritual principle. Manual labor can be used as a formation tool in emotional maturity. Our experience in the FYP attests to this.

7. *The redemptive value of work*

Most seminarians come from working class families. Many had worked in the fields and some under even subhuman conditions. Work is not something new to most. But work for them was without meaning then. It was a burden and for many, an oppressive condition. When they entered the seminary, they come into a formation program where manual work was not given a high premium. So, manual labor, where already it had no meaningful value in the seminary, lost its attraction altogether.

The FYP hopes to give back to manual work its sublime meaning, and to the seminarians a new way of working. One point which has been "popular" in bringing about the appreciation for work is its redemptive significance. The FYP has taught the seminarians to make their work as an offering to God and when the task is hard to unite their "sacrifice" to the Passion of Jesus. Thus they learn to put meaning to their work and discover a new joy which before they may not have experienced. For now they realize that work or sacrifice offered as an act of love acquires an eternal value and becomes a channel of grace.

Love, the leitmotif of our work in the Formation Year

In the 5th century, when people in Europe almost stopped working, God inspired St. Benedict with the charism of *ora et labora*. Through the effort, and, we should say, the spirituality of the Benedictines, European culture was preserved, or more accurately, developed. It is not without grateful reason, therefore, that Benedict is recognized as the Patron of European culture.

Today we observe an opposite extreme. Work in our times has become the consummate obsession. The prevalent motto seems to be *labor vincit omnia*. While work is indeed a value, it is not the ultimate value. For work in itself can be impersonal and oppressive. It can be done in bitterness and rancor. One can work grudgingly and in mediocrity. In short, work can be dehumanizing.

And so *labor vincit omnia* is not the absolute principle. The original design is more *amore vincit omnia*. For God is love! And everything in creation is expression of his fatherly love. And so it is that work in the FYP is viewed always under the over-all light or general theme of the Formation Year Program, viz, as part of the formation in love. For the aim of Christian formation, and hence of seminary formation is to be transformed in Jesus Christ: to become, like Jesus, loving, compassionate, humble. And in the FYP, work is intended precisely as part of this formation in service, compassion and humility.

Let me quote from the FYP guideline:

"Work in the FYP is an integral part of the program. But work is not an end in itself. Based on the leitmotif of the program, it is only a pretext to foster mutual charity; it is only a means to love. The various manual labor activities that we do are only opportunities for the seminarian to learn to work together in patience and mutual service. It is important to inculcate in them the gospel mentality that the mark of true discipleship is the witness of mutual charity. This cannot be emphasized enough because ironically the common complaint of our lay people is that priests do not seem to know how to live together. We forget that the first and true apostolate is the witness of reciprocal love. For this reason, in the FYP, we do not have 'outside' apostolate. Their apostolate is among themselves; how they are able to establish brotherly love. And work is an opportunity. Through manual labor, we learn to be patient with one another and to collaborate with diverse personalities. Love, therefore, is the basis of our work, and our work is our love made visible."

Conclusion: Work, a way to "communio"

When I was appointed FY director, my concern was to give the seminarians the experiences of community life. For the Church, being the reflection of the Blessed Trinity, is a "communio". And the priest, being a builder of a Christian community, must be a man of

communion and dialogue. So the Formation House must be the abode where the Trinitarian communion is lived. Indeed the Trinitarian relationship must be the model of our community life, which (relationship) we make present in our community be our mutual charity. As St. Augustine says: *vides Trinitatem si charitatem vides*. In the Formation Year, the formandi and the director must experience God as their common Father and the Holy Spirit who unites them as brothers in Jesus Christ.

And so if there is anything unique about the program it is its emphasis in living in constant and mutual charity in order to ensure the presence of Jesus in our midst. Everything that we must be motivated by our love for Jesus and in him among us. It is in the light of this "communio" that work in the Formation Year must be understood and carried out. Work, in other words, is only a means to enhance our community life and our mutual charity. Manual labor, in effect, is a pedagogical tool for us to grow in love.

Experiences of Members during the FYP

1. During the first months of the FY, I used to do things haphazardly. I did the assigned task out of a sense of duty, especially when I was assigned in the laundry. Remembering that every burden is light when accepted with love, I washed the clothes with care and thinking that my brothers will wear them, the task became easy. I realized too that Jesus lives in my brother and I have to give the cleanest clothes for him to wear.

2. Last week I was assigned to clean the pig pen. At first I refused. Then I remembered it was a way of losing my "little pleasure" for the sake of the brother who will do the job in my behalf. So I consented. But when I was starting work, I became so irritated. I discovered I was proud because I was saying to myself: *I never did this at home*. But I realized that if we allow God to enter into our history, great things occur. While I was cleaning the pig pen I decided to do the task for the whole week. Now I am convinced that anything can be done with joy when there is love, and ordinary things become extraordinary when done in love.

3. Our flower garden used to be a *camote* patch but now it is taking beautiful shape. In the beginning I was the only one who had interest in it. Gradually the others shared in the work and we have turned it into a "work of art."

4. For two days now we have been cleaning the Formation House and Fr. Alex keeps on reminding us that we are really "rebuilding the Church" from within us; like St. Francis our chapel is now beautiful. I believe Jesus sees it this way too. We have been waxing the floors and we have made a sanctuary lamp. I didn't sleep siesta this noon so I can polish the tabernacle.

5. For our laundry, we wash our personal things like socks, blankets, hankies. This morning I noticed two hankies wet but unwashed. Remembering that it was an opportunity to love the owner, I washed them with joy. I was happy because it was a service to the brother in my simple way.

6. To work now is to remember that Jesus through me is working. And so I try to make my work "perfect". And to enable my work to be perfect and not done haphazardly, I remember one principle: "Work with love." Now, I can cook as if Jesus were to eat the food. I clean as if Jesus were to live in the house. I wash as if Jesus were to wear the clothes ... etc. And so to love through work enhances not only my growth in interpersonal relationship but with God as well.

7. I am industrious, by nature. In fact, I consider myself a workaholic. But what used to motivate me was my sense of time which I did not want to waste. Now I learned to offer my work as an act of love for Christ and this has "psychologically" eased the burden of work.

8. Every time I work, I always make a decision that this particular work, of whatever kind, I am doing for love. Doing work in this perspective made me value its importance. Now I find it easier to work with others and for others. It is in this way that I find joy in work.

ALEX MEÑEZ

THE *HOW* OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Introduction: Who is a Good Director?

WHEN FR. EDUARDO HONTIVEROS, S.J., in March of 1970, called to ask me to come to San Jose Seminary, I was only one year back from graduate studies in the philosophy of science and in Southeast Asian Studies. The request surprised me because he wanted me to assist Father James McCann in the Spiritual direction of the seminarians, an area in which I had great interest but no training! After much prayer and consultation, my interest won out over my feeling of incompetence. I came to San Jose, "apprentice" under Fr. McCann - and have been here ever since. In fact, the assignment has led to a second parallel career teaching courses in pastoral theology at LST; and that in turn has led to the writing of several books in the area of spirituality.

I begin with this bit of personal history because many of us come to seminary spiritual direction with just as little formal preparation as I had. And we can feel - as I did - quite inadequate to the task. But I am convinced that my own experience is typical. Spiritual direction is an art, not a science. Courses and programs in psychology, spirituality and related fields can indeed be a great help. But when

all is said and done, one becomes a good director by (a) having the charism for it; and (b) by doing it. That is what I mean by calling it an "art." An art is learned by doing provided we have the charism: i.e., the love plus the natural talent for it.

For me, direction is probably the most fulfilling aspect of my whole priestly ministry. Since the sacrament of reconciliation is closely linked to spiritual direction, a beginner could recognize that "love" if he finds (as I do) that he is most a priest in the confessional. Thus it is fairly easy to test whether one has the love of which I speak - even before actually working as a seminary spiritual director. But what about "the natural talent"? That is the more difficult to recognize before one has actually wet his feet in the waters of direction.

One test, though, might be to see how "comfortable" you feel with the process of direction to be described in this talk. Does it sound like something you would enjoy doing and do reasonably well? Am I secure in my own identity and sense of self-worth? And, as a result, am I a good listener (to God and to people)? Is prayer important in my life, not only in theory but in practice? Am I able to be both frank and gentle, with myself as well as with others? If you could answer these questions with at least a partial and growing "Yes", I suspect you would have the charism to be a good director. To see why I say this, let us explore the process of direction in detail.

I. When Does Direction Begin?

There are various stages of seminary formation: high school, college and theology proper. At every stage spiritual directors are assigned to the seminary staffs. But, if I am not mistaken, the work of direction is only possible when young men reach a certain stage of self-awareness, and possess at least a minimal capacity to introspect and to probe their own inner depths. At what stage does this take place? In my experience, it would be about third year college. Individuals vary, of course; but in general that seems to be the age (about 17 or 18 in our culture, since elementary schooling normally lasts only 6 years) at which the young man begins to explore his own identity and to question his values and goals.

What then of appointing directors to high school seminaries? If such institutions survive into the future, the process of direction which I describe in this talk would not be possible - as will be clear from the pages to follow. At that early stage the "director" would be more of a "big brother" or a substitute father-friend. As such, however, he would still play a most important role in the lives of the boys. Since they are deprived (by the fact that they are in the seminary) of the close contact with, and a strong influence of, their own fathers at a crucial stage in their lives, it will certainly be important to their maturing - sexually, emotionally and spiritually to have a substitute father at that time.

The job would be a very challenging one, especially if a young priest is asked to be such a father-friend to thirty or fifty or even more high school boys, he would certainly have to be mature, masculine (not macho) and not possessive or exclusive in this love. He would have to have a very large heart if so many boys are to find a place in it at one time! Probably he should not be too young - since a 26 or 27 year old young man would rarely be mature enough to be a father to a teen-age son in "real life". As St. Thomas insists, "grace builds on nature"; thus in priestly formation, we cannot ignore the basic dynamics of normal human maturing - whether in the boys or in ourselves.

From all that I have said, is it even possible to be a real "spiritual director" (in the "father-friend" sense described) to high school boys? While I have some doubts, I certainly hope that it is possible. If not we may do a serious injustice and irreparable harm to many of the young boys whom we take away from their families at a critical age. If such a task is possible, then the high school "spiritual director" can also contribute much to laying a solid foundation for genuine spiritual direction at a later age. He can create in the boys the climate of openness and trust which will make real direction possible in college and afterward. Thus the following pages, while not directly applicable to direction in early adolescence, can provide the high school director with as sense of direction or purpose. Whatever he does with the boys should be ordered toward this goal: to facilitate genuine direction when they are more mature. As I stress whenever I speak to grade school teachers, while he cannot teach them everything at such an age, he should never teach them anything which is false, which will have to be unlearned later!

II. Choosing a Director

Let us assume, then, that we are speaking of the work of spiritual direction in theology, or at least in the upper years of college (philosophy). The young person is ready to look within himself, to examine and to choose for himself the values and goals of his life. It is at this point that the spiritual director becomes an important (perhaps the most important) person in his priestly formation. The director is a companion, a guide. Since none of us can be fully objective in viewing our own selves, we need the help of someone who can journey with us to self-discovery. Someone who can be both *simpatico* and objective at the same time.

When people ask me how to choose a spiritual director, I always mention four qualities to look for (1) someone who is *simpatico*, *ka-vibes*, on the same wavelength as myself - since direction is a friendship relationship, and thus requires a basic compatibility of temperament; (2) someone who believes in what I am seeking - in this case, in the priesthood, in celibacy, in prayer as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; (3) someone who can be objective - who loves me and yet does not become emotionally involved in my problems, since in that case we would have two people with a problem and no one to help; and finally (4) someone who is a bit ahead of me on the journey to the Lord. This last quality is ideal but not essential: i.e., one can direct another who is more mature or deeper than oneself, but it is much more difficult when one can only depend on books and theory rather than one's own personal experience. That, I suppose, is why I feel much more confident and secure in my direction as I get older. And it explains why "peer counseling," while it can be helpful, can never replace or eliminate the need for a good spiritual director.

From what we have been saying, it is clear that no one person could hope to be a good director for every seminarian. The chemistry of diverse personalities is crucial to the process. If direction were simply a question of commanding and obeying, or of providing facts and judgment, this might not be true. In fact, in that case a good computer might be the best director since it would be freer of mistakes and biases. But direction is a journey of discovery shared with a friend. It involves the directee in all of his uniqueness and with his whole personal history. For this reason, we at San Jose Seminary

have always found it important to give the seminarians a choice of directors. If that is done, the results can be quite fruitful and long-lasting; otherwise the direction-relationship is very likely to remain superficial and of little lasting value.

An important related consideration is confidentiality. The directee must believe that his sharing with the director is virtually under the seal of confession. The spiritual director, therefore, should not participate in faculty evaluations, or make recommendations, concerning his directee. As the directee should feel that talking to his director is equivalent to talking to himself. There is, indeed, need for structures of discipline and evaluation in a seminary. But they should never be confused or combined with the spiritual-direction relationship. The latter is also essential to solid formation. And the directee, if he is to be helped in the inner journey of which he spoke, must be able to be totally open to the director - an openness which will only be possible if he has complete trust that confidentiality will be scrupulously preserved.

III. How does Direction begin?

Granted that a seminarian has chosen a spiritual director according to the above criteria, let us begin to explore the direction-process itself. John Wright, S.J., describes it as "an interpersonal situation in which one person assists another to develop and come to a greater maturity in the life of the spirit, that is, the life of faith, hope, and love." In his very helpful article, Wright goes on to describe a process much like that implied in my discussion in the preceding section. Direction is not therapy, nor is it primarily a communication of information nor a giving of advice. Rather, as he goes on to say: "The primary function of spiritual direction is to provide assistance in two areas, that of clarification and that of discernment." The director, I would say, is a facilitator and co-discerner. As in all spiritual direction, the primary discerner is the directee himself. The director has a role much like that of John the Baptist: to facilitate an encounter between the Lord and the directee.

For this reason, I find it appropriate and helpful to begin the direction session with a spontaneous prayer for the Spirit's light and

grace - offered either by the directee or by myself. This creates the proper climate of openness to the Lord and of belief that it is his voice his enlightenment and advice - that we seek. Direction is a work of grace. It is not merely religious counselling, however helpful the latter may be. The simple practice of beginning with a prayer seems to be very effective. I find the seminarians respond generously to the prayerful mood thus created. Many of them, in fact, spend some time praying and reflecting just before our monthly meetings.

I also find it better to allow the directee to take the lead in our sharing. That is, I don't have a set of questions prepared nor do I follow a catechetical question-and-answer method. Some "drawing out" may be necessary at the beginning of our relationship. Many seminarians tell me they have never had a regular director and don't really understand how to proceed. Even then, however, I prefer not to ask too many questions. What I reply is that maybe our first need is to get acquainted. "So why don't you first tell me all about yourself - your family background, your previous studies, your interests and concerns, etc.?" That way I can get to know you. And, if you wish, I can tell you about myself, too." They usually share freely (and many remind me of my promise to tell them about my past!), so that our first session is almost entirely a getting-acquainted process. We don't do much real direction - but we do begin to become friends. And usually by the second or third session we are relaxed and comfortable with one another, and then the real "work of direction" can begin.

Let me underline the point about not asking too many questions nor having a pre-set pattern of topics. I try to be open and flexible, especially with more mature seminarians. Normally they know what in their lives needs to be discussed or discerned. Eventually, if I allow them to lead, the important topics are touched upon - though perhaps not all of them in every session. Usually certain areas of concern dominate any given monthly session; but over the year all the important areas are covered. And then our discussion of them is not artificial or forced but is a response to a felt need.

IV. The Word of Direction

We note earlier that John Wright sees spiritual direction as primarily intended "to provide assistance in two areas, that of clari-

fication and that of discernment." Discernment concerns discovering in prayer the way the Lord is calling us to act. It is, as I have written, "where prayer meets action." That is one reason why prayer is one of the most important topics or areas of exploration in direction. The seminarian needs to learn to pray, and to mature in prayer, not only for his own personal sanctification - but, equally importantly, that he may be able to "read the face of God," that will be his primary function as a priest: to be the mediator and interpreter of God in the lives of his people.

Wright also mentions "clarification". What he means here is, I believe, very much in the spirit of Carl Rogers' non-directive counseling. That is, people have within themselves the answers to many (most?) of their problems. But often they need the assistance of a good guide to articulate and explicate those answers. By "objectifying" their concerns in conversation with a trusted friend, they themselves can come to clarity about their own situation. Without espousing the whole Rogerian scheme, I can affirm that creative listening is the most important part of my work as a director: i.e., a listening which is open and responsive and helps the directee.

This assumes that our relationship is "adult-adult" and not "parent-child", in the famous terminology of Eric Berne (Games People Play) and Thomas Harris (I'm Okay, You're Okay). If I play the parent to the directee's child then he will not grow in maturity and personal responsibility. However good or wise my advice may be, the directee will merely be reacting (by submission or by rebellion) to my structures. Only by the patient process of creative listening, in which I treat him as an adult and he deals with me adult-to-adult, will I really assist him in the vital process of self-confrontation and self-appropriation. Where there are abnormal problems or serious blocks to self-appropriation, it will be necessary to secure the help of a professionally-trained counselor. But in "normal" situations of growth (where the problems are the usual or common ones), the type of ordinary director we described in Section II can do much good by creative listening.

In speaking of abnormal *vs.* normal problems, I should mention that I find the admission test results (intelligence, motivation and personality profile) a great help in personalizing direction - i.e., in adapting our meetings to the specific needs of the individual directee.

I find it most helpful to get to know the seminarian personally first, so that I will not be "biased" at the outset. But after about one semester, I ask our Rector for a copy of the report. At that time, after I already know the seminarian personally, the test report can be a real help in assisting him in meeting his own personal growth-needs.

What, then, are the basic areas of exploration (of clarification and of discernment) in the process of spiritual direction? The following come to mind: prayer, community, studies, apostolate, family, sexuality and discernment of motivation. The last-named is very important and will be treated in the next chapter of this book. Let me just mention that I have found most helpful a section (pages 74-105) of Raymond Hostie, S.J., *The Discernment of Vocations*. He points out that the only valid motive for a priestly or religious vocation is "the total love and exclusive service of God". This motive which, for the Christian, necessarily implies love and service of one's neighbor, must be present and central before ordination to the priesthood. Helping the seminarian to realize this and to make it his own is one of the most important tasks of a good spiritual director.

Of course, this ideal motive will rarely be present - or, at least, will rarely be "unmixed" with other motives - in the early stages of formation. There will perhaps be invalid motives (like security, prestige, pleasing "Mama") which must be confronted and rejected. And even the valid motives may be distorted or improperly understood: e.g., one's idea of service maybe too naturalistic, or one's concept of reparation may be based on a false picture of a demanding, authoritarian God. In the latter case, the director must help the directee to confront and sort out his motives - to reject the distortions and to embrace single-heartedly the sole valid motive: love of God in Christ Jesus, and of our neighbor for his sake.

The other areas of exploration noted above, such as prayer and sexuality, are all treated at length in other chapters of this book. Let me just note one point which has been very valuable in my own work of direction. While it is something I discovered experientially and by trial and error, it was a monograph of Fr. William Connolly, S.J. which helped me to verbalize and explicate it. He says that every director (and every person) must make a choice between two ap-

proaches; to concentrate on weakness or to concentrate on strength. If we focus on weakness, as much of traditional spirituality and morality have done, then we will have (and inculcate in others) a negative image of God and of ourselves. And as Connolly says, "The problems, impasses and difficulties represent the person's weak side. This is not to say that they are unimportant. Concentration on them rather than on identity questions will not, however, make him a gospel person but will instead weaken his confidence and sense of identity. For there is something infinite about problems." In the extreme, such a formation can lead to scrupulosity and other psychological disturbances. But even at its best, when the director's ego strength is great enough, such a negative approach will never produce the joyous, hopeful type of "gospel person" of whom Connolly speaks.

Fortunately there is another approach: to focus spiritual direction on strength. That is, to focus on who I am, and on what I seek in life. And in the context of prayer and spirituality, this means asking "Who am I in the Lord's eyes?" and "Who is the Lord for me?" When this is our focus, then, as Connolly says, the "Lord's own strength and generosity come to be seen more clearly in the dialogue of prayer and come to have a deeper, more personal meaning. The person sees the Lord's love as his own strength, as accepting him in his weakness, and as calling him to creativity." One who sees his life in this way will not only be happy, prayerful, "holy" person himself - he will also be an effective priest, leading his people to the joyful freedom of the children of God.

V. Conclusion

The spiritual director who is chosen to be the instrument of this personal "liberation" (which, in the life and ministry of a priest, will surely lead to societal liberation) is a lucky man indeed. To be fully effective, he needs to work within a formation structure which is oriented towards personal interior growth and maturity, and not merely towards external conformity and discipline. If the overall seminary program is not very sound - if it places more value on conformity than on maturity, and on externals than on inner spirit -

a good spiritual director can still do much good in his personal direction of the seminarians. But if the seminary structures are sound and personalistic, then the spiritual director we have been describing is doubly fortunate. The Church will be well-served by priests who have been formed in this way.

THOMAS H. GREEN, S.J.

THE UNITY OF PRIESTS: A WAY TO HOLINESS

I. Introduction

IN MY TALK ABOUT THE UNITY of Priests: a Way to Holiness, I presume the biblical and theological foundations. My approach is more experiential or existential. For this reason, I cannot separate my explanations from my personal experience, which again is not only my experience. We know that it is impossible to speak about unity without taking concretely into consideration my link with others, in this case, with my fellow priests who are part of my life, of my experience and my achievements, and who with me share the same vocation. In other words, my talk concerns the experience of a group of priests who are spiritually united as one body and who are committed to walk in the same spiritual journey, even as part of a greater family, the majority of whom are lay people. Together, we live the spirituality of unity of the Focolare Movement, officially called as the Work of Mary.

With sincerity and honesty, I have to make this premise: surely there are many other ways which lead towards sanctity, based on the great charisms given to the Church through the centuries for the

good of the humanity. This new way which is a fruit of the charism of unity, is just like the last on the old and rich tree of the Church. It answers particularly to the needs and challenges of our time.

Our epoch, despite all the tensions, divisions, conflicts and wars, manifests a definite trend towards unity. Unity was the key-word of the opening speech of John XXIII at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council. He died praying for unity. Unity is luminous sign of the times, even more after the event of Assisi last October 27, 1986. A priest today cannot but be a man of communion and dialogue, a man of the Church (who discovered herself as "communio," as a community of persons). The Holy Spirit brought the Church back to its roots, to the gospels. Jesus prayed before his death for unity, for the unity of his apostles, of his disciples. He prayed first of all for us priests, that we may be one so that the world may believe that the Son of God was sent into the world.

I remember that the period before the Second Vatican Council was a time of great expectations in many parts of the Church: new forms of communitarian life were emerging, many kinds of renewal in the liturgy and in the deepening of the Word, a new awareness of the role of the laity in the Church and society, a deepening of the family life as a "Domestic Church," the role of women, etc.

The first sessions of the Second Vatican Council brought a discovery of being Church, particularly through the contribution of Paul VI, with his encyclical letter, *Ecclesiam Suam*. He pointed out the needs of our times: the rediscovery of the mystery and the experience of the Church as people of God called to holiness, and her essence as the experience of a community where the risen Lord is present.

At the same time, there was already a small group of people, even priests and seminarians, who were convinced that it is possible to contribute to this experience, which may be lived and expressed in all the different ecclesial realities, from the presbyterium to the basic ecclesial communities. I still remember how much we were inspired by the letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch, written in the early beginnings of Christianity, about unity: unity, like a divine symphony, makes the Word of God resound in the Church and in the universe, as a manifestation of God's wisdom in human history.

Many questions were arising: how is it possible to live the Christian experience being challenged by the drive of secularization in the capitalistic and socialist societies, with a widespread phenomenon of atheism as never before in the human history? How is it possible to go back to a Christian experience which opens a dialogue with all men and women of our times? Unity, as a fruit of mutual love, in the parishes, in each community, in each presbyterium, in each *convento*, in the schools, in the offices, among families, etc. . . a dream? . . . a "utopia"? Unity was the prayer of Jesus before he died for us. Through life with Jesus among us, we can penetrate into the heart of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The gospels became mirrors for our own personal and communitarian experiences.

These experiences enlightened us how to serve our neighbors, especially those in need, how to listen to Jesus in the authority of the Church, how to meet him in the Eucharist, how to deepen our prayer life, etc., because he is always with us until the end of the world (Mt 28:20). It is against this background of the experience of the risen Lord in the midst of the Church that we can look at the problems and achievements of the Church in the period after the Second Vatican Council, *ad intra* and *ad extra*, as defined in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*.

In this context, I see my own experience and those of many priests in whose life I came to share. After undergoing military service, I entered the seminary with the firm decision to prepare myself for the priestly ministry. I felt strongly that giving up the possibility to form a natural family, I had to find an authentic Christian community, a supernatural family based on personal relationships which are inspired by the gospel. Even before this, I was always searching for it for years. I consider it a particular grace that few weeks after I arrived in the seminary in Rome, I found the answer for my longing. I met a group of lay people from the Focolare Movement. I was very much touched by their experience of mutual love and of unity which is the mature expression of the life of a Christian community as described in the gospel of John. And I guess, it was not only an experience of a deep interpersonal relationship with others.

In that meeting with a very small group of lay people, I experienced the presence of Jesus, because where two or three are united in his name, living the New Commandment, and having this readiness to die for one another, there is the risen Lord. This encounter with Jesus in the midst of a Christian community was the answer to many questions. It was a point of arrival, but also a new beginning in my life. I told myself: "if lay people are living in such a radical way the gospel, why should I not live the same radicalism of love being in the seminary?"

II. Unity among priests

This was a decisive spark of light for me. It was the beginning of a divine and human adventure, of a spiritual journey which brought me in contact with so many different cultural and religious realities. It opened to me opportunities for dialogue without frontiers.

In all these years, I notice, in a variety of different contexts and situations, that there is a deep longing among priests to be a part of a family, of a community. This is not only true for Asian countries, but it is also true for all since the beginning of humanity, as expressed in Genesis. There is a longing to find a true brotherhood among priests in the diocesan presbyterium, with their bishop as the figure of the Father and as a brother too among brothers (because there is only one Father in the heavens). I could see that if priests are experiencing that sense of belongingness and of acceptance as members of a true family which is even stronger than a natural family, being based in Jesus, many problems which before seemed without solution fall apart like magic. Even impossible situations can be faced and solved from within and can be enlightened by an inner light, because through the powerful presence of the risen Lord among us everything is possible.

This was the way how Jesus formed his disciples; he walked on the roads of Galilee, entered into the life of people to become part of their history, shared joys and sufferings with them, called them one by one by name and revealed to them a divine plan for their life, called them to follow him and to stay with him. Jesus shared his life with his

disciples. He gave them new eyes, opened to them new horizons, showed them how to face the problems of the society: violence, sufferings, taxes, relationships with women, sinners, the sick and those who were ostracized by the society and even by the religious leaders. This was the way Jesus formed the members of his family and transformed them in himself. They were not only instructed to repeat his doctrine, but to be, with their life, witnesses for the Lord's presence.

Walking with the risen Lord, he reveals to us our own identity and our place in the Church. In the light of this experience as a communion of persons, we find our home.

Sin is the absence of communion. It brings about division from God, neighbor; and within the creation. Only in undergoing a process of interior unification and integration and at the same time growing in a true relationship with God and our neighbor can we reach the authentic rootedness in the love of the Father. Only in the unity with the Holy Spirit can we say "Abba" and thus recognize him as our Father, and can acknowledge all as our brothers and sisters. The more we can reveal to others the true face of the Father and his immense love.

Missing that authentic relationship with the Father, there can be many obstacles in our "fatherless" society, as sociologists describe it. Moreover, coming from a strong authoritarian patriarchal or soft matriarchal society, mixed with so many defective psychological or human problems and not being able to transcend them - brings a disastrous life. For example, it seems that any affective equilibrium is not possible without this true relationship with the Father. Jesus brings us back to the Father and the Father is our true home.

The spirituality of unity focused on the testament of Jesus: "that all men may be one," offers a pedagogy which leads to full communion. Full communion is attained when the risen Lord is present in our midst. Moreover, living this spiritual journey, passing through the different steps, helps us to reach an authentic Christian and human maturity. The spirituality of unity, just as each of the spiritualities approved by the Church as a way to holiness, is simply a life according to the gospel, is Christian life, and brings us to fully realize the words of St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." It

means that our aim is to be transformed in Christ. Without entering in the dynamics of this pedagogy through a true formation process, it is difficult to reach that transformation which has it a high point in the paschal mystery.

The starting point is a radical conversion, a *metanoia* which is normally provoked by a crumbling experience. It is when everything collapses and is sensed as "vanity of vanities" that the truth that God is love is understood in a totally new way. God is love, and every person, every thing, every event is his gift, a gift of the Father who loves us immensely. We are no more orphans. Our life is in his hands. We believe in his love, and we put him in the center of our life, above anything else. Maybe, before, the priesthood was our ideal, the whole formation in the seminary centered on it, and maybe, we forgot that we should become Christians first and that we should first live our royal priesthood in following Jesus radically.

When we accept God as our Father, all prejudices, all feelings of cultural and racial superiority, all reasons for discrimination lose their importance. What matters is to do his will moment by moment as Jesus did until his death on the cross. To choose to fulfill the will of God is therefore a concrete expression of our choice of God as the center of our life. This frees us from our attachments and from exaggerated activism. It concentrates us in the "*porro unum*," i.e., only one thing is necessary: our union with God in holding his will. This faithful accomplishment of the will of God is the popular way to holiness despite the different vocations and walks of life.

Out of love for God, we *love our neighbors*. This means to serve and to make ourselves one with each one who becomes our neighbor in the present moment. Thinking about the growing scarcity of priests in so many local Churches, together with the proportionate increase of expectations on the part of the faithful for the administration of the sacraments, the eucharistic celebrations, etc., I see that there is a great risk that the priest eventually will reduce himself to the performance of liturgico-sacramental function. Even if he is spending all his time in pastoral activities in the midst of the crowd, he remains alone. He does not find time to establish deep personal relationships with his neighbors who come in contact with him or who live and walk with him.

The anthropological turn in the spiritual and pastoral orientation given by the last council has its enormous relevance. John Paul II stresses it very much since his first encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis* when he said:

"... man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission... the way traced out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the incarnation and redemption" (no. 14). "It is the way that stood the test of the centuries and it is also the way of the future. Christ, the Lord indicated this way especially, when, as the Council teaches, 'by his incarnation he, the Son of God, in a certain way, united himself with each man'... Jesus is the chief way for the Church. He himself is our way to the Father's house, and is the way to each man. On this way leading from Christ to man, on this way on which Christ unites himself with each man, nobody can halt the Church" (#13).

In order to become a man of communion and dialogue, we have to give full attention to each person, as son and daughter of God, with infinite and absolute value. According to the pastoral rule of St. Gregory the Great which has influenced the life of pastors for many centuries, "the art of the arts" is to be able to lead the persons entrusted to our service. But how can we guide others without that constant effort to establish deep interpersonal relationships with them in the love and truth of Christ and without listening to our neighbor, always emptying ourselves in front of Jesus in each neighbor. Surely, we participate in his prophetic mission, we have to speak and to preach but we cannot really teach as Jesus was teaching if we are not listening to the Father. Hence, he introduces us into his own intimacy with the Father and we are led by the Holy Spirit to call him "Abba".

Another step in this spiritual pedagogy is the reciprocity of love, according to the New Commandment of Jesus, the pearl of the Gospel, "love one another as I have loved you." Here we have the very essence of Christianity. It opens out the way to live the life of the Blessed Trinity here on earth, through our interpersonal relationships in the midst of human history. This is the fundamental law of the Church that all members are called to be perfect in love, and therefore to form Christian community. Thus this is also the fundamental law for the

transformation of the society. Only in living mutual love that we are recognized as disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:35).

"Nobody has a greater love than the one who gives up his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). With this commitment to be ready to die for one another, interpersonal relationships acquire a new quality and provokes a real change. The interior life is enriched by a new strength, a new zeal and a new courage. This kind of witness has many effects: conversions, vocations, etc. With this readiness to give up one's life for one another, we can experience the presence of Jesus among us (Mt 18:20).

This presence of Jesus among those who are united in his name is the rule of all rules, the premise for all initiatives and actions, and the guarantee for a new supernatural brotherhood.

As Jesus was leading his disciples to the understanding and the acceptance of his passion and cross, we too, in our spiritual journey at a certain moment, are called and invited to deepen our choice of God. Through a particular instance, our eyes were fixed on the abandonment of Jesus, when he shouted with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46). At this moment he reached the apex of his spiritual, moral and physical suffering, and passed through the darkest night, experiencing the absence of the Father, his being separated from the Father, making himself "sin" for us, as Paul says. This is the aim of the spiritual pedagogy: to choose as the ideal of our life, Jesus crucified and forsaken, and to recognize and live him in the different faces of his presence, in us and among us, because he identified himself with all those who are suffering and abandoned, and those who are without hope and without God in the world, he revealed himself as the key to recompose the unity of persons with God and among themselves, and to heal all kinds of division.

The truth of Jesus crucified and forsaken is of great relevance in the cultural and religious context of Asia, and for the dialogue with brothers and sisters of other religions, especially with Buddhists. The renowned German Theologian, Romano Guardini, affirmed: "There is only one whom we might be inclined to compare with Jesus: Buddha. This man is a great mystery, he lived in awful force, almost superhuman freedom, yet his kindness was powerful as a cosmic

force. Perhaps Buddha will be the last religious genius to be explained by Christianity. As yet, no one has really uncovered his Christian significance. Perhaps Christ had not only one precursor, John, the last of the prophets, but three: John the Baptist for the Chosen People, Socrates from the heart of Antiquity, and Buddha, who spoke the ultimate word in Eastern religious cognition . . ." (Romano Guardini, *The Lord*, Chicago, ET, 1954, p. 305).

Our spiritual journey is nourished through a constant communion with the Word of God as word of life. It changes our lifestyle: our way of thinking, of loving, of acting, of living. Being a source of the presence of God as the Eucharist, it is essential for our life. Before praying for unity ("that all may be one . . ." Jn 17:21) Jesus instituted the sacrament which makes that divine unity possible: The Eucharist. This communion with Jesus in the Eucharist is vital, as the communion with Jesus in the hierarchy: "He who listens to you, listens to me," which indicates to us the direction of our journey.

Mary, the perfect disciple of Jesus followed faithfully this divine pedagogy, from the beginning to the end of her life. She is the model for our way to sanctity. And *dulcis in fundo*, the Holy Spirit guides and enlightens us, step by step in our holy journey.

All these different points or pillars of his spirituality of unity which are all connected to one another and interdependent from one another, like a complete "compendium:" for communitarian spiritual experiences are answers to the directives of Asian bishops, elaborated in the last years. These can be synthesized in the following words: (1) to preach the Gospel in Asia means to share the experience of the Risen Lord to Asian peoples. (2) There is a great need in the Church of Asia for "contemplative communities" where the values of prayer, silence, mortification, self-denial, etc. are concretely lived and witnessed in the contact with Asian people. But how can we be "contemplative communities" without the powerful presence of the Risen Lord among us?

Entering in the process of this spiritual pedagogy enables us more and more to grow deeper like in a spiral movement, experiencing first of all the powerful presence of Jesus in the midst. Consequently, we are able to witness and share his life to others.

I hope that my explanation is not seen so much as a spiritualistic approach. In fact, I limited myself to stress the life of unity, as a way to holiness, but living radically the gospel it affects and transforms progressively all the aspects of one's Christian and human life in his personal and social dimensions. We know too well that the Christian life is normally broken up into the various duties, fields or actions during our days; for example, there is a time for working and for relaxing, a time for prayer and a time dedicated to the apostolate and so on. If we come to realize that there is only one thing to do: to love God, this brings about a revolution. In order to love God, we pray, we work, play, eat, etc. . . . Thus everything is unified by love and this makes life luminous and fascinating.

By living this spirituality of unity, we noticed that love put into practice in the daily life assumes different aspects, like light passing through a prism divides into seven different colors. Love is lived therefore concretely in seven fundamental aspects. The life of love is a global approach integrating all the aspects of personal and social life. To begin with, love leads to putting everything in common. For this reason priests are pushed to live the spiritual communion of goods. They live poverty in order to share with those who are in need. They live justice by distinguishing for example their personal income from the income which belongs to the community. True communion abolishes the confusion of goods which created injustices, forms of discrimination, even among priests. Love inspires you to give an account about your personal expenses and reveal your personal needs.

Then love leads us to reach out to others because love is diffusive by nature. Witness, especially the witness of mutual love between the parish priest and his assistant, is more important than our sermons. Our first sermon is the witness of our life, our coherence, our authenticity in living the gospel of love. People of our time listen to teachers only if their teaching is a fruit of their life. Then love elevates us to God and leads us to union with him. Here is the foundation for the spiritual and moral leadership of the priest. A priest who has a deep interior life, prayer life, and who is faithful to the practices of piety, etc. becomes a living sacrament to the call to holiness, a call for all without exception. Love nourishes and heals the soul as well as the body. The free time or the day off, every week becomes a moment to

be renewed again in the family of priests. Passing together the period of holidays is a grace of renewal and of deepening of spiritual life for those who are convinced and committed in the life of unity with other priests.

Furthermore, love leads us to keep in touch with one another, to meet regularly, to encourage one another in the spiritual journey, and to transform people into Church. This aspect concerns the lifestyle of the priests: how he lives in the *convento*, how he maintains "privacy" and an atmosphere of home which reflects the harmony, order, and the simplicity of the home of Nazareth. It concerns also the way how he dresses himself with the awareness of his dignity as a Son of God. The other aspect includes studies, wisdom and contemplation - all of which are fruits of love. Finally, love fosters unity among the members of the Mystical Body. It makes use of all forms of communications and media which can be helpful in generating, developing and maintaining unity.

We understand that there is a long process of transformation which affects our personal and communitarian life as Christians, as citizens, as members of presbyterium and as animators of communities. We can find these guidelines too in the *Presbyterium Ordinis*, the decree about the life and ministry of the priests according to the Second Vatican Council. Nothing is more radical and demanding than the radicalism of the gospel, of love.

III. A Communitarian Spirituality

What is the characteristic of our way of life? Our spirituality is communitarian. We are living our journey as members of one body, as members of one family. And being one mystical body in Christ, all positive and negative actions of one member have their reflection in the whole body. But somebody could say: already in the convents, in monasteries, the Christians lived in a communitarian way. They were gathered in the name of Jesus and enjoyed his presence. In fact, we know that every spirituality, a fruit of a charism in the Church, is never totally individualistic. We cannot be Christians without putting emphasis on love which helps us how to progress together.

We know during the last centuries, with the new awareness about men and women in their very own individuality and personality (cf. the progress of human sciences), the individual aspect in the spiritual life was very much emphasized and consequently influenced the spiritual formation in the Church (seminaries, formation houses of the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola). Until now the spiritual life is considered a personal, individual journey which leads towards the perfection in love, towards sanctity. The peak of the spiritual life is found in the mystical union of the soul, with the Blessed Trinity within oneself. The perfection consists in the intimate uninterrupted dialogue of the person with God who has become "one" with him, although always remaining distinct in the so-called transforming union with God. Simultaneously we confess our "nothingness," our "*nada*" in front of the divine majesty.

We cannot reach this perfection without the love of silence, for time of recollection, for solitude, and the flight from the creatures (*fuga mundi*) in order to retreat in the "interior cell." The traditional book, the *Imitation of Christ* which until now is of great help for many to find a deep communion with God, shows: "The greatest saints, as much as they could, fled from human company, preferring to serve God in solitude. One of them said: 'It's easier to live a hidden life at home than to safeguard effectively yourself in the company with others.' God with his holy angels will draw close to the person who avoids friends and acquaintances" (I.20). In this journey the soul passes through the night of the senses and the spirit, even of the theological virtues, in order to reach the apex of spiritual life.

Without neglecting but integrating the wisdom and experiences of the spiritual praxis of the Church in the past, the Holy Spirit pushes us to go deeper, to enter more radically in the mystery of God who is present in human history, particularly through the event of the Second Vatican Council. Paul VI stated at the conclusion of the last session: "Perhaps never before as on this occasion, has the Church felt the need to know, to draw close to, to understand, to penetrate, to serve and to evangelize the society that surrounds it and to gather in it, to almost run after it in its rapid and continual state of change." The way we have to relate with the "world" and the way we have to go to God has changed. We have to go to God through people. People have become the doorway to God. "We passed from

death to life because we love our brothers" (Jn 3:15). The more we are serving our brothers and sisters, and our love is true service in self-giving, the more we realize and find ourselves, and the more we shall experience his presence within us.

In the communitarian spirituality more is asked from us. Not only are we to pass through the night of the senses and the spirit, but even the "night of God." We have to lose God, with his inspirations and his light in order to love the neighbor because the same God who lives in the heavens is dwelling in the soul of each neighbor. I make myself one with him in everything except in sin, to be empty, silence, nothingness in front of him. The same attitude that I live in my relationship with God, I have to live in my relationship with the neighbor next to me. If this attitude becomes mutual, if each one sees in the other Jesus and is ready to die for him then this encounter manifests the life of the Blessed Trinity, because when two persons live as the Father and the Son, between them the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Mystical Body, bursts forth. If we meet in this depth, the words of Jesus are fulfilled: "Where two or three are united in my name, there I am in their midst." (Mt 18:20). The risen Lord is there and he reveals his transforming power. Living the communitarian spirituality, the presence of the risen Lord becomes the point of departure and is the premise for all activities and initiatives. For this reason our union with God is conditioned by our link with the brother: "If you are bringing offering to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar and go at once to make peace with your brother, then come back and offer your gifts to God" (Mt 5:23-24).

How can we keep this unity alive? (1) We found that the sharing of how we are concretely living maybe a sentence of the gospel is a great help for us to grow and deepen first of all the spiritual communion among us. (2) Then the regular personal colloquium with the responsible of the community or group helps to remove the difficulties which are obstacles in the spiritual journey. (3) In a gathering which is called the hour of truth, we experience mutual encouragement and we help one another to recognize the positive and negative points in our personality.

I conclude: St. Theresa talks about the "interior castle" which is the reality of the soul where his majesty reigns and enlightens

everything. This is the highest point of sanctity in an individual spirituality. In the communitarian spirituality, we have to discover, to illuminate, to build up the "exterior castle" of God where he reigns in the midst of people. This is the experience that we have to discover and to make as a communion of persons, as Church. Through this experience, the Church becomes more and more herself. She is more and more realized according to God's plan. She is like the spouse of Christ, the beginning of the heavenly Jerusalem of which is written: "Here God lives among men. He will make his house among them. They shall be his people and he will be their God and his name is: 'God-with-them' " (Rev 21:3).

ANTON WEBER

THE PERSON OF THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

ARROGANCE AWAITS THE SPIRITUAL director who dares to identify himself. If I sound arrogant, I am sorry! Since I was asked to speak about the self awareness of the spiritual director, I have to face my responsibilities; in listening to me, please avoid thinking of myself but rather think of yourselves. In that manner arrogance will fast fade away.

I. Self-awareness of the Spiritual Director

A) In this present age I would say that the true spiritual director is a person who seeks out God in a very special way. That means that he refuses to let himself be swept along by a decadent age.

He believes and he demonstrates that there is a way of living without a slavish dependence on conventional values. Yet he does not arrogantly reject society or human companionship. He is rather in quest of a society where he could become a true self in Christ. He does

not live like Christ but he loves in him with him and through him. As the love of God gradually stripped himself of his false, illusory self he begins to experience his transformed self more strongly.

Everyone knows that the spiritual director should allow their life to be directed in every respect by the Spirit. The temptation is great to determine the value of our spiritual direction on the performance of external practices which block the life of the Spirit. Such directors may seem to love others but this is rather a disguised form of love for his own doctrine, his own ascetic system, his rule, his way.

(B) Why is the spiritual director sought for?

The true spiritual director is sought for spiritual guidance. To enter into a deep prayer life is not to seek out disciples or clients the way the doctors do but it is a burning desire to commune lovingly with God in silence and solitude.

The fact that the spiritual director is sought by others is but the external sign that he possesses the God-given charism of engendering the life of the Spirit in those sent to him.

The spiritual director is a person of few words but of deep meaning. This makes me think of the story of Abba Pambo. Some people sought Abba Pambo:

They said:

"Speak a word to the Pope that he may be edified."

Pambo replied:

"If the Pope is not edified by my silence how could he be edified by my words?"

II. His identity and his struggles

There are few difficulties that we encounter in spiritual direction. Without being exhaustive on the topic let me underline the most important among them:

(A) The difficulty in listening:

Selectivity:

Wise selectivity affords us the opportunity to choose those things which most foster development. However, no matter how positive the influence of selectivity, it does, in fact, limit us.

Selectivity becomes manifestly negative when choices are made on the basis of prejudice. Prejudice by definition is irrational. By prejudice we become fixated on something in such a way that we cannot perceive reality.

A positive kind of selectivity occurs when the Spirit gives the director the wisdom to see which aspects of the directee's experience need more immediate consideration. It is easy enough to talk about selectivity but it is much harder to know how to do it. I found myself more than once giving an excessive concentration on the area in the directee's life which led me to exclude other important areas.

Encouraging the directee to explore his difficulties would require that we ourselves face our own lack of response to God.

B) Counter-transference

Counter-transference obliges us to be realistic with ourselves. It refers to unrealistic and inappropriate behavior vis-a-vis our directees. This attitude brings us to relate to our directees as if he were some other person. We put another face on the directee because he reminds us of an intimate friend for whom we have attraction or passionate feelings. So we use the directee for personal gratification. Inordinate caring leads us to take decision or advice which result not from listening to the Spirit but from our own emotional reactions. This finds its source of our need to be loved.

How one should deal with counter-transference?

We have first to listen to our feelings, to identify them as clearly as possible, accept what is happening, then the freedom will come to let go our projections and we will find ourselves seeing the directees as they really are:

N. B. We should be able to let go when the time comes. Otherwise we establish such a dependence that it is impossible to give room for progress.

C) Hesitancy to take risk:

The hesitance to take risk stifles the Spirit. Of course the refusal to take risk prevents pitfalls but it also removes the possibility of maximum spiritual growth. To take a prudent risk is to make an act of faith. We should never forget that what is safer is not necessarily truer.

III. To overcome the difficulties mentioned above
we have to acquire:

A) Competence.

Every spiritual director needs to ponder with heart and mind the mysteries of salvation. It finds its roots through two principal sources:

1. Personal reflection on our own faith-experience as well as that of our directee.

2. In-depth study of the Scriptures and Theology.

St. John of the Cross says:

"The fundamental requirement for a spiritual guide is the knowledge and ability to discern."

St. Teresa of Avila:

"A truly learned confessor has never led me astray. It is not that the others deliberately meant to misguide me. They simply do not know any better."

And I would like to add:

There is nothing as bad as the one who knows so little that he ignores he knows nothing.

Nowadays nobody will deny the necessity of the basic principles of psychology.

B) Psychology — It helps to have a holistic approach of the needs of the directee especially in the area of emotional turbulence arising

from deep hurt and anger. It helps the directee to translate into consciousness something of his existential experience of the mystery of Christ.

However, we should be aware that there is a certain tendency now of becoming attached simply to the psychological point of view. Knowledge is often an attempt to supplement the lack of experience. Experience is acquired as a result of conversations. In spite of personal competence and esteem people have for human values in the spiritual director, they seek above all a spiritual person.

One of the struggles often met and I should say one of the most delicate is the resistance of the directee.

C) Resistance:

I will not hesitate to say that the following are signs of resistance to the Lord:

1. Avoidance of prayers (no time, too busy, no feelings).
2. Avoidance of appointments with the spiritual directors.
3. Repeated lateness for appointments.
4. Endless discussions.

There is no possibility of communicating a message unless the recipient is ready to receive it.

I can easily accept the unexplained but I can hardly tolerate the inexplicable.

D) Discernment and Religious Experience:

Discernment at its most basic levels consists in recognizing differences. If we accept that discernment as such, we can appreciate both its simplicity and its value.

It helps us to discover the authenticity or inauthenticity of experience of God in prayer as well as in life generally, since not all spiritual experiences are from the Lord.

There are experiences of harmony and tranquility that do not open to God but rather bring to a halt towards Him. Oftentimes signs

of humility and obedience from the directee appear to be an abdication of personal responsibility.

It is a great difficulty for the spiritual director to decipher the real value of the religious experience. Let it suffice to say that:

Authentic religious experiences move towards a unity of individual and community and lead to openness to other voices, especially an openness to the voice of legitimate authority in the Church. Such openness may lead to tension and struggle since authentic obedience must faithfully listen to both inner and outer voices and cannot too quickly accept one over the other. An unwillingness to listen to the voice of others and especially to the voice of legitimate authority - is a sign that at some point the person's prayer has stopped making him free.

When there is no outward Christian development, it will be seen sooner or later that there is something askew in his inner development.

In my first years of experience as a spiritual director I was ever anxious as to know what I would say to my directees. I went to the extent of preparing topics to assure myself of having something to say.

I discover that the more contemplative I become in doing spiritual direction the more contemplative I become in my prayer. In spiritual sessions responses, texts and suggestions for prayers come to the mind as they are needed. I feel that directors have knowledge and experience once they lose their anxiety about what they should say.

Today, there is a certain vogue among the so called modern guides. They label themselves with the word openness. They play the butterfly's game, to fly from one novelty to the other under the pretext to be adapted to the "modern" world.

On the other hand there can be a fundamentalist, sectarian reaction that restricts guidance to scripture or tradition of the past Christian piety.

These two attitudes can lead the spiritual guide either

1. to an over-accomodation to the culture; it reflects the values of the culture and succumbs to folk religion

2. Sectarian irrelevance: truth is rigidly interrupted in words and forms a way to the truth but a way into security from the truth's ambiguities and vastness in human life.

IV. Ascetism and Mysticism

A) Christ's life shows a real concern for others through prayers and action. In like manner my life should be continual concerns for others. My work brings me to prayer and my prayer brings me back to my work.

Neither of the two can stand alone. Both should always be together. Otherwise it becomes either a refuge or an escapism of responsibilities. During spiritual sessions it is necessary to keep re-orienting oneself towards God through prayers and actions.

Opening myself to the needs of others makes me fully aware of my own needs. Like Moses I become an interpreter between my people and my God. Not a God limited to my own needs but a God full of love ready to do the impossible for those he loves.

B) This is where the mystic becomes prophet and the prophet becomes mystic. We are fully aware that whatever we say or do is addressed first and foremost to ourselves.

It is here that the authentic prophet is distinguished from another angry voice.

The world has too many uncritical lovers, too many unloving critics. What is needed are critical lovers, those who love the world intensely, as Jesus did, and so criticize it and try to correct it as Jesus did. The authentic prayerful prophet is willing to pay the price.

The prayerful prophet knows that to speak on this issue, to take this stand, to say "no" at this juncture, will bring misunderstanding, rebuke and the cross.

The prayerful prophet will repeat with joy and peace the words of Mother Teresa:

"God calls up to be faithful not successful."

The great mystics are not people who withdraw, hide to find God in solitude and to stay there. Obviously mystics become more passive in prayer but that does not mean becoming passive in life.

We distort the picture of holiness if we divorce it from the prophetic dimension to which it always leads.

Jean Vanier of L'Arche and Mother Teresa of Calcutta are holy people not just because they pray or write eloquently about prayer but because their prayer leads them to respond to Christ in the given historical cultural moment. Each mystic becomes a prophet. We become a radical lover not a fanatic.

Conclusion

I will conclude in saying that one cannot prepare for the ministry or practice of spiritual direction the way a medical student prepares to be a surgeon or a defense lawyer prepares a case.

Serious study, perseverance in prayer and honest self-discipline are required for any vibrant interior life. These qualities help discern the possible presence of this charism as well as aid the director's collaboration with the Spirit in refining this gift.

There is no such thing as a ninety-day wonder (much less a two-week wonder!) in spiritual direction. No one becomes a spiritual director after a crash course, regardless how one's certificate may read. Spiritual direction is pure gift, both for the director as well as for the directee. This gift is fragile. It is delicate. It needs to grow and intensify.

Paradoxically spiritual direction leads to spiritual non-direction because it is only in losing our way that we truly begin to find the way.

GUY PIGEON, P.M.E.

AN EXPERIENCE OF KENOSIS

KENOSIS: AN EXPERIENCE! Whose? . . . When I received the invitation to participate in this Congress, I was surprised — and worried. I have never been a spiritual director in a seminary; and although it is true that one of my main preoccupations at the present time is precisely the formation of young men in the Dominican way of life and that lately I have had something to do with programs to that effect, still the "*Nemo dat quod non habet*" of my philosophy days came back strong to me. How could anyone talk intelligently about kenosis unless he went through it in a meaningful way in his own life? For, it seemed to me, kenosis is an experience to be lived, not a thesis to be written. Honestly speaking, I had then, and still have now, serious misgivings about the whole thing. However, in view of Fr. Cajilig's gentle insistence, I had no other choice but to go into some kind of kenosis of my own and come here, with nothing special to offer, except a few random thoughts which, more than anything else, I take as a challenge to myself in my priestly life.

Initial Thoughts on Kenosis

What were the first thoughts that came into my mind when I started to think about kenosis in the formation and the life of a priests? Several scenes appeared immediately before me, all having much to do with what we are as Christians and as priests.

SCENE ONE = *Bethlehem*: A baby in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger — And the fact that this baby is God made man, the Messiah. SCENE TWO = *The Cross*: Christ nailed to it, totally helpless, unable even to wipe blood or perspiration off his brow — And the fact that he is actually saving the world from sin. SCENE THREE: *A Small Wafer* on the Altar, so fragile and thin that it can hardly be called bread — And the fact that it is the Body of Christ, source of eternal life.

This was Christ . . . But then, looking at myself and thinking of my calling and ministry, several other scenes appeared before me. SCENE ONE = *A Priest at the Lectern*: Proclaiming the Word, with a human voice — And yet proclaiming it as the Word of God, the Word that has power to bring salvation to mankind. SCENE TWO = *A Priest uttering the tremendous words of Consecration*, "This is my Body," "This is the Cup of My Blood" — He, the man always in need of redemption. SCENE THREE = *A Priest raising his hand in the Confessional* and saying with authority and without any doubt in his mind, "I absolve you from all your sins" — He, the sinner!

What conclusions could I draw from all these scenes? Only one: that, either I go into real kenosis in my life, or otherwise cannot have any valid claim to authenticity in my ministry.

The "Carmen Christi"

If Christ could not be the real Christ and Saviour without kenosis, as attested to by Bethlehem, the Cross and the Eucharist, how could a priest expect to be his witness and his minister without kenosis?

Christ: who he was, what he did, and how, is told at length in the Gospels. However, every time I need a brief but powerful and

eloquent account that brings me to the root of everything about him, I instinctively turn to Ph 2:6-11, the famous *Carmen Christi* (A Hymn to Christ). A passage that like no other passage in the whole of the Scriptures speaks of the kenosis of Christ in all its stark reality, and in all its magnificent results.

*Though he was in the form of God,
Jesus did not count equality with God
a thing to be grasped at.
He emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant,
being born in the likeness of men.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient unto death,
even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name:
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

"He emptied himself" — This is the real meaning of kenosis: the emptying of oneself, the going out of oneself to reach out to others, the lowering of one's status in order to identify with others, the creation of a void within oneself for the purpose of assuming another identity.

This was exactly what Jesus did; and in an extraordinary and remarkable way indeed. When, in the words of Paul, the Son of God said, "Here I am to do your will, O God" (Heb 10:7), he embarked upon an incredible venture, a venture that demanded of him to come into the world and to die for mankind in order to save it from the power of sin. But how could he, if he was God and therefore immortal? The answer was kenosis. Setting aside his humanity, he followed the way of mortality, humility and suffering. First, he became man; then he became obedient to the Father in everything, even unto death, and

not an ordinary death, but death on a cross. Greater emptiness - greater kenosis - than this could not possibly be imagined.

Had Jesus clung to his divine prerogatives, he could not have walked this earth like one of us. Had he come in power and majesty, he would not have been persecuted, he would not have been put to death. Had he decided to use his authority as God, he could easily have forced obedience to his will . . . But then he could not have spoken of humility, and of meekness of heart, and of service, and of love, and of peace . . . ; at least not citing himself as an example, not as *exemplum dedi vobis*.

Early Christian theologians disagreed with one another on how to interpret Christ's person and nature and his divinity and humanity in the context of the *Carmen Christi*, and the Church suffered from kenotic heresies. Even today theology is not clear about some nuances in Christ's kenosis. For their part, Bible scholars argued, and still argue, about whether the *Carmen Christi* was composed by St. Paul or quoted from an earlier poet - perhaps the deacon Stephen - and about whether Paul's intention in quoting it was to present Christ as a model *ad imitationem*, or to bring to the Greco-Roman world of the first century - a world in turmoil and in search of peace and meaning in life - a new encouraging vision of the world under the guidance of God and the kingship of Christ.

However all this may be, the fact remains that "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth" (2 Tim 3:16) and, above all, that Jesus is not only Saviour but Model as well for Christians, and certainly for priests. No wonder then that since Pope Clement's Letter to the Corinthians exhorting them to humility (chapter 16) and the famous Martyrs of Lyons of 177, identified with Christ in suffering and glory - all in the spirit of Ph 2:6-11 and Is 53 - the *Carmen Christi* has always been given an ethical interpretation in Christian Spirituality.

If this was the way of Christ, this must surely be the way of a Christian. Redemption is "a wonderful exchange." Christ assumed our humanity to enable us to share in his divinity. If in order to do so he had to go through the kenosis of not clinging to his divine prerogatives, it follows that we cannot hope to be made god-like unless we are

prepared to go through the kenosis of giving up whatever in our corrupt and fallen nature prevents us from being lifted up to him.

Now, a priest is not only called to imitate Christ in his personal life; but, as a *vas electionis*, he is also called to be his special witness in the world, to become an instrument of salvation. Can he possibly be all this without a special kind and a high degree of kenosis?

If we pause to think for a moment about the priesthood, we shall be able without much effort to discover some fundamental and basic kenotic attitudes' and experiences that must be constant part and parcel of our life and ministry.

Kenosis from Pride

Pride is easily the root of all evil. If *Carmen Christi* teaches us anything at all, it is humility. Christ humbled himself . . . as a man, as a servant, as a suffering servant, as a dead servant! . . . How can a priest approach his calling and ministry except from the platform and solid ground of humility? Should he approach it in any other way, he would have no need to look for anybody or anything to blame if it turns out to be a disaster. The priesthood with which we have been invested is not of our choice, it is a gift most gratuitously given us; and we have to keep and carry it as a treasure in the earthen vessel of our ignorant and sinful humanity: in deep humility. How can we be "servants," "useless servants," unless we are keenly aware of this, unless we accept and live by the fact that "without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5)?

Kenosis from pride, i.e., humility, will keep our hearts free from wordly ambitions, from running after lucrative positions and shining titles, from preaching ourselves.

Pride was raising its ugly head in the Philippian community, and Paul sent a stern warning against it. The warning should always sound loud and clear in our ears, for we know from personal experience that pride is ever ready to raise its ugly head in everything we do, and spoil it. The pride of the one hundred burials and one hundred

resurrections! — as Cardinal Luciani (later Pope John Paul I) described his.

Kenosis from Our Own Will

Christ became obedient. Obedient to the Father, who sent him; obedient to his parents, who looked after him; obedient to the Spirit, who led him throughout his life and guided him in the fulfillment of his mission.

We priests promise obedience to our bishops and religious superiors. But this specific promise is not in itself the main thing. This is but a symbol of a deeper promise, not uttered in words, but written in our hearts: our serious commitment to seek at all times and in all circumstances the Will of God, for us and for our ministry. This implies a continuous quest, a constant kenosis, for it is quite easy, especially under favourable circumstances, to take for God's Will what is only our will.

Far from me to advocate blind obedience, or an unreasonable use of authority. Communication, dialogue, friendship are part of a good obedience-authority relationship; and so is the sincere effort to facilitate the following of every priest's "special vocation" within the general priestly calling. Still, there come times in the life of a priest when he has to choose between what he wants and what the ecclesial community, his superiors, the Church, and therefore God, want for him and from him. Times that perhaps call for a strong sense of availability, for radical abandonment to divine providence, for readiness to walk in naked faith.

I believe that obedience is not only of the essence of our priesthood, but also that it is the true way to peace and to real fulfillment in our lives. And I find encouragement in the attitude of a great man of our times, John XXIII, whose episcopal motto was *Oboedientia et Pax*, and who practiced this kind of kenosis all his life with answering and unstinting determination. His obedience brought him to spiritual maturity and bore abundant fruit for the whole Church.

There is no telling how far an act of obedience (or of disobedience!) can take us. When in 1205 Dominic de Guzmán and his bishop requested Pope Innocent III's permission to resign their positions in the Diocese of Osma and go to Eastern Europe as missionaries, the Pope said no. In humility, they obeyed. Later, the Lord guided their steps in another direction, according to the plans he had for them. Without that act of obedience to the Pope, there would be no Dominicans in the Church today (I hope none here regrets Dominic's obedience!).

"Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants me to do. When Judgment Day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord! in your name we spoke God's message, by your name we drove out many demons and performed miracles!' Then I will say to them, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you wicked people'" (Mt 7:21-23).

Kenosis from Self-Sufficiency

The self-sufficiency of the youngman who knows everything! The self-sufficiency of the professor who has learned everything there is to be learned! . . . And many other forms of self-sufficiency found in the priesthood.

A young priest, just out of seminary, with a full baggage of spiritual and academic preparation and with unlimited enthusiasm and eagerness to serve God and his fellow men, might feel that he is ready for everything. He is wrong. He is prepared for many things; however, not for everything. Nothing prepares us for everything; and no one, no matter how old or learned, is prepared for everything. More than "The Preparation," the seminary is the start of the preparation, the first chapter of a book that will continue to be read all throughout a priest's life. I still remember that old professor's advice to us, young students bent on knowing everything: "I don't expect you to learn everything now. If when you leave the house of studies you know enough to know when to doubt and where to look for answers, then you will have learned enough."

In this age of easy communication, mass media and computers, a priest must keep his appointment with books, seminars, ongoing formation programs and the like. However, he must at the same time learn - if not beforehand, at least from experience - that, no matter how many books he reads and how many diplomas he acquires, his ministry will always demand something else. He is preaching the Word of God, not a human, scientific or cultural word. A Word that is alive, and has to be presented alive; and such life is not given to it by human wisdom, but by the Spirit of Wisdom.

Saul of Tarsus was well qualified academically, and on occasion he made use of his knowledge of the Law and of his intellectual preparation to deliver the Message, but he relied mainly on the truth of that divine wisdom which is the Gospel of Christ. "When I came to you, my brothers" - he tells the Corinthians (1 Co 2:1, 4) - "to preach God's secret truth, I did not use big words and great learning . . . and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit." And he advises his disciple Timothy to do likewise: "Timothy, keep safe what has been entrusted to your care. Avoid the profane and foolish arguments of what some people wrongly call knowledge'. For some have claimed to possess it, and as a result they have lost the way of faith" (1 Tim 6:20-21).

With human wisdom on our hands we can argue, and rebut, and perhaps convince intellectually; but can we change hearts, and convert souls? . . . How often does a priest feel the helplessness of all his knowledge and learning in the face of a set mind, a hardened heart, or even an unyielding sermon! . . . What to do, then? Nothing, except sitting on the floor, with all our human baggage about us looking useless . . . in humble prayer, asking the Lord to take over, to say the Word that gets things done . . . A kenosis, that in moments of crisis we have to go into perhaps in a radical and painful way, but which somehow must be practiced all the time. John Paul II has on several occasions upheld the value of prayer over even the most intense apostolic activity.

This is the radical poverty of "Take no bag and carry no money or bread" (Mk 6:8). The poverty that teaches us: about insecurity in

everything, except in the Lord; about the need to learn from situations and the people around us (and there is so much that others, including those whom we actually teach, can teach us!); about "shaking the dust off your feet," not in disappointment or anger, but in the realization that sometimes it will be necessary for us to change our attitudes, to modify our way of doing things, to adjust to new environments, to put aside some of our inherited cultural values and embrace those of other people . . .

St. Paul was never prone to give in to the opinions of others, and he was always ready to engage anybody in disputation, convinced as he was that he had received the Gospel directly from Christ himself and that, therefore, he was in possession of the truth. Yet, after fourteen years in the mission, he went back to Jerusalem and explained to the Apostles the Gospel he was preaching, "for fear that the course I was adopting or had already adopted, would not be allowed" (Ga 2:2).

Kenosis from "Holiness"

This kind of kenosis may sound strange, and perhaps even unorthodox, at first hearing. But personally I believe it is a true and valid kind of kenosis.

In the years of formation it is relatively easy to dream of total surrender, of the ideal priest, of perfection . . . Forget it! You will always be a sinner! . . . An old teacher among the fathers of the desert used to say, with a knowing and wise smile: "If you see a young man trying to fly, grab him by the feet and bring him down quickly!"

If the Lord wants to bring you to the summit of Mount Carmel or to the splendour of Mount Tabor or to turn you into another Curé d'Ars, he will show you the way; but of course he will expect a very high degree of kenotic cooperation from you! . . . Even then, you will never reach total perfection . . . which does not exist in this world.

Perhaps he is actually calling all of us to those heights. The hard fact remains however, that the majority of us tread and will continue to tread the path of 'ordinary mortals', with our daily toll of failures,

shortcomings, mistakes, sins . . . And, to the chagrin of all our seminary dreams, none of us will ever be able to convert the world!

In a sense, the more I advance in years and in the practice of preaching, the more difficult I find the task, and the more I discover that I cannot do it without constant and sometimes painful kenosis: the kenosis of having, and daring, to preach with my inadequacy and my sinfulness staring me in the face. It really is an awesome dare to attempt to proclaim the Word of God with sincerity and conviction when one knows that his own life does not measure up to it. Time to fall on one's knees and pray with the Psalmist: "My sins, O God, are not hidden from you. You know how foolish I have been. Don't let me bring shame on those who trust in you, Sovereign Lord Almighty. Don't let me bring disgrace to those who worship you, O God of Israel" (Ps 69:5-6). Or to remember St. Dominic's prayer when entering a town on a preaching mission: "Lord, do not punish the people of this town on account of my sins." We all carry within ourselves the two sombre clouds under whose shadow we were born, and from which Thomas Aquinas prayed to be delivered whenever he engaged in writing, teaching or preaching: sin and ignorance.

This is not saying that we should not strive after perfection. We should, with all our heart, lending full cooperation to the Spirit who does his sanctifying work in us. This is saying that we should never lose heart and give up in disgust or disappointment on account of our failures and sins. The Lord is much more understanding and patient with us than we are ourselves. This is saying that we must beware of two forms of self-righteousness that are reliable to creep into our lives: the self-righteousness of believing that we can attain to the summit of Christian perfection by our own ascetic methods, and the self-righteousness that makes us adopt a holier-than-thou attitude towards others, be they our fellow priests or our parishioners.

Limitations, failures, sin . . . are part and parcel of our kenotic life in the imitation of Christ. With his kenosis, Jesus imposed stringent limitations upon himself and upon his work. He could have converted the world, but he did not. By assuming a human nature with all the attendant limitations, he narrowed down his field of action and the possibilities of success.

Imperfection, in spite of its negative form and connotation, is a great source of spiritual richness. How can I find and understand the all-loving, all-patient, all-forgiving Christ, unless I am a sinner and recognize myself as such? And how can I identify with other sinners and treat them with compassion and mercy unless I feel one with them? And how can I tell people about God's love and forgiveness and readiness to welcome them back in his arms unless I experience it every day? . . . "This means that he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven. And now he can help those who are tempted, because he himself was tempted and suffered" (Heb 2:17-18).

Let us strive after the righteousness that St. Paul wanted for himself: "I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith" (Ph 3:9).

Kenosis from Authority

A priest occupies a position of authority in the Church. St. Paul is quick to recognize this authority and to claim it for himself and for his collaborators. The Church does, too. And so does God. The Lord said to Jeremiah: Today I give you authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jr 1:10). And Jesus gave his disciples such powers as no prophet before them ever had.

The priest must make use of the authority given him by God and by the Church. Without such authority he could not possibly accept the responsibility of his office and ministry. No one will begrudge him the use of his authority; on the contrary, people will expect him to exercise it.

But . . . in a spirit of kenosis: as a servant, mindful that the purpose of such authority is to enable him to render an efficient service. This is the key to the interpretation and use of the priestly

and hierarchical authority. It is an authority shared with us by Jesus, Lord and Servant; not the authority that comes from pride, from vain glory, from a desire to dominate or to shine.

In 1206 a group of preachers was trying hard - and unsuccessfully - to contain the Albigensian Heresy in Languedoc (Southern France), preaching "with the authority and pomp of papal legates" . . . until bishop Diego de Acebes came along and suggested that they preach in simplicity and poverty (with the authority of the Gospel) . . . and right away things began to change and results to be seen.

Here is an important teaching on kenosis from authority. It comes from Peter, first among the apostles: "Now I have something to tell your elders: I am elder myself, and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed. Be the shepherds of the flock of God that is entrusted to you; watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, because God wants it; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Never be a dictator over any group that is put in your charge, but be an example that the whole flock can follow. When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will be given the crown of unfading glory" (1P 5:1-4).

How many opportunities are found daily in the life of an active priest to remember this message: when dealing with parochial associations, with the priesthood of the laity, Church "elders" . . . We all know how exacting it can be to have to put up with unreasonable demands, know-it-all attitudes, arrogant ignorance . . . And how difficult to discern and practice the Kenosis that combines authority with service! . . . The Chief Shepherd, who is also the Good Shepherd, invoked by his disciple Peter, will always provide inspiration.

Kenosis from Success

Surely, all of us want to be successful in our ministry. When we sow the seed of God's Word, we expect it to grow and to bear fruit. That is why we accepted the Lord's invitation to go and work in his Vineyard in the first place. Besides, we want this success to flourish

in order to give real meaning in our lives to Jesus' words: "It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit" (Jn 15:8).

Quite frequently, however, "success" carries in God's dictionary a connotation that is different from the one it carries in ours. Success does not necessarily consist in spectacular results or in achieving that which we have set out to achieve, or in accomplishing things in accordance with our own timetable. Success in the apostolate consists mainly in working for the glory of God and the growth and expansion of his kingdom, and in doing it in the name of Jesus and with his spirit: the spirit of obedience, the spirit of acceptance, the spirit of submitting everything to the Will of the Father and to the plans that his providence has for us and for our ministry.

In the eyes of the world, Jesus' ministry was not only not crowned with success, but looked rather like a dismal failure: he confined his preaching to only a few thousand of his own people, of which only a handful followed him; and he ended up on a cross! Had he been invited to draw up a plan for Jesus on his coming into the world, we surely would have thought of a failure-proof plan. But the Father's plan was different, and Jesus' plan was different, too.

How often we quote when we preach to others, and how little we seem sometimes to believe in the words of St. Paul: "I sowed the seed, Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow. The one who sows and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because he makes the plant grow . . . For we are partners working together for God" (1Co 3:6-7, 9).

If we fail in this, we will in all probability fail, when success does come our way, to say truthfully, "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to you be the glory" (Ps 115:1), which would be tantamount to forgetting that the Vineyard is not ours. When I think of this I always recall a story heard long ago about a famous preacher who, on the point of death, seemed to be worried, and when told to remember the many sermons he had preached for the glory of God, replied: "My sermons . . . oh yes . . . my sermons! If the Lord does not bring them up, I'll keep quiet about them." The most disappointing words a priest can ever hear are: "You have had your reward" (Mt 6:2).

Kenosis from Popularity

Popularity: the greatest and sweetest form of human success. And therefore, the most sought after.

Popularity means acceptance on the part of the people, it means that the seed we sow is scattered far and wide, carried on by the wind like fertilizing pollen, producing new seeds, growing new flowers and bearing new fruit. With the best of intentions in his heart, and of course all for the glory of God, a young priest dreams of this upon leaving the seminary. And may it please the Lord to make his dream come true!

However, such a priest - all of us, for that matter - should never forget that he is a prophet, with a prophetic message in his hands, and that a prophetic mission means announcing things, proclaiming words, talking about situations, correcting mistakes, opposing injustice; in short, speaking up for the truth . . . And we all have heard the old saying that the truth hurts!

It would be childish and naive for a priest to expect to gain a popularity so wide and universal in his ministry as to preclude all forms of opposition, misinterpretation and criticism. For his own sake, he had better get ready for this from the beginning. Whether he likes it or not, a priest is a sign of contradiction, sometimes even among fellow priests. Jeremiah could give us a whole seminar on this kenotic reality. Jesus himself felt its hurting sting in his own flesh. The experience prompted him to remark: "A prophet is not honoured in his own country" (Mt 13:57). He also spoke of prophets before him being persecuted. But he enjoyed popularity before the Father: "This is my Son, the Beloved. My favour rests on him" (Mt 3:17).

Likewise, much more important for us and useful in our ministry, is the popularity expressed in Jesus' encouraging words: "Well done, good and trustworthy servant" (Mt 25:21). The popularity that really matters!

Kenosis from the World

"I gave them your message, and the world hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the evil one. Just as I do not belong to the world, they do not belong to the world. Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth; your word is truth. I sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world. And for their sake, I dedicate myself to you, in order that they, too, may be truly dedicated to you" (Jn 17:14-19).

When Jesus said this he was about to consummate his own kenosis with death on a cross; and although he did not use the word, he was obviously talking to his disciples about their own kenosis.

For a man who wants to be with God in solitude and contemplative prayer, to be sent into the world means kenosis: the kenosis of giving up his spiritual preferences and desires. Just as it meant kenosis for the Son of God to put aside his divinity in order to become one of us. Similarly, to be in the world without really belonging to it, demands constant kenosis. Kenosis from the criteria and ways of the world, so that one can be a valid witness to the values of the Gospel. Kenosis from the noise that surrounds us, so as to be able to live in the solitude and silence of our consecrated hearts.

How? The way to do this - as Jesus himself points out - is to be dedicated to God by means of the truth: the Truth come down from heaven, that is, Christ. The Truth of his teachings and of the example of his life. "Christ our Wisdom" (1Co 1:30).

Kenosis in Community Life

Every priest has his own personality, and his own work. Still, he can never think of himself alone. Somehow, he must always relate to the community, even if he lives alone in a parish. He still belongs to the community of his parish, the community of the presbyterium, the community of the diocese. If he is a religious, then his life is more markedly communitarian.

Community life is not easy, as we all know. It was not easy for the apostolic group, and in the end it proved to be impossible for Paul, Barnabas and Mark. There is no such thing as a perfect community. As Thomas Merton says, even saints cannot live with saints without some anguish and pain.

To live in community means to live in constant kenosis. The kenosis of being aware that others are living with us and that therefore we cannot simply do as we please, the kenosis of listening to the opinions of others, of giving in to them whenever necessary, of participating in community projects, even if we are not in agreement with them, of respecting the voice and discernment of the community. A painful Kenosis, but a most fruitful one too, for it can be a great school of spirituality for us.

Without this kenosis we are liable to grow too attached to our own ways, to become little dictators or chieftains in our office or parish, to consider ourselves our own masters . . . with dire consequences on our other kenosis from pride, self-sufficiency, authority, etc., and, therefore, on our ministry. On the contrary, in a community, kenotic humility on the part of its members leads to unity, and unity to strength, both in the life of the individuals and of the community and in their apostolate.

Paul speaks of community kenosis to the Philippians when he advises them: "I urge you, then, to make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being one in soul and mind. Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble towards one another, always considering others better than yourselves. And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own" (Ph 2:2-4).

Sacrificial Kenosis

The kenosis of Christ was not a kenosis in the abstract, a mere exercise in self-emptying. It was a kenosis undertaken for the very explicit purpose of enabling him to go through the Paschal Mystery of his death and resurrection.

Priestly kenosis is no mere mortification, is not an exercise in asceticism. It is much more than that: it is an identification with Christ, it is our entering into his Paschal Mystery. We have to share this mystery with others in our ministry; but how can we share it unless we live it, unless we experience it ourselves in our own flesh and blood, and when necessary to the quick?

How else can I say with feeling, "This is My Body," "This is the Cup of My Blood"? . . . To be a true priest I must try to identify myself with the Suffering Christ, and with his people; and like him, offer "My Body" (my time, my learning, my talents, everything I have) and "My Blood" (my readiness to suffer, to be misunderstood, to surrender my life in service) for his people and for his kingdom. The altar of the Eucharist is my kenotic altar, for it is the sacrificial altar of the cross upon which the Christ I am trying to imitate was offered.

Kenosis is a "hard saying" (Jn 6:60), and must of needs be painful. As it was painful in the life of Jesus. But this is to be expected - and welcomed! Can I, as a priest, hope to be free from suffering? If I did, I would not consider as addressed to myself Jesus' words about carrying the cross, about losing one's life, about the grain of wheat falling to the ground, about the disciples being persecuted as he himself was persecuted . . . That would amount to missing the whole point, not only of the priestly calling but of the Christian way of life as well.

If I want and expect the Word of God to be effective when I preach it to others, I should first let it do its "sacrificial" work in me, knowing full well that "The Word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of man's heart" (Heb 4:12).

An easy life, tailored to my own personal convenience and in accordance with my every wish, will deprive me of the many and great spiritual benefits I can draw from the practice of Christian kenosis.

Permanent Kenosis

Christ went through kenosis, not only at birth in Bethlehem, or as a child growing up in the obscurity of Nazareth, but all throughout his life, until the very end, until the cross, which was the last chapter of his kenosis, as well as the end of his life on earth. He was always the Saviour.

Different people look at Christ from different perspectives, and he is being revered as a social worker, as a defender of human rights, as an ethics teacher, as a revolutionary. In some ways he was all these and many other things too; but he was above all the Saviour, and in his life there was no room for anything that in whatever way would make him deviate from his mission of saving the world - and this through the kenotic means chosen by the Father: humanity, service, suffering and death.

When I reflect on this I cannot but conclude that priestly kenosis is not just for the years of formation or for times of crisis, but that on the contrary it must ever be present in my life and ministry. In other words, that wherever I am and whatever I do, I must always be a priest, with all the consequences.

At a certain stage in my life as a priest I experienced the danger of becoming an administrator; a danger that the Lord in his goodness granted me to recognize, for which I am deeply grateful. This, it seems, is a mistake that in the life of some priests is not difficult to make, often through no fault of theirs but rather imposed upon them by the circumstances attendant on their work, and at times perhaps even by a wrongly exercised form of authority on the part of their superiors. Once more, Roncalli (John XXIII) serves as inspiration here. Engaged for many years in the diplomatic work of the Vatican and in countries where the Church had no significant presence, he found it very hard to function as a priest. However, he always kept his priesthood very much in mind, and in his letters to priest friends engaged in administration, he strongly warns them against falling into this temptation.

Jesus was tempted to do his redemptive work as a king, as a performer, as a wonder-worker . . . and he flatly rejected all such

suggestions. We priests can be many things and engage in a wide variety of activities. We can be administrators, professors, executives . . . But not just administrators, professors, executives . . . Not to the point of losing our identity as priests. Not to the point of forgetting that we have been sent to preach the Good News. Any activity - no matter how "successful" and "necessary" - that deprives us of our priestly identity and distracts us from our real mission, is a subject for kenosis - no matter how "painful."

Kenosis from Unkenotic Emptiness

Kenosis means emptiness. However, not all emptiness is Gospel kenosis. There is a particular kind of emptiness which must be avoided at all costs: spiritual emptiness. The emptiness that results from leading a secularized life without prayer, without the presence of God in our hearts.

Whenever, through sloth or acedia or any other cause, I fall into this emptiness, my heart is certainly full, and perhaps even to the brim, but of the wrong things: of pride, of ambition, of sensuality, of worldliness . . . And my life is full of work, indeed too full, to the point of making me fall into what has come to be known as the "Heresy of Action," but an action that, no matter how well motivated in its inception, slowly changes its course and begins to look more like "my" action, "my" work, than the action, the work of the Lord. "My" Vineyard, not his!

God forbid that such unkenotic emptiness remain long in my heart. It should immediately be replaced by the real emptiness that the Lord wants to find in me. Otherwise, it might lead me to another, more fearful form of emptiness: the emptiness of feeling lost in the priesthood, and the danger of losing it altogether.

At times such as these my only possible option is to heed Jesus' invitation to the twelve when they returned from their preaching mission: "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest for a while" (Mk 6:31). In other words, to leave everything - without the usual excuses of urgent and unavoidable commitments - and retire for a while to the kenosis of solitude, there

to find the Lord in prayer, and thus enter once more into the authentic kenosis of the Gospel.

"By God's grace I am what I am" (1 Co 15:10). In the priesthood there is no substitute for a sustained life of prayer. Without it, everything else, no matter how important and "successful," will inevitably lead to unkenotic emptiness, and our ministry will end up being the "Lip Service" condemned by Jesus as hypocritical (Mk 7:6).

Kenotic All

Sometimes, when confronted with a situation that requires a particularly painful kenotic response, I wonder if that is not just my bad luck and ask, "Why me?" or, "Why now?" . . . Stupid thinking, really! And to convince myself that this is indeed stupid thinking, all I have to do is to open my eyes and look around. Anywhere and everywhere where the Lord is at work, kenosis is present.

Present in creation, where the Lord, so to speak, had to go out of himself in order to share his life with other beings. Present in redemption, which Christ accomplished precisely and only through kenosis. Visible in all the manifestations of God's presence in our lives, a presence made felt, not through fire and brimstone and in the full force of divine power, but through such humble and gentle means and ways as the Book of Scriptures, the quiet Mystery of the Eucharist, the inner voice of the Spirit in our hearts, the questioning of our conscience . . .

Present in the men and women chosen by the Lord to bring a special message of salvation to the world.

Abraham was asked to leave home and country, and go where he knew not, and even to offer his only son in sacrifice to the Lord - and he became the father of a new and great people. Joseph had to go through the painful kenosis of being sold into slavery by his own brothers - before becoming their saviour. Moses, a child in the river, was later on forced to give up the comfortable life of Pharaoh's Court and live as a fugitive in a foreign land - in preparation for his role as the deliverer of his people. Jeremiah, the youth who couldn't speak,

had to forget about his inexperience and ignorance and become a prophet; and whenever, tired of an apparently hopeless mission, he felt like running away from it, he had once more to empty his heart of his own feelings and desires and go on witnessing for the Lord. Paul was stripped of his self-sufficiency and self-righteousness on the road to Damascus - before being sent as an Apostle to the Gentiles. And Peter heard words of total helplessness: "When you are old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will bind you and take you where you do not want to go" (Jn 21:18).

Once I asked a Bible scholar what kenosis meant in the spiritual life, and he replied. "Mary's *Fiat*." The answer sounded simple, but I discovered a profound reality in it. Mary's *Fiat* means total availability to the Will of God, complete readiness for the action of the Spirit in her. An emptiness so absolute and perfect that it deserved to be filled with the presence of God in a unique way.

In fact, I can think of no saint who in his life and work did not have to go through clear - and often striking - situations of kenosis. If I do not make up a list here it is to avoid lengthening this paper unnecessarily.

And not only canonized saints. Prophets of our times, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, provide great examples of self-surrender and kenosis. Offhand, I can recall: Gandhi - a strong man of peace, who died violently in his quest for peace; Martin Luther King - the prophet with a "dream", killed for his dream; Mother Teresa - Love in Action, supported by radical kenotic poverty; John Paul II - A Voice in the World: the kenosis of preaching the Word *opportune et importune* when people listen, and when they do not; Bishop Romero - "This is My Body" upon the altar . . . Recently I have read about the extraordinary kenotic exodus of a whole people: the close to one million Catholics from North Vietnam who in 1954-55, in the face of the Communist occupation, left everything and migrated to the South "to be free" - as they repeatedly explained to whoever asked them - "to practise their faith," only to encounter the same problem twenty years later. The faith and kenosis of the Vietnamese Catholics is a prophetic testimony to the world, as the Pope acknowledged with the canonization last year of 117 of their martyrs.

Kenosis is a doctrine taught by all teachers of spirituality. Meister Eckhart speaks of *Exitus*, the flowing out and the breaking through of the soul in extreme poverty and simplicity in search of the very essence of God; and as a consequence, of its *Reditus* to the primal origins from which it emanated. *Que quereis hacer de Mi?* (What do you want from Me?) expresses in a masterly way the spirit of total *Fiat* of St. Teresa of Avila; being a presentation in poetic form of the thesis that Jean-Pierre de Caussade was later to develop as *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*. But, of course, the best known teacher of kenosis, and himself an extraordinary example of it, is St. John of the Cross. His is the most impressive description of the subject in the whole of Christian literature.

John's way to spiritual perfection is the *Nada* Path, and his constant theme is the self-emptying of everything by saying no to all things, both on the material/physical and on the spiritual/mystical levels. "The Path of Mount Carmel is the perfect spirit of Nothing, Nothing, Nothing . . . and even on the Mount, Nothing." Only in this way can the soul find true freedom to soar unhindered towards God, in whom is found everything else. And the way to this "perfect spirit of nothing" is the Dark Night of Sense and Spirit, a fire that slowly purifies the soul, making it walk in naked faith, until it reaches the Sublime Light in an embrace of spiritual union.

This is kenosis in its fulness. Of course, the profound degrees of kenosis and the mystical heights described by John are probably not for us "mortals" and "sinners", as I pointed out earlier. However, there is no doubt that in a lower degree the *Nada* Path should be everybody's path; the path followed by priests anyway.

At any rate, the desire to enter this path, if only on its first steps, should always be with us. St. Augustine has a most appropriate teaching on this: "This is our life, to be exercised by desire. But we are exercised by holy desire only in so far as we have cut off our longings from the love of the world. I have already pointed out - empty that which is to be filled. You are to be filled with good, pour out the bad. Consider that God wants to fill you with honey, but if you are already full of vinegar, where will you put the honey? What was in the vessel must be emptied out: the vessel itself must be washed out and made

clean and scoured, hard work through it may be, so that it be made fit for something else, whatever it may be" (Second Reading, Office of Friday, 6th Week, Ordinary Time).

In this connection, let us also remember St. Catherine of Siena's explanation that our capacity to progress in this desire grows within ourselves, and can keep growing until it becomes quasi-infinite, depending on the generosity with which we respond to God's will of love for us.

Non-Christian and Christian Kenosis

Kenosis is not exclusively a Christian doctrine and practice. It is found in plenty in some non-Christian religions and traditions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. It is an essential part of oriental mysticism, where meditation, based on abstraction from desires and thoughts, and accompanied by self-discipline and fasting, aims at a state of purification that will eventually lead to illumination. One could not possibly imagine a Sadhu in India or an Arhat or Zen Master in China or Japan without a very high degree of kenosis in his life. The doctrine of total renunciation, of complete mutation of flesh into spirit, is common to all of them.

Without any doubt, kenosis is - or should be - the way of a Christian. We are first initiated into it at Baptism, where we are buried in Christ, in the words of St. Paul. Jesus described it as the kenosis of being born again. Called to share in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, we are expected to die constantly to sin and to rise continuously to and in the life of grace.

True kenosis, of whatever kind, is never an end in itself - unless we wish to turn it into a masochistic experience or a mere exercise in asceticism. It is an emptiness that aims at fullness. For an oriental mystic, this fullness may mean perfect harmony with nature, inner euqanimity, enlightenment . . . For its part, Christian kenosis has very clear and definite objectives. It does not seek temporal or material advantages. Its purpose is not to run away from things (all things can be referred to God). It is no mere forgetting of past

unsavoury experiences (we can learn from them all, no matter how unsavoury). It is not the killing of pain (suffering has a great value in Christianity).

Christian kenosis is not just a matter of emptying our hearts of all desires and our minds of all thoughts for the sake of reaching a state of total indifference or abstraction, not even for the sake of attaining to a blissful nirvana or of getting lost in the immensity of a cosmic divinity. Christian kenosis does not intend to destroy our personality. It keeps it intact. More than that: it helps it grow. We are individual persons, created by God as such, and we shall continue to be so far ever. However, into this personality of ours comes, as an uplifting and perfecting element, the Spirit of Christ. We only empty ourselves of those things in our personality that go against the purpose that God had in mind when he created us and which are a hindrance to the work of the Spirit in us and through us.

This is why Christian kenosis can never be totally identified with non-Christian kenosis. It can borrow ideas from them; it can even make use of some of their methods, for instance, oriental methods of concentration in pre-prayer; but it must also be different in that it starts from Christ (the Model) and ends up in Christ (the Saviour). Any kenosis that somehow does not bring us closer to Christ is false, or at least incomplete, as far as the Gospel is concerned.

The more we empty ourselves of anti-Gospel elements the fuller the presence of the Spirit in our hearts, the greater our identification with Christ and our sharing in his divinity, and the more profound and effective our participation in his priesthood and in his ministry.

Joyful Kenosis

Christian kenosis is the most rewarding experience we can think of. It is not a negative idea at all. It opens the way for the Spirit of Christ to come full strength into our heart, filling it with his divine gifts and fruits.

Christian kenosis is therefore joyful kenosis, a kenosis that, in spite of its being painful, and precisely because it is painful and

perhaps to the degree in which it is painful, is the source of that peace that Jesus left us as his special gift, a Peace that in turn leads us to the "Joy Complete" he wants for us (Jn 15:11; 16:24). The "Joy Complete" that John the Baptizer - who lived a kenosis that few have ever equalled - felt at the presence of the Messiah (Jn 3:29).

This has a great bearing, for instance, on the important matter of celibacy. Celibacy does not mean a loveless life, is not mere emptiness, is not just giving up marriage for the sake of availability. It is kenosis all right, and a difficult one; but a kenosis that gives us all the opportunities to live in the intimacy of the friendship of God's Spirit and to experience a love of more universal dimensions. A kenosis so satisfying that it can fill us up with a highly spiritual form of joy and happiness. "My brothers, be joyful in your union with the Lord" (Ph 3:1). The Lord who said, "Carry the Cross," also said, "My yoke is easy and my burden light" (Mt 11:30).

A joyless kenosis would at the very least look and sound suspicious. "A sad saint is a sad sort of saint," St. Teresa used to say. And the Lord: "When you fast, do not put on a gloomy look, as the hypocrites do" (Mt 6:16). A "gloomy" (read "merely ascetic"?) attitude would not only render our kenosis affected and superficial, it would also adversely affect one of the most essential aspects and purpose of our calling and ministry, that of being messengers of peace and sources of consolation. "'Comfort my people' - says our God - 'comfort them! Encourage the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they have suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven'" (Is 40:1-2).

Fullness in Christ

Christian kenosis is joyful because Christian kenosis is not only emptiness; it is also fullness.

The *Carmen Christi* has a second part - the exaltation part. Let us quote it again:

*Therefore God has highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name;*

*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth;
And every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*

The kenosis that opened at the incarnation with its first public manifestation in the humility of Bethlehem and which, step by step, grew in intensity and realism until it reached its climax on the cross, did not end there. The cross was followed by resurrection, which again grew in intensity and meaning and significance in a process that included rising from death, ascending to the heavens, the sending of the Spirit, and sitting at the right hand of God, that is kingship over the new creation. Christ's kenosis, profound beyond all imagination, led to a fullness beyond all expectations.

But even while living in this world in full kenosis, Christ, in so far as his limited human nature allowed it, always enjoyed the fullness of the presence of God. He lived in an emptiness that was fullness at the same time. Perhaps we can call it his "One hundred percent" on earth for having accepted the kenosis offered him by the Father. At the last supper he knew that in a short while his disciples would abandon him, leaving him to face death alone. He told them so; and then he added these highly meaningful words: "And yet I am not alone, because my Father is with me" (Jn 16:32). What a great teaching for us! No matter how empty of other things, we are never really alone, we are never really empty, if the Father is with us.

When Christ invited us to follow him, he invited us to the kenosis of the cross, and also to the exaltation of the resurrection. Our kenosis has a second part too: in the glory of God the Father. Jesus told his disciples that he was going back to heaven to prepare a place for them. Furthermore, he promised them a share in his Kingship when he said: "You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:30).

Fullness in heaven . . . And fullness here on earth as well: in our personal life and in our ministry.

No matter how generous we are with the Lord, he is always infinitely more generous with us. When Peter said "We have left everything; what now?", he immediately countered, not only with life eternal in heaven, but also with "the one hundred per cent in this life" (Mk 10:28-30). The one hundred per cent in material things we do have in many ways, thanks to God's generosity and that of his people. The one hundred per cent in the spiritual realm is always before us, for us to take and to make grow, thus converting it - again thanks to God's generosity - into one thousand and even one million per cent. If this does not happen in our life, whose fault is it?

Chapter 10 (1-2, 17-20) of Luke carries a most interesting story for all of us priests. "After this the Lord chose another seventy-two men and sent them out two by two, to go ahead of him to every town and place where he himself was about to go." He sent them in kenosis: "Don't take a purse or a beggar's bag or shoes." And he told them to concentrate exclusively on their mission: "Don't stop to greet anyone on the road." And he made it clear to them that their first duty was to bring the Good News to others and to do all they could for everybody: "Whenever you go into a house, first say, 'Peace be with this house' . . . Heal the sick . . . and say to the people there, 'The Kingdom of God has come near us.'"

"The seventy-two men came back in great joy. 'Lord,' they said, 'even the demons obeyed us when we gave them a command in your name.'" - They had carried out their mission faithfully, and had done everything in kenosis, that is, in the name of the Lord and as instructed by him; and the results had been marvellous.

Jesus acknowledged the results: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." And confirmed them in the mission: "I have given you authority, so that you can walk on snakes and scorpions and overcome all the power of the enemy, and nothing will hurt you." And once more he made a promise of fullness, of exaltation: "But don't be glad because the evil spirits obey you; rather be glad because your names are written in heaven."

I consider Jesus' words in this story as addressed directly and personally to each and everyone of us his priests. Our vocation as

priests is to be with Christ in the full meaning of his kenosis.

*If we have died with him,
we shall also live with him.
If we continue to endure,
we shall also rule with him.*

(2 Tim 2:11-12)

Praying for Kenosis

Sometimes when I feel kenosis' hurting sting, I remember the father of the epileptic boy, who prayed, "I have faith; help my lack of faith" (Mk 9:24).

We all believe in kenosis as the way of Christ and as the way of the Christian; and we preach kenosis to others, even though we seldom use the word. But when it comes to ourselves . . . I, for one, find myself utterly wanting in it.

In the spiritual life there is no denying this fact: that humility is learned through humiliations, that poverty is understood when lived, that obedience means more than dialogue and rationalization . . . Shouldn't I, therefore, try to welcome - or at least, accept - opportunities for the practice of kenosis? And when necessary, shouldn't I even be ready to pray for such opportunities to come my way; and when they actually do, for light to discern them? . . .

"Rock bottom" is a most interesting stage of the spiritual life. A stage that can turn into a great kenotic experience (painful emptiness followed by joyous fullness). When a man has reached "rock bottom" and is confronted with the painful realization that all the things and values he had so far relied upon are no longer reliable, and accepts this fact in humility and faith, the Lord comes to the rescue. "Rock bottom" may come in the form of forced inactivity (Ignatius of Loyola) sickness and imprisonment (Francis of Assisi) lying flat and blind on

the ground (Saul of Tarsus) . . . Great moments of emptiness which resulted in extraordinary spiritual and apostolic harvests!

Somehow we all reach "rock bottom" every now and then in our lives: feeling empty inside, confused, weak of faith, our dreams shattered, our favourite apostolic project gone awry, our vocation wavering . . . The important thing in such moments is to feel that way "before the Lord", in prayer; remembering Mary's words and praying with her: "He has filled the hungry (the humble) with good things, and sent the rich (the self-sufficient) away with empty hands" (Lk 1:53).

Kenosis and Spiritual Direction

Kenosis is one aspect of the spiritual life where guidance is necessary, especially in the years of formation. A good number of young men enter the seminary and the religious life thinking of mortification, of giving up things, of self-surrender; and frequently with very wrong ideas about all this. Discernment is needed. The general principles of kenosis have to be made clear to them. Otherwise the consequences could be disastrous. A distorted view and practice of asceticism can develop distorted forms of spirituality in priests and in the people they guide spiritually. Narrow mentalities, timid and fearful attitudes, the false mysticism of "bowed heads, lowered eyes and closed mind!" has done much harm in the Church.

Here the spiritual director has an important job to do. However, while providing the necessary guidance, he must remember that we are all different in character, in psychology, in taste . . . and that we are supposed to remain different. Grace does not destroy nature. It imbues it with a supernatural element, but in full respect for its particular characteristics. The saints are not photocopies of one another, even if they share the same name and the same religious vocation, like the two Carmelite Teresas. And schools of spirituality are simply the result of different experiences by different people.

Basically, there is only one school of spirituality: Christ, and more specifically, the Paschal Mystery.

The spiritual director must avoid making his charges fit into a mould; and much less should he try - and this in a spirit of personal kenosis! - to make them fit into his own personal mould or form of spirituality. The seminary is not expected to create and train robots. We are forming men, in maturity and in the freedom of the Gospel. Men who on their own knowing what they are doing, respond, in their personal way, to Christ's kenotic challenge: "Follow me!"

GUILLERMO TEJON, O.P.

A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON THE MARIAN VIRTUE OF CHASTITY AND PRIESTLY CELIBACY

*Christus matrem virginem ideo elegit,
ut ipsa omnibus esset exemplum castitatis.*

St. Sophronius, De Assumptione

Pastoral perspective

KARL RAHNER ONCE REMARKED that those who sincerely seek Christian life have no need for mere concepts and abstractions. This is true especially for the virtue of chastity and the lifestyle it connotes which is celibacy.

Here is where the Blessed Mother comes in. She is no abstraction. Her chaste and celibate life tells us more about the "gift" than all books written about it.

Mary does not offer another "form of devotion" but a very concrete and pastoral example of what the "Virginal option" in the service of the Lord could mean.

With Mary as example, I would like to present to you, Spiritual Directors and Vocation Formators, some pastoral considerations in your efforts to help candidates for the priesthood and for the Religious life "interiorize" these ideals of chastity and celibacy. Indeed, as the Papal Nuncio said in his address to bishops regarding priestly formation: "The key to seminary formation is Christian interiorization."

Faith Dimension

It is interesting to note from all four Gospels of the New Testament that Mary never discussed nor discoursed on chastity and about celibacy. She only lived it - firmly believing, silently pondering and joyfully proclaiming it through her "Fiat" and her "Magnificat".

Her total oblation of self to God's word, her complete acceptance of her role to be the mother of Jesus and her unreserved attention and undivided focus on Jesus were first and foremost a response to the realization that she was *gratia plena*. It was a response to a gift, *the gift of God's love*. From that moment on she simply directed all her energy and life, only with the Word made Flesh in mind. That was her perfect *vacuo Domino*.

In Mary, we see clearly and concretely the meaning of virginity and celibate life as "gift." It was a *perfect reciprocation of love*. God perfectly gifted her, she likewise perfectly responded. She surrendered all that she was - body and soul - to fulfill her part in Christ's redemptive work.

Hence, if chastity as a virtue is ever to be appreciated and if a celibate lifestyle is ever to be treasured, spiritual directors must present these realities to seminarians through the *dimension of faith*. Only in this context - as in the Virgin Mary's life - can celibacy or being "single for the sake of the Kingdom" be accepted joyfully as a gift. Only also in this spiritual perspective will candidates to the priesthood see its deeper and richer meaning as a concrete sharing in the *Paschal Mystery*.

Consequently, any treatment of chastity and celibacy will be fruitful and meaningful only if it is *faith-oriented*. Emphasis on them

only from a point of view of discipline and reasons of convenience will not suffice.

Celibate Witnessing

Another pastoral consideration I wish to draw your attention to is that chastity and celibacy are lived not so much by talking about it but by simply witnessing more to it.

St. Jerome made this beautiful observation about the chaste and celibate life of Mary. Against the heretic Helvidius who denied the virginity of Mary, he wrote: "*Tu dicis Virginem non permanisse; ego mihi plus vindico, etiam ipsum Joseph Virginem fuisse per Mariam* —you say that Mary did not remain a virgin. I say that not only she remained a Virgin, but even that Joseph preserved his virginity through Mary."

This is the reason why we call on Mary rightfully and not just devotionally as "*Virgo Virginum* — *Virgin of Virgins*" because as St. Albert the Great once commented: "*Virgo Virginum, quia, sine praecepto, consilio, exemplo, munus virginitatis Deo Obtulit, et omnes virgines, per sui imitationem, in virginitate genuit* - with reason is Mary called the Virgin of Virgins, for she, without counsel or example of others was the first who offered her virginity to God. Thus did she bring all virgins who imitate her to God." Mary's witnessing draws others to live this way of life. She echoes what is said in Psalm 44:15 "after her shall virgins be brought . . . into the temple of the King" (cfr. St. Albert the Great, Super Miss., Q. 143, as quoted by St. Alphonsus Ligouri).

The pastoral implication of this for formators is clear. Formators must not only witness by their own lives as to the beauty and joy of their state of life, they must — by their own positive and joyful attitudes sort of lead, attract and contaminate the young novices or seminarians under their care to appreciate virginity.

A balanced "sexuality education" for seminarians is not enough; what is more needed are spiritual directors and confessors who are understanding, compassionate and patient. It is not enough that formators manifest or exude a mere stoic and "macho" image, nor is it enough to be sympathetic and accommodating, but what is needed are formators who themselves have "interiorized" and "integrated" their own commitment to celibacy. Only in this way can they, like the Blessed Mother, "*alios in virginitate genuit.*"

This poses a question to all spiritual directors and formators: *are you yourselves, first of all, happy with your own celibacy?*

I know that no one of us is perfect. Perhaps we, too, are all wounded healers ourselves. But the important thing is: do we witness at least to the fact that we acknowledge the value of a celibate commitment and that we are happy making all possible efforts to live it faithfully and joyfully? Do our actions, remarks and attitudes about celibacy encourage or turn off those who hear us?

In this regard, I would add this one important pastoral concern: it is important that spiritual directors and formators recognize first in themselves and then in their "subjects" the reality that interiorization is never instant, that it takes time — even years after ordination, and that it is a *continuous process of growth*. Even saints *struggled* with the growing pains of a chaste and celibate life especially in *community*.

It is healthy to bear in mind what was said of Jesus Himself in the Letter to the Hebrews: "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned" (Heb. 4:15-16).

Henri Nouwen in his book, *Intimacy*, warns about a too severe and rigid treatment of counselees undergoing difficult problems about chastity and celibacy. It can happen that formators — to hide their own inadequacies — would, by way of projection and compensation tend to be too harsh and hard on those who are encountering some rough sailing. Let us be aware of this possibility.

Celibacy is Apostolic Love

Mary's virginal life was not an abstraction, as we said; more so, in the context she lived it. As the perfect disciple and mother of Jesus, she, too, like her Son, lived a celibate life *in the service of others*. The incident in the Wedding of Cana is one concrete example. Her perception of the need of the young couple and at the same time her focus on Jesus prompted her to seek the assistance of her Son.

That's what happens when our whole attention, heart and mind are focused on Jesus. We become sensitive to the needs of others. We become truly "hospitable" in the scriptural sense. We become *genuinely sensitive* to the feelings and needs of others. In short, chastity and celibacy become an attitude of the heart when Jesus becomes the sole focus and concern of our life. We begin to think like Him, work like Him and love generously like Him.

Transformation in Jesus is the other side of the coin of a celibate or virginal commitment. Poetically, Fr. Le Frois compares this to the chalice we use for the celebration of the Eucharist. A Virginal heart and mind make us like that chalice — beautiful and worthy to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in our lives.

Not only that. Like Mary, our *celibacy leads us to be fully identified with the Eucharist* as the "Christ broken and given for others."

How Mary loved tells us in concrete how Jesus loved. His words: "Love one another as I have loved you" become real when we see how Mary lived it. Her total dedication to Joseph and Jesus was her concrete expression of living. She loved as Jesus loved. In celibacy we also love as Jesus loved — without conditions and reservations of any kind.

It is this kind of love that is *apostolic*. It is this *quality of loving* that can *transform* the world, as Pope John Paul II said.

It is this what chastity and celibacy are for: *to love as Jesus loved and to serve as Jesus served*. And for all this, we thank Mary about whom St. Sophronius said: "God chose the most pure Virgin for his Mother, that she might be an example of chastity to all."

Conclusion

Just by way of supplementing the thoughts already shared, I would like in conclusion just to share with you this statement of Pope John Paul II in his letter to priests on Holy Thursday last year, 1988:

"The analogy between the Church and the Virgin Mother has a special eloquence for us, who link our priestly vocation to celibacy, that is, to making ourselves 'eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven'. We recall the conversation with the Apostles, in which Christ explained to them the meaning of this choice (cf. Mt 19:12) and we seek to understand the reasons fully. We freely renounce marriage and establishing our own family, in order to be better to serve God and neighbor. It can be said that we renounce fatherhood 'according to the flesh,' in order that there may grow and develop in us a fatherhood 'according to the spirit' (cf. Jn 1:13), which possesses at the same time maternal characteristics. Virginal fidelity to the Spouse, which finds its own particular expression in this form of life, enables us to share in this intimate life of the Church, which, following the Virgin, seeks to keep whole and pure the *fidelity* she has pledged to her Spouse. By reason of this model — yes, of the prototype which the Church finds in Mary — it is necessary that our priestly choice of celibacy for the whole of our lives should also be placed within her heart. We must have recourse to this Virgin Mother when we meet difficulties along our chosen path. With her help we must seek always a more profound understanding of this path, and ever more a complete affirmation of it in our hearts. Finally, in fact, there must be developed in our life this fatherhood 'according to the spirit', which is one of the results of 'making ourselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God' " (No. 5, p. 12).

MOST REV. CAMILO D. GREGORIO, D.D.

ADDRESS TO THE CONVENTION OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS OF SEMINARIES IN ASIA

A FEW DAYS AGO IT WAS my privilege to address a convention of Religious Formators of Women Religious. They assigned the opening Eucharistic celebration with its homily to me. And now, at this international Asian gathering of spiritual directors, a similar task has been entrusted to me, it seems the good Lord is sending me a message; he is bidding me to turn my thoughts to the need that we have, as a priests, for the inner life.

What may I share with you, dear fathers and brothers, as I address you this morning? You are "spiritual directors." Your task is to form other spiritual directors too. For is not every priest a spiritual guide for others also, by the place and role he is given in the Christian community? Was not an older name for the priest that of "ghostly father"? (I believe that in some countries that name endures to this day). And yet nowadays the spiritual director is expected to undergo specialized formation and certain "professional knowledge and skills" are needed qualifications in the work he must do. In that sense, I

suppose, a "mere pastor" like the bishop does not pretend to be a "spiritual director"! Yet we are not to forget that a priest, as leader of the community in its faith, its hope and love, must be first and foremost one who helps Christians — as individual persons and in their communities — live out the grace of their baptism. And this grace of baptism is the life in the Spirit.

Thus, every spiritual director must first of all be one who has the experience of the Spirit.

Let me cite here at some length a passage taken from an interview with a great contemporary theologian, not long before his death. I am told it is a wise man's summing up of the theology of the priesthood, after a whole lifetime's search for understanding, after a whole lifetime's lived experience as a priest.

A priest has, of course, thousands of duties: he has to care for the poor in his community, he must work for peace, he is to awaken a critical spirit toward surrounding society, in his Christian community. But now I would like to say something about the real heart of the priesthood.

A priest is one sent by Christ, an apostle of the eternal God, with one message that far surpasses any and all earthly desires and possibilities. This message is: *there is a God, and he in his inexplorable way wants to be a part of our lives*. Even if he caused a cosmos to explode (a cosmos which may be ten thousand light years away!), he is still with me, he still loves me, he still surrounds me, he wants to make my existence eternal. He wants to reward me with his presence and his eternal life. The word in which God commits himself to us must be proclaimed; it must be communicated, it must be witnessed to. It is eternal through the crucified and risen Jesus. And there must be people who do this.

This word of God in the crucified and risen Jesus is the reality: challenging, redeeming, satisfying, that is why we call it a sacramental word of grace. If, because of this, the priest is also the dispenser of the sacraments, the administrator of Christ's last supper, in which the crucified and risen Jesus is present, then perhaps he should have become a social worker instead.

These words are not my own, although its message I want to make my own, before you today. They are the words of the theologian Karl Rahner, spoken in 1982, less than two years before his death. This may surprise some of you. But his editors tell us these are his last words on the priesthood, the summary of his most mature thought.

He goes on to speak of the difficulty of preaching the message of the Gospel today: difficult for the priest may not just repeat, in a boring way, dead catechetical formulae. He may not take refuge in homilies of social critique, of political activism; no, he may never forget that he is first of all "*a guru of the living God, a guru of a loving God.*" He may never forget that he is not this just by his own choosing, just by his own doing. "Rather, he is one who has been graced and empowered by God."

There are people who feel the need to aim for more on earth than just making money and being able to take trips. There are people who yearn for the incomprehensibility of God, for the eternity of God, to these people the priest says . . . you are a person of eternity, of absolute yearning, of unlimited hoping. You can be this, because we have experienced the love of God in Jesus Christ. I do not see (Rahner goes on) why a priest with this vision cannot overcome the "crisis in the priesthood today." True, the triviality and the grayness of day-to-day life overshadow this, even in the priest's life. So the priest is necessarily one who also must constantly pray, "I believe, Father, help my unbelief." He, too, must accomplish a breakthrough in hope — out of the banality of the mundane, into God's eternity.

A man cannot be a priest and be happy if he is not a spiritual person, if he is not always beginning again . . . he must be a man of God, a man of the experience of the Holy Spirit, a man of eternity. If he is not this, then the priesthood will be unbearable burden of him.

We should reflect much more upon the real heart of the priesthood. There must be men in our banal and brutal society who nurse the fire in the experience of the mystery of God. Each one will do this in his own way, depending on his talents and personal history. Each one will be more or less "successful" in

proclaiming this message as a servant of God's kingdom . . . every priest must constantly say to himself: "within limits given you by God, you must try to be truly a prophet, a man of God, one moved by the fire of God."

You will forgive me for citing so many paragraphs from Karl Rahner's reflections on the priesthood today. I was struck by them; I was struck by their wisdom, you will hear many other and maybe wiser reflections, during these days of your conference, so I did not feel I had to "cover everything," even in the keynote address. But I did want to speak on the "heart of priesthood." I do want to make this my contribution to your thought and prayer these days: the bottomline dimension of the priesthood, more important today than ever before, is the priest's own profound experience of God and the sharing of this experience with others. In the end, the priest must be a man of God.

Sociologists tell us that all over the world the process of secularization goes on. In some societies the word "God" has lost its meaning for many people. This is true especially of the west, but in many Asian countries today this is increasingly true also. This cannot but affect also the lives of priests; for it is not the outside world only which is growing secularized; the heart undergoes that process too. The priest too, only too often, bears the burden of the seeming absence of God in his life.

For the priest, then, the present age is an increasing summon to walk the path of faith, to learn to surrender himself ever more deeply to "the abiding mystery whom we call God" that is the mystery in which our lives must be lived, increasingly, as we grow year by year in our priesthood. For does not St. Paul say, "this is how we should regard ourselves: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1).

Some Difficulties Considered

Having given you the substance of my message today, let me for the moment "defend myself" against some difficulties which maybe brought up — not perhaps by you, but by those "less wise".

Difficulty: "You are returning to a disincarnate spirituality; back to the kind of priest who did not have his feet on the ground. Back to the priest who did not share the lot of the 'the least, the lowliest, the lost', now our spirituality must be that of service to people, above all the poor!"

Let me reply: First, I agree that priestly spirituality is a "spirituality of love, embodied in humble service." With Vatican II, and Pope John Paul II, I agree that we must, by word, and example, live the "preferential love for the poor" in our lives and that is a prime component of our spirituality. But as I said before, in this address I do not intend to touch everything. There will be other themes, other speakers, other notes will be sounded. I was asked to give the "keynote", it is the one note I ring.

Secondly, you know better than I that it is from some authentic experience of God that our pastoral and social presence and action must flow, if it is to be in the service of the kingdom of God. In the history of the Church, it is the mystics who have made the best prophets, even the most effective activities. Let me take this sentence from recent book on spiritual direction: "the person deepening in prayer and growing in faith is not called out of the world to be with God, but is more profoundly immersed in that world's heart" (K.M. Dyckman, L. Patrick Carroll, *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet, An introduction to Spiritual Direction*, N.Y. Paulist Press, 1981, p.81). Recall only the names of Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila, of Francis of Assisi and Ignatius of Loyola. Recall the life of the Holy Cure of Ars, St. John Baptist Marie Vianney. And in our day: Archbishop Oscar Romero, Thomas Merton; maybe we should mention our own Bishop Benny Tuftud, Jean Vanier who has "touched the wounds of Jesus and experienced his own weaknesses, but travels the world setting up a network of places for people, wounded people, to be together, to know the community which God's love creates." Mother Teresa is touched by God and leaves her beloved community to begin a new one and care for dying people on the streets of Calcutta . . . and to challenge every aspect of "the lifestyle of the rest of us."

Difficulty: "Our spirituality must be concerned above all with the creation of a more egalitarian, a more sharing society — even a socialist country!"

Let me reply: Let me share a little of my experience in China, in Russia, in Poland, — all of these socialist societies. What moved me most in Moscow, in Riga, in Kaunas in Lithuania, was the people's hunger for God. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which comes from the mouth of God." These words rang in my heart as I saw the intensity with which the people worshipped in the churches of Russia, as I witnessed the power of faith and prayer in Poland — above all in that great shrine of Jasna Gora. It is God who keeps the life of man human; it is the experience of God which is water in the human desert. A Protestant minister from East Germany told me that the young in his country turn to ministers and priests who, they believe, have something of the authentic experience of God to share with them. And in Beijing and Xiamen and Shanghai, it is the priest "with the sense of God" whom people seek out, because not all the cultural revolutions in the world can wipe out the hunger for God in the heart of man.

Difficulty: We are spiritual directors. In a sense we are called to be teachers, not mystics. Mysticism is free gift of God; you cannot prescribe it!"

Let me reply: Ah, that will be a good topic for you to discuss, during these days. But let me recall Pope Paul VI's words, which I remember (but not word for word) from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. He says that people today are surfeited with words. They will listen to teachers *only if they are witnesses*. In the biography of Father Tony de Mello there is a quotation from Fritz Perls. "What is the act of teaching? Teaching is showing that something is possible." The book's author, Fr. Carlos Valles, says, "Tony de Mello had shown me that direct experience of God in this life is possible. That was the greatest favor he could ever have done to me." (Carlos Valles, *Unencumbered by Baggage: Tony de Mello, A Prophet for Our Times*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, India, 1987, p. 143).

Is that not, in the end, what spiritual direction is about? We welcome the deeper psychological knowledge we possess today; we learn as much about it as we can. We dig deep into the wells of an authentic humanism, because *grace builds on nature, it does not destroy it*. But spiritual direction is more than that: It is a leading to

the wellsprings of the Spirit. *Grace after all perfects nature*; in Christ we see the fullness of what the human can be. And the perfecting of nature always means cross; that is the law of Christian life. This law knows no exceptions. And the end of spiritual direction is not secular humanism: It is coming to the presence of God. It is being led by the Spirit. It is going to the Father, I know I speak to men who themselves have experience of the cross, and experience of the Spirit. I beg you not to forget that, in the end that is what we seek from you: Your experience of the cross; your experience of the joy and power of the Spirit.

One last point: A story

I have mentioned Fr. Tony de Mello and one of his tales, let me end with one of his stories, from his book, *The Song of the Bird*.

He tells the story of a great monastery on an island: a monastery which had a thousand bells; several times a day these thousand bells would ring. People came from near and far, from distant land to hear these thousand bells. A great earthquake came to that country, and the island sank and with it the monastery. But even after this, from time to time, people standing by the sea where the island sank, would hear from the ocean, the ringing of a thousand bells.

A young man came from afar; he wanted more than anything in the world to hear the sound of the bells. He built a hut beside the shore. Day and night he sat near the sea straining his ears to hear the ringing of the bells. Intently, with all his attention, seeking to hear the bells.

Days passed by, weeks, months, finally — a year, listening, listening, but never once did he hear the bells. He had to return home with much disappointment. But on the last evening, he said: "for days and nights I have tried to catch the ringing of the bells, and all I heard was the surge of the waves, the sound of the sea. These I tried not to hear, straining for something else. Tonight, let me just hear the waves, let me just enjoy the sound of the sea." And so he sat there, listening to the sea. But then, first faintly, then louder and louder, he

heard the bells, the ringing, the ringing of the bells, the thousand bells, from the bottom of the sea, then he knew that what he had sought in vain, day-by-day, the ringing of the bells, was there, all along, in the surge of the waves, in the sound of the sea.

Conclusion

I am told that to his Jesuit scholastics, Ignatius of Loyola gave the motto: *Ut In Omnibus Quaerant Deum*. In all things, in everything, let them seek God. He knew what the young man knew on the last night, beside the sea. God is in all things; the experience of God may be given us, in our experience of the daily round of our lives. If teaching is showing that something is possible, let your lives show those you direct, that it is possible to know, in their lives, the presence of the living God. There is no greater gift you can give them, as they too go forward in their pilgrimage to the heart of that living God, to the heart of that loving God.

May our blessed mother, the seat of wisdom, direct all your thoughts and deliberations during these days. May her Immaculate Heart lead you in "pondering in your own hearts" — and bring you to "all wisdom and knowledge" in the heart of her Son.

+ JAIME L. CARDINAL SIN

HOMILY AND CLOSING ADDRESS

VERY REVEREND FATHER Constant Bouchaud, Representative of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples; Reverend Monsignori, Fathers, Religious Brothers; My friends:

Finis coronat opus. The concluding page of a book is in the crown of the total work. Tonight this Latin phrase becomes alive and relevant, as we conclude the first Congress of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries. And like in every end of a memorable encounter, we wish to look back with joy and gratitude to the days we have gone and the time spent in common quest for ways and means to enrich, expand and invigorate our knowledge concerning the spiritual formation of our priests. I feel confident that this congress, the first of this continent, will redound to the benefits of the Church in Asia, where the harvest is indeed great and where there is much promise of priestly and religious vocations.

As I deliver the closing remarks tonight, I feel I owe you a little explanation of my present predicament. I shall not make a long story,

but more than two weeks ago, I had a bad fall during a trip from northern Luzon. My present condition did not, however, prevent nor discourage me to come here, and in spite of my being temporarily handicapped, I am here with you, happy to be counted among you, prompt to give you my whole-hearted support and enthusiastic to share with you my conviction that the spiritual formation of our seminarians constitute an important and essential part in seminary training; and hence, the spiritual directors are the Church's best guarantee that this task will be carried on faithfully. Doubtlessly, theirs is the big responsibility, but theirs also are the joy and merits that the people of God will be blessed some day by good and holy priests through their instrumentality.

My brothers: Many thoughts have crossed my mind, while I was preparing this talk. I have chosen a few, and I shall try to be concise and brief. In the first place, I shall not attempt here to give a lengthy observation about the spiritual formation and its components nor is it my intention to deal on the modern problematic of spiritual life in the seminaries. I know that for the past nine days, you have been lifted up by the speakers' many striking ideas and elucidations related to this matter. I shall try, however, in my talk under the guise of homily to underline some relevant ecclesiastical pronouncements that will help and encourage you in your work.

Resemblance to Christ

Firstly, the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, while treating on the subject of spiritual formation in the seminaries, gives an outline of the life that seminarians should gradually acquire. One of its outstanding features may be summarized as follows:

"The end of spiritual training is the perfection of charity, and it should lead the student, not just by dint of his ordination, but from the intimate fellowship of his whole life, to become in a special way another Christ " (R. F., 44)..

To become another Christ is to be conformed to Him (*configuratio Christi*) not only through sacred Ordination, but with their whole

heart, gradually by daily effort taking up the life taught by the Gospel.

This concept of conformity to Christ, which involves the reproduction of Christ's image upon oneself, is found in the theological perspective of St. Paul (Rom 8:29). God wishes to see reproduced in his priests the characteristics of his incarnate Son and in this regard, he provides for us a model and a source - Christ himself.

The reproduction of Christ's image is a process that begins with a series of voluntary giving-up of oneself by renouncing even the legitimate pleasures, so that the seed of supernatural life may freely grow in the soul. To visualize this concept, St. Paul spoke of our "old self" that was crucified with Christ (Rom 6:6). In this way, our assimilation or incorporation with and in Christ happens precisely on the time when we become "dead to sin" and a new life emerges in us. During this process, we go through the experience of dying to sin, being buried and rising, just as Christ did.

From the time that a person learned the value of voluntary divesting or of giving-up of something or someone, then he becomes a new person prompt to be molded in a new life in Christ. There is now a reorientation of man's very self, so that he could no longer even think of going astray from God.

The resemblance to Christ begins now to appear, especially in the ever increasing domination of charity over all our conduct. Gradually but steadily, love or charity will orient every action that we make towards God, so that St. Paul's teaching expressed in the words, "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me," (Gal 2:20) comes to be fully realized in our souls.

To follow Christ and to be conformed to Him in the spirit of the Gospel is, in the words of the *Ratio Fundamentalis* "an intention certainly to be renewed everyday."

To insure that this is faithfully followed and maintained, the same *Ratio* prescribes the following guidelines: "The virtue of penance, then, should be instilled into future priests . . . Students should strive to acquire a real enthusiasm for a life crucified with Christ, through love of him, and for purity of heart. They should therefore

pray fervently for the help of grace they need; frequent recourse to the sacrament of penance should become a habit; moreover each should have his spiritual director to whom he may humbly and confidently open his conscience, so as to be guided safely in the way of the Lord" (*Ratio Fund*, 55)

The Marian Dimension

The second point for reflection deals with a meaningful passage from the recent encyclical letter of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*: "Behold your Son!" these words fully show the reason for the Marian dimension of the life of Christ's disciples (*Redemp Mater*, 45).

The spiritual training of our seminarians should be marked with a special reference to the Mother of the high and eternal Priest. Such training will evidently be lopsided unless it is Marian in its orientation and source. The priestly life to which a seminarian's life should be directed is necessarily a life of faith. In other words, the life and ministry of a priest is centered on faith and derives strength from it. The priestly vocation belongs to the realm of faith and when the Letter to the Hebrews speaks about it, it clearly states that "one does not take this honor on his own initiative, but only when called by God as Aaron was" (Heb 5:4).

The Second Vatican Council has a beautiful way of placing the Blessed Virgin Mary before our eyes to be an exemplar and model of faith. It stated in a concise manner that "Mary is the model of the Church in the matter of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ." (*Lumen Gentium*, 63). Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, elaborated this pronouncement and added that "Mary's exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, for individuals and for communities..." (*Redemp Mater*, 6). Like everyone of us, the Blessed Virgin Mary received faith as God's gift. She knew this truth, but it was in the way that she responded to it, that the Church is inviting us, especially our seminarians, to follow. It was during the Visitation, when Elizabeth indicated how the Virgin of Nazareth responded to the gift of faith. The Gospel

recorded this marvellous reaction on Mary's part for all of us to reflect and meditate: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Lk 1:45). These words imply that Mary entrusted herself to God completely and without reserve, following this up with a perfect openness to God's action and sustaining this with her perfect cooperation to every motion coming from the Holy Spirit.

On our part then, it is our task to instill in our future priests to accept confidently and fully the truth of God's word and to conform themselves to God's mysterious and unfathomable designs with a ready and generous heart. In this regard, the "obedience of faith," of which St. Paul profoundly spoke in his Letter to the Romans, found a place in Mary's heart and in a parallel manner it will also discover a place in the heart of seminarian, who keeps Mary as his model and source of inspiration in the pilgrimage of faith.

Our third and last point of reflection focuses our attention to a particular provision with important connotations and consequences contained in the *Ratio Fundamentalis* and supported by the authority of the new Code of Canon Law (246,4): "Each (seminarian) should have his spiritual direction to whom he may humbly and confidently open his conscience" (*Ratio Fund.* 11).

The biblical foundation usually alluded to in order to corroborate the existence and necessity of spiritual direction is the role of Ananias in the conversion narrative concerning St. Paul. The Acts of the Apostles narrates that when Paul was converted, Christ, instead of manifesting directly to him his designs, sent him to Ananias to learn from this man's lips what the Lord wanted him to do (cf. Acts 9:6).

I shall not argue for or against this biblical interpretation. However, nobody can deny that it is an ancient custom in the Church that persons feeling in their souls a call to a higher degree of perfection, had sought guidance and direction in their spiritual life from another person, who were noted for piety and wisdom. This practice has been continued and is bound to continue particularly in houses of formation.

Presbyterorum Ordinis admits that it is of the greatest advantage to the Church to help those who are preparing for the priesthood with "a diligent and prudent spiritual direction." Who shall deny this spiritual assistance to a person who seeks to become one day a shepherd of souls?

I sincerely admire the exceptional interest of the Asian bishops, supported by an equally enthusiastic seminary formators, to have a constant supply of priests to serve as spiritual directors in the seminaries. I pray to Almighty God to equip these priests with much learning, prudence, empathy, gentleness and firmness of character. Above all, I express a wish rooted in a common sentiment of seminarians, that beside the virtues and qualities I have mentioned, they be always available and be filled adequately with the spirit of piety.

Needless to say, sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit and it is only the Lord who can touch the heart of a human being and move that heart to love Him. However, the spiritual director is always that man of God, who is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, a gift to the Church and God's witness in discovering His designs in the souls of seminarians.

Allow me, in conclusion, to congratulate you all in your praiseworthy and meritorious service to the Church. May you be inspired, encouraged and challenged by God's word that persuasively says: "Each one of you has received a special grace, so like good stewards responsible for all those different graces of God, but yourselves at the service of one another" (1 Pet 4:10).

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

+ BRUNO TORPIGLIANI, D.D.

DIRECTORY

FIRST CONGRESS OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS OF SEMINARIES OF ASIA

CANNOSA RETREAT HOUSE, TAGAYTAY CITY
FEBRUARY 15 to 23, 1989

DAY 1, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Missionary Dimension of Spiritual Formation in Asian Seminaries

Speaker: Rev. Constant Bochaud, S.S.
Moderator: Rev. Vicente G. Cajilig, O.P.
Reactors: Rev. Robin Andrews (Malaysia)
Rev. Lazaro Revilla, S.D.B. (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Deogracias Rosales

DAY 2, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Human and Moral Qualities of Candidates to the Priesthood

Speaker: Rev. Venancio S. Calpotura, S.J.
Moderator: Rev. Paul Bernier, S.S.S.
Reactors: Rev. Francis Gomes Sima (Bangladesh)
Rev. Lester Avestruz (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Jesus Lucas, S.J.

DAY 3, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

*Eastern and Western Spirituality:
Points of Convergence*

Speakers: Mr. Stephen Lo
Sr. Therese Joseph Patrick, O.C.D.
Moderator: Rev. Maximiliano Rebollo, O.P.
Reactors: Rev. Harry Vas (India)
Rev. Celestino Pascual (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. John Northrop, M.M.

DAY 4, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Spirituality of Work

Speaker: Rev. Alex Menez
Moderator: Very Rev. Francis de Leon
Reactors: Rev. Francois Vandekerkove, S.A.M. (Pakistan)
Rev. Jesus Lucas, S.J. (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Jess Enojo

DAY 5, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

The "How" of Spirituality

Speaker: Rev. Thomas Green, S.J.
Moderator: Rev. Bill Abbot, S.J.
Reactors: Rev. Christian Vaz (Sri Lanka)
Rev. Charles Meagher, S.S.C. (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Bill Abbot, S.J.

DAY 6, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Unity: A Way to Sanctity

Speaker: Rev. Anton Weber
Moderator: Rev. Vic Torres, C.M.
Reactor: Rev. Joe Mathias, S.J. (India)
Introducer: Rev. Alex Menez

DAY 7, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

The Person of the Spiritual Director

Speaker: Rev. Guy Pigeon, P.M.E.
Moderator: Rev. Ruben Elago, M.S.P.

Reactors: Rev. Lawrence Yiu (Hong Kong)
Rev. Dave Warren (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Romeo Panes, O.S.J.

DAY 8, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

An Experience of Kenosis

Speaker: Rev. Guillermo Tejon, O.P.
Moderator: Rev. Joe Mathias, S.J.
Reactors: Rev. Adam Pereira, C.S.C. (Bangladesh)
Rev. Ramon Bautista, S.J. (Philippines)
Introducer: Rev. Quirico Pedregosa, O.P.

DAY 9, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

*The Marian Virtue of Chastity
and Priestly Celibacy*

Speaker: Most Rev. Camilo Gregorio, D.D.
Moderator: Rev. Robin Andrews
Reactors: Rev. Joseph Bui Duc Tien (Australia)
Rev. Nicholas Ho (Singapore)
Introducer: Rev. Lester Avestruz

Executive Committee

Fr. Vicente G. Cajilig, O.P.
Ecclesiastical Faculties
University of Santo Tomas
Manila, Philippines
(Tel. No. 731-31-25 / 731-05-58)

Fr. William M. Abbott, S.J.
San Jose Seminary
P.O. Box 4475
Manila, Philippines
(Tel. No. 998-176 / 962-671)

Fr. Paul Bernier, S.S.S.
20 Sunnyside St., New Manila
Quezon City, Philippines
(Tel. No. 70-68-59)

Fr. Victorino Torres, C.M.
St. Vincent School of Theology
221 Tandang Sora Ave., Quezon City
Philippines
(Tel. No. 968-063)

Fr. Maximiliano Rebollo, O.P.
Ecclesiastical Faculties
University of Santo Tomas
Manila, Philippines
(Tel. No. 731-31-25 / 731-40-66)

Msgr. Francisco de Leon
San Carlos Seminary
P.O. Box 148, Makati, Metro Manila
Philippines

Lay Assistants

Ms. Arlyn Igtiben
Mr. Omar Mayo
Mr. Roberto Evangelista
Mr. Rene Aguilar
Mr. Jojo Iñola
Mr. Felizardo Datu, Jr.

Directory of Speakers

1. Fr. Constant Bouchaud
Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples
Palazzo delle Congregazioni
Piazza Pio XII
Citta del Vaticano
2. Fr. Venancio S. Calpotura, S.J.
Sacred Heart Novitiate
P.O. Box 172
Novaliches, Quezon City
1117 Philippines
3. Fr. Thomas Green, S.J.
San Jose Major Seminary
P.O. Box 4475
Manila, Philippines

4. Most Rev. Camilo D. Gregorio, D.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of Cebu
St. Joseph's Church, Mandaue City
6433 Philippines
5. Mr. Stephen Lo
1479 D. Oliman Street
San Miguel Village, Makati, Metro Manila
1200 Philippines
6. Fr. Alex Menez
Formation House (Nazareth), Manduriao
Iloilo City, Philippines
7. Fr. Guy Pigeon, P.M.E.
Regional Major Seminary of Mindanao
P.O. Box 189, Davao City
9501 Philippines
(Tel. No. 7-6705)
8. Sr. Theresa Joseph Patrick of Jesus-Mary, O.C.D.
Carmelite Monastery of St. Therese
4 Gilmore Avenue, New Manila
Quezon City, Philippines
9. Fr. Guillermo Tejon, O.P.
Provincial, Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary
Hamburg Villa, Block 2
8-10 Eastbourne Road, Kowloon Tong
Hongkong
10. Fr. Anton Weber
School of Spirituality for Priests in Asia (Focolare)
Tagaytay City
2721 Philippines

Directory of Delegates

AUSTRALIA

1. Fr. Joseph Bui Duc Tien
Catholic Community
95 Mt. Alexander Road
Flemington, Victoria
Australia

BANGLADESH

2. Fr. Francis Gomes Sima
National Major Seminary
Block A 112, Road 27
Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh
(Tel. No. 601-340)
3. Fr. Adam Subash Pereira, C.S.C.
Pobitra Krush Sadhana Griha
Notre Dame College
P.O. Box 5, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
(Tel. No. 405-785)

HONGKONG

4. Fr. Lawrence Chungkit Yiu
Holy Spirit Seminary
6 Welfare Road, Aberdeen
Hongkong
(Tel. No. 5-530265)

INDIA

5. Fr. Joe Mathias, S.J.
Vidyajyoti,
23 Rajnivas Marg.
Delhi — 110054
India
(Tel. No. 2524231 / 2524707)
6. Fr. Harry Vaz
St. Pius College
Aarey Road, Goregaon East
Bombay 400063
India
(Tel. No. 691217 / 699457)

ITALY

7. Fr. Francois Constant Bouchaud
Via Dei Fratelli Bandiera - 17A
00152 Roma, Italy
(Tel. No. 589-1420)

KOREA

8. Fr. Jai-Man Thaddeus Park
Catholic University
90-2, Hye-Hwa, Dong
Seoul 100-530, Korea
(Tel. No. 762-2501)
9. Fr. Jung-Woon Lee
Suwon Catholic College

226 Wang Rim, Bong Tam
Hwa Syeng Keyngki Do
South Korea
(Tel. No. (0331)-34-1081-85)

MALAYSIA

10. Fr. Robin Andrews
College General
Jalan Chengai
11200 Penang, Malaysia
(Tel. No. 802002)
11. Fr. William Poilis
St. Peter's College
P.O. Box 327, 93704 Kuching
Sarawak, Malaysia
(Tel. No. 082-244496)

PAKISTAN

12. Fr. Francois Vandekerkove, S.A.M.
Christ the King Seminary
National Catholic Theological Institute
P.O. Box 17748
Hassan Square near Noman Complex
Karachi - 47, Pakistan
(Tel. No. (021) 42-87-40)

PHILIPPINES

13. Fr. J. Aguirre
Holy Rosary Major Seminary
P.O. Box 788 Concepcion Heights
Naga City
Philippines
14. Fr. Ernesto Manalili Arceo, O.P.
Central Seminary
University of Santo Tomas
España, Manila
Philippines
(Tel. No. 731-3125)
15. Fr. Lester Avestruz
Sacrd Heart Seminary
6501 Palo, Leyte
Philippines
(Tel. No. 323-2214)

-
16. Ramon Bautista, S.J.
St. John Vianney
Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 136
Cagayan de Oro City 9000
Philippines
(Tel. No. 55-70)
 17. Fr. Roberto Ruben Cavite Elago
Fil-Mission Seminary, Tagaytay City or
MSP Central House
9105 Banuyo St., San Antonio Village
Makati, Metro Manila
(Tel. No. 851-634)
 18. Fr. Jess Enojo
St. Joseph Regional Seminary
Jaro, Iloilo City
Philippines
(Tel. No. 76277)
 19. Fr. Juan Maria H. Ledesma
San Pablo Seminary
20 Crystal Cave Road
Baguio City
(Tel. No. 442-2847)
 20. Msgr. Francisco Mendoza De Leon
San Carlos Seminary
P.O. Box 148, Makati
Metro Manila, Philippines
(Tel. No. 854-966)
 21. Fr. Jesus Malcampo Lucas, S.J.
Sacred Heart Novitiate
P.O. Box 172, Novaliches
Quezon City, Philippines 3006
(Tel. No. 902-113)
 22. Fr. Charles Meagher
Missionary Society of St. Columban
St. Columban's, P.O. Box 4454
1099 Manila, Philippines
(Tel. No. 581-433 / 594-247)
 23. Fr. Romy Javier Murillo
Sacred Heart Seminary
Theology Department

- Archdiocese of Palo, Palo, Leyte
(Tel. No. 323-3115)
24. Fr. John Northrop, M.M.
Mission Society of the Philippines
Fil-Mission Seminary
4120 Tagaytay City
Philippines
(Tel. No. 851-634 MSP Central House Makati, Metro Manila)
25. Fr. Romeo Panes, O.S.J.
Oblates of St. Joseph
OSJ Formation Center
Maraouy, Lipa City
Philippines
26. Fr. Celestino Pascual
San Carlos Seminary
Edsa, Guadalupe, Makati, Metro Manila
1299 Philippines
(Tel. No. 854-466)
27. Fr. Quirico Pedregosa, O.P.
Sto. Domingo Convent
P.O. Box 3992, Manila
Philippines
(Tel. No. 711-44-42; 711-44-39)
28. Msgr. Antonio Rebanal
Holy Rosary Major Seminary
P.O. Box 788 Concepcion Heights
Naga City, Philippines
29. Fr. Lazaro Revilla, S.D.B.
Don Bosco Center of Studies
P.O. Box 1756, MCPO
Makati, Metro Manila
Philippines
(Tel. No. 828-8588)
30. Fr. Reynaldo Reyes, S.S.P.
Society of St. Paul
Box 525 Makati Central Post Office
Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati, Metro Manila
Philippines
(Tel. No. 886-702; 886-861; 886-847)
31. Fr. Deogracias Santos Rosales
Maynilad Study Center

2515 L. Guinto Cor. Estrada St.
Malate, Metro Manila
1004 Philippines
(Tel. No. 572339)

32. Fr. Rolando J. Tria Tirona, O.C.D.
St. John of the Cross Monastery
P.O. Box 80, Carmelite Fathers
Greenhills, Metro Manila
Philippines
(Tel. No. 78-13-35 / 70-59-38)
33. Fr. Dave Warren
Seminario Mayor de San Carlos
P.O. Box 252, Mabolo, Cebu City
6000 Philippines
(Tel. No. 949-60)
34. Fr. Rosary Matteo Daniello, O.F.M. Conv.
St. Joseph Formation House
Order of Friars Minor Conventual
Fil Farm II Subdivision
4120 Tagaytay City, Philippines

SINGAPORE

35. Fr. Nicolas Ho
St. Francis Xavier Major Seminary
199 Ponggol 17th Avenue
Singapore 1954
(Tel. No. 481-0556)

SRI LANKA

36. Fr. Christian S. Vaz
St. Francis Xavier's Seminary
Colombogam, JAFFNA
Sri Lanka

THAILAND

37. Fr. Silvano Magistrali
Lux Mundi Seminary
Sampran - Nakhon Pathom 73110
Thailand
(Tel. No. 02-4201840)

HOMILIES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

13th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
July 2, 1989

How People Follow Jesus
LUKE 9:51-62

IN THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL (Lk 9:51-62) we see the different persons who follow Jesus or who wish to follow Jesus. All of them entertained a praiseworthy desire; but all of them had some defect that barred the realization of their heart's desire, and Jesus brings this to their attention.

James and John have agreed to follow Jesus, but they do not know how to follow him. These two apostles possessed a strong temperament, a tendency to use violence. Faced by obstacles the first thing they want is "to call down fire from heaven," to reduce to ashes those Samaritans who refuse to accept Jesus.

To follow Jesus we need to put on his spirit of meekness. That is why Jesus corrects them: "You do not know what kind of spirit you belong to; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The spirit of Jesus is incompatible with violence. Whoever wants to be his disciple must learn of his meekness and sweetness of heart.

"As they went on their way, a man said to Jesus: I will follow you wherever you go." This man had witnessed the miracles of Jesus, had heard his doctrine and in a moment of enthusiasm he presents himself to Jesus and says to him: "I will follow you wherever you go."

It was a spontaneous expression of deep admiration. It expresses a firm posture, a sharp decision, but perhaps not deep felt.

To follow Jesus we must first seriously reflect on what it is to follow Jesus and then make the decision. Because the following of Jesus cannot depend on a momentary decision without weighing the consequences.

That is why Jesus responded: "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest." With these words Jesus is saying to us: *Think well of what you are committing yourself to and then decide, because to follow me entails a lot of difficulties.*

Jesus said to another man: "Follow me." But that man said: "Sir, first let me go back and bury my father." This request for permission to "bury my father" should be understood as saying: "I will follow you after my father has died." This is not a momentary act of giving interment in a literal sense, which definitely is an act of piety and a corporal work of mercy. It deals with an indefinite postponement of following Jesus until his parent dies.

When Jesus invites and calls, we must follow him immediately, without delay. Peter and John and the rest of the Apostles were called in this manner. Peter left his work and his nets. Matthew left his office, and all the others, upon hearing the invitation, they left everything and joined our Lord.

None of the Apostles told Jesus: *Yes, Lord, but later*. Everyone answered in a moment, on the spot, immediately. God can demand this and, in demanding it, he does so for our greater good and happiness. The Apostles and the rest of the disciples, who heard the call of Jesus then and there, following it, never regretted having done so.

"Many are called but few are chosen," Jesus said. He calls many of us. But not all of us, although we hear his call, decide to follow him. And the post to which we are called, if we do not fill it ourselves, another will be privileged to occupy."

"I will follow you, Sir: but first let me go and say good-bye to my family," another man said.

This young man has a well disposed spirit but is excessively calculating. There was no total surrender. The following was conditional. His heart was divided.

Jesus said to him, "Anyone who starts to plow and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God."

Those who follow Jesus must nail their gaze on him, without looking back. They must give themselves entirely to follow the way Jesus has pointed out to them. This activity has to be complete and total. This is the very activity which you are in now, in your family life, in your professional life, in your life in society.

It is not enough to follow Jesus in your religious or family life, and follow other principles which are not Christian in your professional or social life. You have to be a Christian totally, entirely and completely.

To follow Jesus we have to know him more profoundly. Whatever is known well, is sought and loved. No one will ever follow something that is not known or something that is not loved.

It usually happens that what we know of Jesus is what we knew of him when we were little children and nothing more. That is no longer good for us now. That is why Jesus does not attract us. Our

knowledge of Jesus is childish. That is why our religion is also childish. If we had a mature knowledge of him proportionate to our age and our culture, then the person and doctrine of Jesus would be attractive to us, and we would have no serious difficulties in following him.

To follow Jesus and live according to his Gospel demands sacrifice. To follow him is to abandon many things and carry the cross. God gives us the grace for it, and after overcoming the difficulties we will have the satisfaction of living as true Christians.

Perseverance in following Jesus with simplicity of heart is the unmistakable sign that we really follow Jesus. There are a number of Christians who have grown tired and have ceased to follow Jesus. As good Christians, we must exercise a good deal of understanding and charity with them.

But those who persevere and keep on following Jesus deserve our deep admiration and respect. Great leaders propose ideals that can be attained and achieved at a cost of a big sacrifice.

It is quite reasonable and very Christian that Jesus, God and man, would also do so to us.

14th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
July 9, 1989

I Would Ask For Peace
LUKE 10:1-2,17-20

AMONG THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED for the blind and the deaf-mutes, there stands out in the entire world the very famous North American Helen Keller, deaf-mute and blind from the age of two

years. She could not communicate with the outside world except by the sense of touch alone. Aided, however, by her friend, Ann Sullivan, she underwent studies, graduated, gave conferences and wrote several books.

On one occasion, after a conference, she held an "open forum." Someone asked: "Miss Keller, if one thing you would ask would be granted, what would you ask?" Anyone would have thought that she would ask for the restoration of her sight, hearing and speech. But she replied: "I would ask for peace in the world."

In this reply we can see the greatness of the soul of Helen Keller, molded in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who came to bring peace in the world. Peace was his message from the day he was born: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men, until he died and rose from the dead: "Peace be with you."

Today can be called the "Sunday of Peace." The three readings of the Mass speak to us of peace.

In the first reading Isaiah tells us, referring to Jerusalem; "For this is what Yahweh says: I will send her peace overflowing like a river" (66:12).

In the second reading St. Paul writes: "Let those who live by the rule receive peace and mercy" (6:16).

Finally, in the Holy Gospel (Lk 10:1-12, 17-20), it is Jesus Christ himself who enjoins his disciples, as he sends them out to preach: "Whatever house you enter, first bless them, saying: 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon him."

What salt is for food, peace is for life. As the most exquisite dishes would have no delightful taste were salt lacking, so the goods of this earth, such as riches, health, honor, will not make its possessors happy if peace is lacking.

For this reason Jesus recommended to his disciples: "Whenever you go into a house, first say, 'Peace be with this house.' " How unhappy are those homes wherein there exists no peace! The hus-

band and the wife do not understand one another. They insult each other. They fight. They blame one another, and they are not in speaking terms. At times they come to violence.

The children are disobedient, lazy, ungrateful. They die of envy with regard to their brothers and sisters. They fight and insult one another.

From the time when they wake up to the time they go to bed, loud shouts and sudden outcries and bad words are heard, sour frowning faces are seen, and silent stillness pregnant with animosity and rancor reigns supreme.

How many times have such situations ended up in broken marriages, with all the weight of misfortunes that such marriages carried with them, fulfilling the words of Jesus: "Any country that divides itself into groups which fight each other will not last very long; a family divided against itself falls apart" (Lk 11:17).

How different are those homes wherein peace reigns. Of them the poet sings; "Home, sweet home!"

Along this line in the fourth century St. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of St. Basil the Great and friend of St. Gregory Nazianzen, wrote: "Nothing contributes more to the sweet, quiet and pleasant life than peace. We cannot cite anything that would make life happy that does not contain some element of peace. That is why it is imperative to inquire what is really needed to preserve this inestimable gift of peace."

Now, how can we install peace and preserve it?

1) Endure with patience and overlook the failings of others. "Carry each other's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Ga 6:2).

2) Be interested in the triumphs and failures of others. "Rejoice with those who are joyful, and weep with those who weep" (Ro 12:15).

3) Be compliant with the opinions and likes of the others, whenever there be no sin in them. This point is very, very important in family life.

4) Give instruction and answer lovingly. "A kind answer soothes anger; while a cutting word increases wrath" (Prov 15:1)

5) Do not murmur, do not backbite. Be aware that the person against whom you murmur or backbite will know about it afterwards.

15th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
July 16, 1989

Neighbor in Truth and in Deed
LUKE 10:25-37

TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR as ourself is one necessary condition for salvation. This is revealed by Jesus in today's Gospel (Lk 10:25-37) where he says: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." This is the answer Jesus gives when a teacher of the Law came up and asked: "What must I do to receive eternal life?"

Then, to follow up, he asked Jesus: "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus, in reply, tells him the beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan. We know the parable which today's Gospel carries.

It was a Samaritan, considered as a heretic, (not a priest or a Jewish levite - shall we say "deacon" or "sacristan" -) who with great concern and without any self-interest took care of the robbery victim.

Jesus ends the parable by saying to the teacher of the Law and through him to all of us: "Go, then and do the same."

But who is really my neighbor?

Our neighbor is first of all the one who is nearest to us by bonds of blood or affinity. In the order of moral values these will prevail

above all the rest: spouses, parents, children, brothers/sisters, household members and relatives. This is the standard we have to follow in cases of emergency pursuant to natural law and the evangelical mandate.

Our neighbors are the fellow-inhabitants of our place, our fellow countrymen, those of our own race. Our preferences should be directed to them, without excluding others.

Let us put concrete case. There are two major calamities, one in our country and the other in a foreign land. Our conscience will tell us to help all those in need. But our resources are incapable of complying with this elementary work of charity. Whom shall we attend to first? Without doubt, we should first look after our neighbors, those with whom we have some special ties.

It is not a question of excluding the rest, as the Jews did, symbolized by the priest and the levite who "walked on by on the other side." For them the wounded man was a foreigner, a heretic, a schismatic; consequently, he was an enemy of the Chosen People.

These sentiments of God's Chosen People were abolished by the law of the Gospel which replaced the law of "Talion." But in similar circumstances we must give priority to those who are nearest or closest to us. This is the meaning of the word "neighbor."

For those who take delight in being the children of God and in living as such, what does the abandoned wounded traveller represent? Someone exactly the same as ourselves: a human being . . . a child of God for having created, like us, in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of his Son; with the same supernatural right to faith, to divine grace, to the indispensable means of salvation.

Everyone, no matter who or what he is, is our neighbor, and we therefore have to love him.

St. John writes: "if anyone says, I love God, while he hates his brother, he is a liar. How can he love God whom he does not see, if he does not love his brother whom he sees? We received from him this

commandment; let him who loves God also love his brother" (1 Jn 4:20).

Furthermore, all of us descend from the same parents, Adam and Eve. Therefore we have to love our neighbor as we do love our relatives.

People of the same profession or career or occupation, people with the same goal, aim or purpose, physicians, musicians, politicians, morticians, etc. associate among themselves. They become united; they love one another and help each other. We are called to the same destiny, to the same happiness in the heavenly home of God our Father. This should be one more reason of our mutual love.

"Love your neighbor as you love yourself," says the Lord. This love has to be shown in not doing evil but in doing good to our neighbor.

We have to avoid harming our neighbor in his life and limb, in his property, in his honor and reputation.

This all prohibited by the last six commandments of the Decalogue. Whoever violates seriously any of these precepts, does not have any love for the neighbor.

These commandments are also pointed out by the words of the Jews: "Do unto others whatever you would that others do to you" (Mt 7:12). "Do not do to another what you would hate to be done to yourself" (Tb 4:15).

Put yourself frequently in the place of your neighbor, and you will surely behave with him differently.

In so far as we must do good to our neighbor, we have to be kind with him and grant him favors. A mere kind feeling is not enough. The Apostle James writes: "If a brother or sister is in need of clothes or food and one of you says: 'May things go well for you; be warm and satisfied,' without attending to their material needs, what good is that?" (Ja 2:15).

The beloved disciple of Jesus tells us: "My dear children, let us love not only with words and with our lips but in truth and in deed" (1 Jn 3:18).

16th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
July 23, 1989

The Price and the Usefulness
LUKE 10:38-42

IN THIS MATERIALISTIC WORLD wherein we move, everything is measured or valued by its liquidity or convertibility into cash and by its utility or usefulness: if it is worth much money, if it is very useful.

If dealing with a house, immediately we calculate its price, so many millions; if it is a famous painting, we appreciate it because it is priced at fifty million pesos; if it is a matter of a technical or medical service, we give it importance because the bill amounts to several thousand pesos.

All labor, material, time and the like are to be reduced to their money's worth.

Another rule we use is the utility or usefulness of a thing or service. We behave like little boys who value a bicycle more than a 14-karat diamond.

The Holy Gospel cannot be appraised. The Gospel, the doctrine of Christ, is a great value, but we cannot tag a price to it: one million, a thousand millions . . .

The Gospel cannot be bought or sold. It can only be presented as a gift; and it is enough to put out the hand to receive it. This is what Jesus does. It is offered free, gratis, without our giving anything in exchange. Herein lies the danger: in that, because it is not something marketable or negotiable, we do not appreciate it for its real and true worth. Today's Gospel narrates that Martha was preparing the meal and other things to make Jesus' stay in Bethany comfortable.

Mary's hands are motionless, doing nothing. She "sat down at the Lord's feet to listen to his words."

If we apply here the rule of money or utility, the attitude of Martha was superior to that of her sister. Nevertheless, Jesus

declared that "Mary has chosen the better part."

By sitting at the feet of Jesus, Mary adopted a posture proper to a disciple, a student who receives the teaching of the Divine Master. Jesus had come to the world and to that house precisely not to eat but to teach the word of God.

Every person, no matter how small he is, can listen to the Gospel in order to live it later; and those who put themselves in the attitude of listening to it and in taking it seriously, choose the better part.

The Christian, definitely, is brought before the Gospel with this alternative: to listen or not to listen. Christians divide themselves into these two big groups: those who listen and accept, and those who do not listen and remain in their blindness.

If it is not listened to, it is not accepted; and if it is not accepted, Christianity is not being lived.

To listen to Jesus you must put yourself in the attitude of accepting, in the attitude of praying. You cannot hear Jesus in the midst of the noise of the world, in the self-seeking traffic of human material activity. You have to seek silence and retreat in order to hear God, and then God also will hear you.

Mary and Martha represent two attitudes: prayer and action. These two attitudes are so matched and they are so entangled and interconnected, that there can never be really a true Christian living involving one without the other.

The watch-word of St. Benedict "*Ora et labora* - Pray and work" has to be the watch-word of every Christian who desires to live a genuine and sincere Christianity. And there is today a very great danger of giving more importance to action than to prayer. Prayer is the soul and action is the body. Without the soul the body is dead; it cannot have any spiritual activity.

Jesus still speaks, as he did to Mary in the Gospel. Jesus speaks to us nowadays through:

1. The Holy Bible. The Second Vatican Council decreed: "When in the Church the Sacred Scriptures are read, it is God himself who

speaks to his people, and Jesus, present in his Words, is he who is still proclaiming his Gospel (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 33).

This points out the sublime importance of the first part of the Holy Mass, the Liturgy of the Word, where the Sacred Scriptures are being read and explained; and, consequently, the momentous importance of going to Mass on time to hear and listen with full attention to the Word of God.

2. Communal and personal prayer. Jesus urges us many times to put ourselves in constant contact with God, to hear God by means of prayer. He himself gave us the example of praying at every moment of his life.

3. Retreats and Recollections. As it was for Mary and Martha, to be able to hear God it is advantageous for us withdraw from the maddening distractions of the world and listen to God in the midst of silence. A lot of Christians realize this by spending a few days in prayers in retreat houses.

17th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
July 30, 1989

Four Requisites for a Good Prayer
LUKE 11:1-13

"Lord, teach us to pray." This is the petition of one of the disciples, when Jesus had finished praying, according to the Gospel of today (Lk 11:1-13). And Jesus taught them how to pray by giving the "Our Father" as a model.

And Jesus taught them how to pray insisting on the constant, persevering prayer, with the parable of a friend who will get up in the

middle of the night and "give you the bread because you are not ashamed to keep on asking."

And Jesus taught them to pray with the fullest confidence: "As bad as you are, you know how to give things to your children. How much more, then, will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

This efficacy of prayer rest on these three truths:

1. God is good; he is our loving Father who delights in adopting us as his children and in our having recourse to him as our Father.
2. God is omnipotent; he can do all things.
3. God is infinitely truthful. His word, so many times repeated in the Holy Scriptures and by his Son in the Holy Gospel, can never fail.

Very frequently, God gives more than what our prayer seeks to obtain. The sisters of Lazarus asked for health for their brother. Although Jesus allowed him to die, he later brought him back to life. Thus he gave much more than what was asked.

To the same Jesus, who with such anguish in the garden of Gethsemane asked the Father to take the chalice of suffering away from him, God let him drink the cup even up to dying on the cross and gave him much more later on in the glory of his resurrection and his ascension.

But, then, why do we not always get what we pray for? St. Augustine has given us three reasons:

1. Because we are bad. "I want men in every place to lift pure hands in prayer to heaven without anger and dissension," writes St. Paul (1 Tim 2:8).

Lifted hands means the hearts are also lifted up to God. Pure hands mean purity of soul. If we are in the state of mortal sin, and we wish God to hear us, the very first thing we have to do is to ask for the grace of repentance and pardon for our offenses. This is why our acts of piety must be preceded by an act of contrition.

2. Because we ask for what is not good for us. The Holy Book says: "The fact is, you do not have what you want because you do not pray for it. You pray for something and you do not get it because your motives are bad: you ask for things to use for your own pleasures," (Ja 4:3).

Prayer in the strict sense is to ask God for useful things. God who knows better than we do what is for us more useful, listens to our prayer, yes, but he gives us what really matters. It is like the case of a student who, without ever studying during the entire school year, at the end ask God for a passing grade. Would this be good for him? Certainly not!

3. Because we pray badly. Our prayer is not always accompanied by those four prerequisites that we all know:

First: Attention to what we are saying to God when we pray, since if we ourselves do not listen to our own selves, why do we want God to listen to us?

Second: Humility, recognizing that for our part we deserve nothing, and that we hope for everything from the infinite mercy of God.

Third: Trust and confidence that God will grant us what we ask him for our spiritual welfare, since he is our Father, and he loves us with an infinite love, and he can do anything. He will not fail to give us what is best for us.

Fourth: Perseverance and constancy in our supplications as taught to us by Jesus in today's Gospel.

Of this perseverance in prayer Abraham gives us a sensational example which appears in today's First Reading.

What with more insistence, confidence and humility we should ask from the Lord is the forgiveness of our sins: "Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone who does us wrong. And do not bring us to hard testing."

In today's Second Reading St. Paul says: "God has now brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all our sins; he cancelled the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross."

During the Old Testament times important documents were written on papyrus. But the ink the copyists used was very different from what we have now. Ours can be easily erased and the paper used again.

Indeed, says St. Paul, Jesus Christ erased with his own blood the record of our sins. This metaphor of St. Paul reminds us of what for centuries we prayed and sang in the *Dies Irae* of the Masses for the Dead:

*Then shall with universal dread
the Book of Conscience be read
to judge the lives of all the dead.
For now before the Judge severe
all hidden things must plain appear;
no crime can pass unpunished here.*

Feast of the Lord's Transfiguration,
August 6, 1989

How to Listen to Jesus
LUKE 9:28b-36

IN TODAY'S GOSPEL (Lk 9:28b-36), the Eternal Father referring to Jesus tells us: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen - listen to him."

Nowadays there are people who do not want to listen to Jesus. Paulo has for the past three months been suffering pains in his stomach. But he does not want to see a doctor so he will not be told that he has stomach ulcers, that he must be treated and watch his diet. Paulo's position is insane.

Thus there are those who do not want to listen to Jesus, the doctor of souls, because they have moral ulcers, and to cure themselves, they have to diet and change their lifestyle.

There are also people who do not want to listen to Jesus, but they readily listen to their very own selves.

Firmo, an industrial engineer, is a wide reader and is fond of reading medical reports and other articles on medicine. He has frequent vomitings. He prescribes his own medicines, especially those whose advertisements he has read in the newspaper or seen on television.

"Who knows better than one's own self? It is he who feels it, who can touch it, who suffers from it . . . As if the doctor would know more than he!" His behaviour is not only imprudent, but downright insane.

Yet in matters of religion, many of us listen only to our own selves; we make our own prescriptions, our own rules and regulations, our own religious observances.

Now, where and when does Jesus speak to us, for us to listen to Him?

1. In the Church. God speaks to us everywhere and, consequently, you can listen to God everywhere; but in a special manner in the Church. And Jesus is in the tabernacle, and precisely in order to strike a conversation with you.

Some come to Church on Sundays to waste or lose an hour of their precious time; others come to see what happens. You have come here to talk with God; but we also have to come to listen to God. "Speak, Lord, your servant listens," we should all say.

A lowly jeepney driver was saying: "I go to Church and God always has something to tell me. Sometimes he corrects the temper I have had; sometimes he gives the solution to a problem I have; at other times he praises and congratulates me for what I have done." This driver was really listening to God.

2. In your home. The home is the temple of the family. Is your home indeed a temple or is it hell? Because if it is the latter, surely God does not speak to you there. God speaks to you from that crucifix that presides in your sala, and he is helping you, and he is encouraging and cheering you up to carry the cross of each day. Do you have a telephone? To hear you have

first to put yourself in communication; put yourself in communication with God also.

If you are a son, God speaks to you at home through the mouth of your parents; but they have to be in communication with God and behave as representatives of God.

If you are a father, perhaps you pick up the phone ten or more times a day to contact people; sometimes pick up the phone of your heart to contact God. God speaks to you also through the mouth (no matter how loud) of your wife and at times through the curious questions of your small children, like that child who asked his father: "Do you sin? Why don't you go to Holy Communion?"

3. In the streets. God is everywhere and, therefore, he is in the streets. God speaks to you by means of the stars, of the sea and of the mountains. God speaks to you through the persons you meet on your way. They are sons or daughters of God. The sight of a son recalls his father; people remind you of God, the Father of us all.
4. In your heart. Do we listen to God in our conscience? To be able to hear God there has to be silence. That is why we do not hear God, because there is so much noise around us, around our hearts. God is a powerful station that broadcasts messages twenty-four hours a day; but we are outside its sound-waves; we like to listen to other stations.

Antonio admits the commandments of God's Law, but re-touched and revised according to his convenience.

There are different listeners of Jesus:

1. Those who listen to Jesus as if they had not listened.

The message comes in one ear and goes out the other. Pepe goes to the doctor, who tells him his ailment and issues a prescription. Pepe goes home; puts the prescription into his drawer and that is it. He has spent time, money and effort. Now, who is the loser?

The same Pepe comes to Mass on Sunday, listens to the homily, goes and continues to live his own wanton way. Who is the loser?

2. Those who listen to Jesus in their own merry way.

Some listen not to Jesus of the Gospel, but to "their own Jesus."

They listen to the Christ that pleases them. All else is "exaggerations of the priest."

They listen to: "My dear workers, do your work well. Fulfil the duty assigned to you." How well the priest has spoken. "Pay your workers well; give them just wages." This priest is out of his mind. He is interfering in my business. Why doesn't he mind his own business?

"Children should obey their parents; they should hearken to their counsel and advice." This priest is really good; he is mindful of our youth. "Parents should take care of their children, even to the extent of sacrificing a little bit of their pleasures. Have patience with your children; help them in their endeavours, in their fears and in their doubts." This priest really does not know how to deal with children.

3. Those who listen to Jesus but . . .

There are listeners to Jesus who admit everything, but, out of human weakness or **because** it hurts, they do not perform it all.

What God demands and wants is that we accept the doctrine of Jesus with all good will and that we strive to fulfil it. God already knows that we are vessels of clay. He wills that, if through human frailty we sometimes fall short of our duties, we should regret our fall and work harder to do better in the future.

4. Those who listen to Jesus and obey him.

Many listeners of Jesus accept his teachings and make great efforts, with the grace of God, to fulfil them.

These are the best of Jesus' listeners. To be like them a great deal of will-power and grace of God is necessary. God's grace, if you pray for it, will never be wanting. God bestows his grace. Now, we should produce what pertains to us according to our will-power.

19th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
August 13, 1989

What Begets Happiness For You and the Rest
LUKE 12:32-48

IN TODAY'S GOSPEL (Lk 12:32-48) and the entire chapter XII of St. Luke, exposes his doctrine on the use of material goods which God has given to us men. Material things are not bad in themselves. Their goodness or evil depends on the good or bad use we make of them.

Jesus even tells us that with these goods we can obtain the Kingdom of Heaven and treasure or hoard up the real riches in the other life.

Material things are something good as long as they serve us, and we do not become slaves to them. We may make use of them, but we should never put ourselves in the service of material goods.

With regards to these material things, let us consider two men: one lives in a rented apartment with a one-year contract; the other lives in an apartment he owns where he can stay all through his life. Both of them live, work and amuse themselves, but with respect to the apartment wherein they live, they behave quite differently. The former does not become attached to the house, he uses it and nothing else.

We are practically living in a rented apartment for a longer or shorter period. I am aware that some people before me have formerly been using the very same things I am using now; and these very same things other people will later use after me, when my time have expired and I am dead.

With regards to the time or term of my life, as regards the mental and physical faculties, and as regards the goods we have, Jesus clearly says that we are administrators and not owners. We are owners, yes, with respect to other men; we are administrators with respect to God. We, therefore, must live like administrators and use the goods as administrators.

In today's Gospel parable, the master goes out to a wedding feast, and, when he returns, he finds his administrator awake and ready, in other words, doing his duty. He was doing his duty not only on the day of the master's arrival, but also on the preceding days, since he has to render an account for all that time. He is a no good administrator who works, according to his own humour, one day "yes" and the next day "no". Something similar happens with respect to God.

Man has to fulfil his obligations in everything he manages, in all of which he is God's administrator; that is, in his family life, in his social life, in his professional life, in his religious life. It is not enough to fare right and praiseworthy in one or two things and in the rest be miserably at zero level.

As indicated in today's parable, God comes when least expected. The administrator who has the accounts well in hand, does not need to worry whether his master comes today or next month or next year. He has the accounts well up to date.

But, more than to ask us for an accounting, God will come to reward us for what we have done well. He does not come to demand, to exact, but to give. As in the parable of the talents; you have gained five talents, everything will go to you, all the ten talents altogether. It is a "Winner-Takes-All" deal.

In the parable Jesus insists that we should be awake, well prepared, watchful and vigilant, but with composure and tranquility, not with anguish and heartache, while we keep our records well, rightly checked and scrupulously rechecked. We should be watchful, not with fear and trembling, but with hope and confidence, since God is our Father. Let us think that, even if it hurts to leave the present, we are going to a better place.

In this parable, Jesus assures us saying: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom . . . How happy are those servants whose master finds them awake and ready when he returns." We really have reason to wait for the coming of the Lord with tranquility, hope and confidence.

By doing things well we ourselves become happy and we help all those who are around us to become happy. The father who does his

duties well, becomes happy, and he in turn helps every member of his family to be happy. We can say the same about the mother; the same about the son and the daughter. . . If all the members of a family, with in just one week, would fulfil their obligations well, if they would do everything well, that family would be the happiest during that week. The fulfilment of duty begets happiness.

20th Sunday In Ordinary Time,
August 20, 1989

How To React To Persecution
LUKE 12:49-53

BEFORE HIS BIRTH and at his birth, during his life and later after having risen, Jesus constantly worked for peace, preached peace.

Nevertheless in today's Gospel (Lk 12:49-53), he now tells us: "Do you suppose that I came to bring peace to the world? No, not peace, but division."

Peace or division? Where are we? Is Jesus not contradicting himself? No, not at all.

The ancient Romans used to say: "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*" (If you want peace, prepare for war). Jesus in an exalted way, sustain this.

Peace, and to a greater degree, the everlasting peace, has to be prepared with war: war against the devil, war against the world and war against our very own selves. Heaven cannot be won without fighting: "no cross, no crown. No pain, no gain. No passion, no resurrection."

Over the grave of our beloved dead we read the words, "R.I.P" Rest In Peace. Yes, once the good Christian leaves this world, he

rests from work, from suffering, from struggling, and rests for all eternity.

But before that, as Jesus has just been insinuating to us, because of our Catholic faith there will be many persecutions and divisions within families themselves and with more reason in our society.

Jesus was a persecuted man all through his life, from the flight to Egypt to the crucifixion on Calvary Hill. The primitive Church, as it appears in the simple accounts of the Acts of the Apostles, was persecuted in the protomartyr, St. Stephen, in the early imprisonments, in the physical tortures and interrogations of the Apostles, who later on, one after the other, would also be martyred. Century after century, one epoch and one culture after another, at every crucial step of history, we find the Catholic Church being persecuted one way or the other.

To give a bird's eyevue of the successive persecutions against our Church, here is a summary list of the principal ones:

Jewish Persecution	untill year 70
Roman Persecution	years 64 - 313
Persian Persecution	years 350 - 630
Julian Persecution	years 361 - 363
Barbarian Persecution	years 370 - 600
Islamic Persecution	years 634 - 1683
Royal English Persecution	years 1534 - 1681
French Revolution Persecution	years 1789 - 1800
Libero-Masonic Persecution	years 1848 - 1929
Nazi Persecution	years 1931 - 1944
Communist Persecution	years 1917 - present

There is no doubt that the most intense and "specialized" of all persecutions is this last, precisely the ongoing one. For more than seventy years, the number of Christians persecuted by Communists has exceed half a million. Truly the words of Jesus acquire all its force and truth: "Then you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and be put to death. All mankind will hate you because of me" (Mt 24:9).

Of the above-mentioned persecutions, most of them took place on the European continent. Actually the cross of persecution has been projected towards other continents and countries, perhaps with much more intensity. This does not mean, however, that it has faltered and disappeared in Europe, especially in countries where Christians belong to the so-called "Church of Silence".

In spite of being one of the most flourishing continents in Christian and evangelistic spirit, Africa is also, paradoxically, one part of the earth where Christians are very intensely being persecuted. For example, in the Archdiocese of Salisbury, Zimbabwe, 64,000 square kilometers, the missions of Assisi and Avila were destroyed and 8 priests were assassinated; in the Diocese of Gwelo, 99,000 square kilometers, 5 priests were murdered together with 200,000 Catholics.

In our Asiatic region we are witnesses to the persecution of Christianity. The storm of persecution broke out in 1981 in Sri Lanka; although the majority of the protagonists were Buddhists and Hindus, Christians were accused just the same and persecuted, and many of their churches were burned or destroyed. In the vast territory of continental China, persecution has been raging even up to now.

In this our own native land, the Philippines, you know what the communists are doing.

In this state of affairs wherein the Catholic Church is being persecuted, especially in her members who are actively involved in the great work of evangelization, we should not forget the example of the first Christians. In the midst of anti-Christian persecution, they reacted spontaneously with an attitude that should not be absent in our solidarity response: "While Peter was kept in prison, the whole Church prayed earnestly for him" (Acts 12:5).

Now, have you ever prayed for the victims of communist persecution in our country? And for the communists themselves? How earnest are your prayers for our native land, for those who govern us and for us who are governed?

Very recently there was a campaign for us to adopt a communist

for whose conversion we would pray a Holy Rosary or at least a "Hail Mary" everyday. Have you joined this movement? If so, thanks be to God; if not, why not, right now, adopt one whose conversion you will pray for day after day?

Let this statement of Jesus sink into our souls: "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division". Ask the Lord now that you may react to this as well as, if not better than, first Christians.

21st Sunday In Ordinary Time,
August 27, 1989

How Are You To Save Yourself
LUKE 13:22-30

TWO YOUNG GENTLEMEN were staying in one house for sometime; they were later on separated. One went to join the Royal Court and in no time became a grand lord. The other entered a monastery and became a Capuchin friar.

After several years they met each other on a trip. The one who was living in the King's Court (given to so much luxury and with no thoughts on his eternal salvation) told the Capuchin: "Friend, I believe you have made a mistake in choosing your path. I find you frail and thin and looking old. But I, you can see, am rich, and I eat and I drink at pleasure."

To this the frail friar replied: "Brother, if I was mistaken, the resulting damage or harm is just for a short time. But if you are the mistaken one, you will have all eternity to pull out your hair, weep and gnash your teeth. By entering through the narrow door I hope to be saved; if you enter through the wide one, it is going to be a great deal more difficult."

That the door is narrow or wide depends on who is going to pass through it. A door with the width of one meter is wide enough for a person, but too narrow for a truck. It is wide for a man who has his hands in his trousers' pockets, but it is narrow for the thief who carries a big sack full of stolen articles in each hand.

For those who live a Christian life, the way is regular, natural and normal. But for him who lives a bad life, the way of righteousness is very narrow and he can hardly walk through it. A passenger-jEEPney driver follows all the traffic rules and regulations through the streets of Manila and it never occurs to him to complain that the streets are narrow. He has his intersections, his uphill drives, his roundabout detour routes, but these he accepts as normal difficulties, which are easily resolved by following the traffic laws.

On the other hand, another driver who does not obey the traffic laws, will say that the streets, even those with four lanes, are narrow, and, if he bumps against a tree, it will be his own fault since he did not stay in the middle of the road.

Yet, how many times do we blame God for our downfalls and failures, when the fault was entirely ours.

Pursuing the comparison of the two drivers, each one of us drives the bus of our own life on an asphalted road, but with a number of dangers to be avoided. If we follow the rules of the Gospel and drive with more prudence and attention, we shall happily reach our final destination, heaven.

To enter through the door of heaven it is not enough to say many times: Lord, Lord! "The master of the house will get up and close the door; then when you stand outside and begin to knock on the door and say, 'open the door for us, Sir!' he will answer you, 'I don't know where you come from!'" What is necessary is an attitude submissive to the inspirations of God and a diligent will put them into practice.

Bonds of relationship are not sufficient; Jesus said it very clearly: "He who does the will of my Father, he is my mother and my brother." In today's Gospel: "Then you will answer, 'We ate and drank with you; you taught in our town!' But he will say again, 'I don't know where you come from. Get away from me, all you wicked people!'"

What is solely necessary is to do good works; in other words, to do at every moment of our life what ought to be done and that only: what we ought to do within our family, what we ought to do in our work, what we ought to do with respect to those around us . . . These free acts, interrelated one with the other, will be the basis for God's sentence on a human life.

And yet, because there indeed is human weakness, God has put up a remedy well within the reach of every free man. You did something wrong? You can erase and remedy it with the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. You lack strength or you feel discouraged? Nourish yourself with the Holy Eucharist and in prayer ask God for additional strength.

A real estate owner wants you to buy an apartment worth five hundred thousand pesos. You have to pay only the balance in twenty years. A better deal than this nobody can give you. It can be clearly seen that the owner wants you to own an apartment, but that it should become yours through your own efforts.

God wants us all to be saved. He grants us a thousand means to obtain it: Jesus, the Blessed Mother Mary, the Church, his Gospels, the Sacraments, health, bodily and mental faculties, etc., etc. Very little indeed is what you have to put up yourself.

Another comparison is as if a billionaire were to give you a car and the gasoline and you only had to drive it well.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was asked by his little sister: "Thomas, you know many things. Tell me. What do I have to do in order to be saved?" "You have to want and want if actively, efficaciously and effectively," replied the learned Saint.

Jesus appeals to our personal responsibility. "God who created you without you, will not save you without you," St. Augustine whose annual feast we will celebrate tomorrow, points out. God will not save you if you do not want to be saved. God holds an enormous respect for man's liberty and freedom; to him we are not puppets. You yourself have to save yourself, because no one else can do it for you. And in this undertaking man discovers his solitude, his solitariness, his loneliness and he detects his profound and untransferable responsibility.

"Be vigilant," Jesus used to say, "do your best to go in through the narrow door". The Capuchin understood the message of Jesus. Let us imitate him not by becoming friars, but by being prepared, or by both becoming religious and being prepared, if that is our path.

MONS. PASTOR S. YBAÑEZ, J.C.D.