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## The Aftermath of the National Bible Year

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Vicente G. Cajilig, O. P.

Our magazine has for its cover a four-fold biblical symbolism: the cross which stands for Christ; the eye which stands for the Holy Father; the dove, for the Holy Spirit; and the book for the Scriptures. What we have done has a special meaning. We would like to convey the message as to what ought to be the aftermath of our national celebration of the Bible Year.

His Eminence, Francis Card. Arinze, during the closing celebration of the Year underlined clearly what course we should follow henceforth. *Read the Bible, live the Bible, and share the Bible.* No Catholic, indeed, no Christian, should neglect this message given at the close of the national congress. Not reading the Scriptures means remaining in ignorance of the Word of God. Not living the Scriptures means living a life devoid of meaning. Not sharing the Scriptures means being unmindful of the hunger and thirst of many for the Word of God.

All of our reading, living, sharing of the Scriptures will help develop in us and our people the sense of Scriptures, which will ultimately lead us to a greater sense of God.

The sense of God is precisely what is promoted by *Dei Verbum*, the *Magna Charta* of the modern biblical apostolate, which centers on the eternal decision of God the Father to communicate with all of humanity.

## FEATURES

# The Sense of Scripture

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by Most Rev. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., D.D.

### Introduction

I have two questions to ask:

"Why is a Mass, which has infinite value, unable to change the world?" We all love to repeat in a variety of ways the all-important expressions of our faith in the immeasurable salvific power of the Holy Mass. And yet the depressing evils of the world continue to grow everyday. Why this?

The other question is: "Why is it that, twenty-five years after the conclusion of Vatican II, renewal of the Church in our parishes appears not to have become a reality?"

These two questions which may appear quite unrelated with the occasion that brought us together are, in fact, relevant to the launching of a *National Year of the Bible in Luzon*. For the answer to them has something to do with the *primacy of the Word in our life*.

The power of the Eucharist has to extend over all life and this occurs principally through the dissemination of the Word. The Eucharist is Easter made present. And Easter cannot be understood except in the context of the whole of Salvation History. Thus, the person who does not know the totality of Salvation History does not understand Easter, does not understand the Eucharist and finds

little meaning in the Mass. To understand the Eucharist we must understand Jesus totally. We must understand the Gospel in its entirety. We must understand Mary, John the Baptist, Paul, Jeremiah, David, Moses and the People of God, because all their experiences have been written for us in the Bible.

In connection with the second question, we can say that for the renewal of the Church in parishes to become a reality, a lived experience, there must be total and deep immersion into the Scriptures. Scripture must become a part of our lives so that we become the living Gospel (*DV* no. 25).

## Causes

The primacy of the Word then must be lived. Unfortunately at present this is not so. This is partly due to our *principles of catechesis*. These catechetical principles have been based on the transmission of knowledge and the consideration of truth as something static, to be recognized and acknowledged, rather than internalized. The result of following this principle is that the Gospel has been announced rather than truly proclaimed. The impression has generally been created that as long as it is said, and to some degree explained, that is sufficient.

A second reason is that many have not really seen the Gospel as their call to make it present to people not only in words but in their lives.

We should all be grateful that the celebration of the National Year of the Bible has set as one of its objectives the promotion of the Bible as primary in our lives. This objective most certainly justifies our collective effort as a "people of the Book." And yet, it seems to me that a more urgent, more relevant focus of the Year of the Bible is not the primacy of the Word, which fortunately is already an accepted fact among us Catholics. A greater challenge today, in the area of Bible apostolate, is the underling of the *essential relationship between Scripture and the Church, between the Book and the People of the Book*.



## Reasons for the Need of This Focus

Our people are hungry for an increase in spirituality. This is so prevalent and deep in our people today that it is clearly a sign of the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. Our people today are tremendously responsive to any appeal to read the Scriptures. They want to deepen their awareness to the Word of God. The National Year of the Bible should aim at *having our people affected by Scripture in such a way as to feel themselves part of the Body of Christ, the Church*. All other objectives are good, but for the Church in the Philippines today this is the most crucial need.

There is very definitely an attitude of the "me and Jesus" spirituality so widespread throughout the Church. And it appears in various forms. One of the great dangers today is the use of Scripture as private revelation or as a personal experience. How many times have we had the frustration of hearing somebody say, "the Bible told me"! Often enough, of course, it comes from a fundamentalist mind set. Even worse, it often is an expression of self-serving mentality. Scripture was written in accordance with the cultural awareness of the authors. It is very definitely read today with the 20th century prejudices and limitations. Consequently, to take it in a very personal way is bound to lead to many aberrations.

Even worse is the tendency to "possess Scripture." It becomes our property. It is *my* revelation from God, a vision in which God is directly, individually speaking to *me*, in a way He speaks to nobody else, for the sake of bringing me happiness and improving my way of being. Scripture becomes something *I own*.

A more dangerous form of this "*me and Jesus*" mentality is when the Scripture is used as an external norm against which the Church is measured. This is an extreme reaction to the old price in which Scripture did not mean anything unless the institutional Church said it did. They told us what it meant. That was an exaggeration and wrong. We are not to return to that. However, the reaction is just as bad, whereby Scripture stands by itself and the Church is only meaningful, any aspect of the Church only has significance, when we find it in Scripture and in a specific way in Scripture. You are familiar with this drift. You recall the usual misinformed statements that there is no need to hear Mass, to receive

absolution in the sacrament of reconciliation, or negative statements about the veneration of the images, devotion to Blessed Virgin, etc. All this and similar statements are grounded on this mentality of putting the Scriptures as an external norm against the Church.

The need of the time then is to *build up the sense of the Scriptures as being part of the Church!* In more concrete terms, this means two things -- accepting that *there is no Scripture without the Church, as there is no Church without the Scripture.*"

## No Scripture Without the Church

This is certainly not the place nor the occasion to expound upon the theological reasons why we hold as true the statement "*no Scripture without the Church.*" *Scripture is the book of the Church* not only in its origin, certification, preservation, continuity, dissemination, but also in its purpose and present experience.

Without doubt Scripture calls us to a commitment to Jesus, but *Jesus as the Church experiences Jesus*, as these people are experiencing Him. It's not a Jesus we concoct on our own. Not an objective Jesus standing outside of His relationship with His people. Jesus said "I am with YOU." Unless the Jesus we discover is with *you* -- these people of the Church, we are not responding to the real Jesus, the Jesus of the Scripture.

Scripture was created by the Church to identify itself to itself and to draw upon the power of the Spirit to create a deeper and more meaningful relationship with one another in the name of the Lord. Their life experience is Scripture. The Spirit inspired the authors of the various books to see this. Such inspiration did not come out of the air, nor did it exist on its own. Paul, James, Peter, Matthew, Luke, Mark and John were inspired to reflect upon and express the experience of the Lord being lived out by the people of the Church into deeper love for one another, down through the ages. In other words, Scripture introduces us to the kind of people the Lord envisions us to be, whom He is gradually molding us into. The communion of the saints is what the Scripture is all about.

In a real sense, Scripture was written by the early faith community to say: *this is what we are; who are you? Will you be part of us? Will you join your life to us?* Scripture is like a man proposing to a woman. A man basically says, whatever words he uses, "I love you, I want you to be a part of my life. I want you to belong to me and I want to belong to you." That is what the Scriptures say to us. Consequently the correct reaction to Scripture cannot be just: "Now I know something more." Rather, it should be: "I am yours." We simply cannot take Scripture separately from the people of Scripture, the Church. It is incomplete, if we do.

This brings me to another point. The credibility of the Gospel message is not to be determined by individual perfection. Sometimes we believe that if we could get every Catholic and every Christian across the face of the earth to truly live a godly life, then the Lord's purpose would be served. That simply isn't true! We would have 750 million saints in the Catholic Church, but we would not necessarily have a Church, nor necessarily a people speaking in God's name. A collection of individuals does not necessarily make a family. The direction is not a personal growth and responsiveness of the individual to ethical perfection. The real ecclesial and scriptural call is addressed to our communion with one another. The purpose of Scripture is to proclaim Jesus' presence among His people, and to identify His overriding ambition for us in our relationship and intimacy with one another.

The Book cannot be separated from the Church. The two go together, otherwise it's a distortion.

## No Church Without the Scriptures

Just as Scripture is a hollow representation of itself and becomes just words and not the real word of God without God's people, so also the Church would be a hollow shell and not itself, but merely some imitation of itself, without Scripture. We definitely need the Bible, for the Word in it stirs up faith and calls the Church together and thus forms the Church. Accepting the Scripture is an essential note of being a Catholic. Not just acknowledging that Scripture exists; not denying it while saying that it's important. *Scripture has to be rooted in us.* It has to be a core dimension of our living out what it means to be a Catholic.

## Conclusion

"... *rooted in us.*" I wish to end on this note. The Gospel cannot be proclaimed without miracles. There are many forms of miracles, not just the restoration of physical health, or raising from the dead. One of the greatest miracles of all is the moral miracle of our being able to accept one another in the Church, even though we come from such diverse backgrounds, principles, philosophies, patterns of personality and conduct. There are so many self-appointed leaders in this world, so many messiahs, so many people who proclaim that if we just follow their ways of doing things, it will lead to happiness. How do we know "Jesus is the way"? If we answer by saying, "it is stated so in the Book which is the inspired Word of God," some unfortunately find that eminently resistible. It is correct, but not suasive. There is no evidence, just an unsupported proclamation. *We have to be the guarantee that the Gospel speaks the truth.* Our relationship with one another ecclesially certifies the credibility of that Book, as the inspired Word of God.

This is my prayer and my hope that such will be the fruit of the National Year of the Bible.

# **"Dei Verbum"**

## **The Magna Charta of the Modern Biblical Apostolate**

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*Efren O. Rivera, O. P.*

The National Bible Year we are celebrating from January 1989 to January 1990 is long overdue. We should have paid tribute to the Bible in 1972 when the United Nations observed International Book Year. Fortunately, that year did not pass unfruitfully for our country, because the first Sunday of Advent 1972 marked the beginning of the annual of the celebration of Bible Week by Filipino Catholics. We can go back to the 18th of November, 1965, almost twenty-four years ago. It was then that the Second Vatican Council issued its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, officially known as *Dei Verbum*. We could have made it to the Guinness Book of Records had we declared the first anniversary of this historic document on November 18, 1986 as the start of a National Bible Year.

Divine Providence, however, taking account of "Filipino time" has wanted to wait some twenty-four years before popping before the surprised face of our people this eye-opener we call our National Bible Year. To make up for the lost time. I suggest that we celebrate a Decade of the Bible in preparation for the year 2000.

*Dei Verbum*, though no longer fresh, is still young even according to the standards of young people, for whom the cut-off age for youth is thirty years. *Dei Verbum* is for the young in years or in the heart for it follows the *aggiornamento* proclaimed by Pope John XXIII, and in its chapter VI, on "Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church" it has given the modern Biblical Apostolate its *Magna*

*Charta.* To put this Magna Charta in correct perspective, let us first pick out the doctrinal highlights of chapters I to V.

## Doctrinal Thrust of "Dei Verbum"

### *Revelation Is an Invitation to Fellowship*

What Jesus Christ came to reveal was not an abstract truth nor a theology of speculative truths divorced from reality, but a Truth that makes men free (see *Jn* 8:32), a Truth who is also "the Way" and "the Life" (see *Jn* 14:6). Pursuing this line of thinking, *Dei Verbum* encourages us to develop a concept of revelation that takes account of God's Life and his Love for us. In other words, revelation has two pages. One page, that of God's Life, tells us about God Himself. The other page, that of God's Love, tells us about his plan of salvation.

*by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit, have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature. (Dei Verbum, n. 2)*

### *Revelation Happens Through Word-events*

Revelation is not just a word of the mouth or a word of the pen. It is a Word of Life, a "Word-Event." The acceptance of Revelation as a "Word-Event" has been popularized by *Dei Verbum*. It says:

*(God's) plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. (Dei Verbum, n. 2)*

### *Jesus Christ Is the Greatest Word-Event*

Vatican II goes a step further by proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the greatest "Word-Event." This is the message of the following words:

*By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation. (Dei Verbum, n. 2)*

*Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making himself present and manifest himself: through his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious resurrection from the dead and finally by sending the Spirit of truth. (Dei Verbum, 4)*

### ***We Need the Holy Spirit***

The Catholic catechism teaches that the response to revelation is faith. Explaining this the First Vatican Council had already said that the obedience of faith is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God.

It is also standard Catholic doctrine that man needs "the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit" to make an act of faith. The help of the Holy Spirit "must precede and assist" any human act that will take the character of a supernatural act of faith. The role of the Holy Spirit is that of moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it.

To all this Vatican II makes a very important contribution by reminding us:

*To bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation, the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by his gifts. (Dei Verbum, 5)*

It is striking to note that the Second Vatican Council seems to have foreseen a future linkage between the biblical movement and the charismatic movement. Today a number of charismatic communities urge their members to hold a weekly "bibliarasal" to supplement the weekly prayer meeting of the community; some communities integrate "bibliarasal" into the weekly prayer meeting itself.

## *The Problem of Tradition and Scripture*

In Chapter II *Dei Verbum* touches on a sensitive issue in Catholic-Protestant relationships. Is revelation contained in Scripture alone? The traditional Protestant answer has been "yes" whereas the traditional Catholic answer has been "no". Today these answers are given nuances that either exaggerate or modify their force.

Protestant fundamentalists exaggerate the Protestant answer by claiming that only the literal sense of Scripture is revelation. However, there are also Protestants who have a broader outlook and are even willing to recognize the validity of those Traditions that can be proven to be truly originated or sanctioned by the Apostles and meant to be part of the Christian belief or practice for all times and places.

On the Catholic side there are still those who are not careful in distinguishing Catholic traditions into two categories: those that are merely human and not part of revelation nor binding forever, and those which are *divine* or *sacred* and therefore part of revelation or the "deposit and faith."

### *Not Human But Sacred Tradition*

*Dei Verbum* is careful to point out that it is not discussing traditions that belong to the purely human category. Its attention is focused on Sacred Tradition, namely, on what God has revealed for the salvation of all nations and He wants should abide perpetually in its full integrity and handed on to all generations. In short, to the question, WHAT IS *Sacred Tradition*, Vatican II answers that is the GOOD NEWS that come from God and which Christ the Lord brought to completion.

As far as the Apostles were concerned, Sacred Tradition is

(1) what they had received from the lips of Christ, from living with Him, and from what He did, or

(2) what they had learned from the prompting of the Holy Spirit.



In regard to this Good News the Apostles had two fundamental functions: Firstly, that of handing it on to people through their own apostolic activity; and secondly, that of appointing successors to whom they will give the authority to teach in their own place. In connection with their first function, Vatican II says that the Apostles had to *preach, give example, and institute observances*; and last but certainly not the least, the apostolic men who were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had to *commit the message of salvation to writing* (see *Dei Verbum* n. 7)

*Sacred Tradition* as distinguished from Sacred Scripture is therefore the *Good News not as written but as preached by the Apostles, exemplified by them in their life and conduct, and supported by them with observances they encouraged among people.*

Vatican II is careful to point out that Sacred Tradition is to be found in the *teaching, life and worship of the Church, whereby she perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that she is, all that she believes.* In other words, the Church is herself the "book" in which we find Sacred Tradition. The words of the Holy Fathers who wrote before the Middle Age only give witness to the presence of the Church's living tradition. It is found in "the practice and life of the believing and praying Church" (*Dei Verbum* n. 8).

### *Recognition of the Supremacy of Scripture*

Pope John XXIII and Paul VI sincerely wanted the Church to offer an "opening" to our separated brethren in the Christian faith. Adopting their spirit, the Fathers of Vatican II took the following steps toward Protestants while still saying "no" to the principle of "Scripture alone."

(1) They said that "the apostolic preaching is expressed in a special way in the inspired books" (*Dei Verbum* n. 8); they recognized the "Sacred Scripture *IS* the Word of God" while Sacred Tradition is, as it were, an agent or a container of the word of God so that, merging in the end with Scripture they together form only ONE SACRED DEPOSIT of the Word of God. The accent is on the UNITY and SAME END of Scripture and Tradition. *Vatican II avoids speaking of Scripture and Tradition as "two sources" of revelation.* Instead, it emphasizes that

there is only ONE DIVINE WELLSPRING from which two streams flow not to go on separate ways but to merge in the same pool. Maybe an image of the Pagsanjan or Maria Christina falls will help us visualize this teaching.

(2) Vatican II purposely refrained from saying that there are truths found in Tradition which are not found in Scriptures. This is a debated question, and there is only one clear exception, namely, the knowledge of the Church's full canon of sacred books (see *Dei Verbum* n. 8). Treading cautiously, the Council said: "It is not from Scripture alone that the Church draws *her certainty* about everything which has been revealed." This simply means that there are certain revelations or dogmas which are *clearer* in Sacred Tradition than in Scripture but *not totally absent from Scripture*.

(3) Although they affirmed that "the task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office (*magisterium*) of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ," it immediately clarified: "THIS TEACHING OFFICE IS NOT ABOVE THE WORD OF GOD, BUT SERVES IT" (*Dei Verbum* 10).

### *God Still Speaks*

So as not to end our reflection on Chapter II in a somewhat polemic note, let us consider what *Dei Verbum* says about the pastoral value of Sacred Tradition. This is very important for those who wish to grow spiritually.

*Through the same Sacred Tradition. . . the sacred writings themselves are more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in the Church. (Dei Verbum, n. 8)*

The following statement is the basis for saying that, although revelation has been completed in its earthly phase and no new doctrines are being revealed, God still speaks:

*(Through Sacred Tradition) God, who spoke of old, uninterruptedly converses with the bride of His beloved Son; and the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel*

*resounds in the Church, and through her, in the world, leads unto all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them (see Col 3:16). (Dei Verbum, 8)*

### **Word of God in Words of Men**

Whereas Church documents of the past have emphasized that God is the Author of sacred Scripture, Vatican II should be remembered in theological history as the council which finally gave to the human writers the full recognition that they, too, are authors of the Bible (*Dei Verbum*, n. 11). They are not just instruments of God nor his secretaries. They are *true authors*. This is a landmark statement which inevitably has repercussions on the inerrancy of Scriptures and on the Rules of Interpretation to be followed.

### **Inerrancy in Matters of Salvation**

Contrary to the stand of fundamentalists, *Dei Verbum* asserts that accepting the inerrancy of the Bible means acknowledging that books of Scripture as

*teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted to put into the sacred writings for the sake of salvation. (Dei Verbum, n. 11)*

This allows room for "material errors" or rather "incorrect information" in historical, geographical and scientific matters.

As a rule of thumb, we can admit inaccuracy in those things found in the Bible which have nothing to do with our salvation. For example, the author of Genesis believes that all fruit trees on earth "bear fruit with its seed in it" (*Gn 1:11-12 New American Bible*). The *kasoy* proves him wrong. But this should not bother us, because it has nothing to do with our salvation.

No book of the Bible is a "perfect book". God had gone so far "in adapting His language with thoughtful concern for our human nature" that "the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse" (*Dei Verbum* n. 13).

## *Some Rules of Interpretation*

The basic rule of interpretation endorsed by *Dei Verbum* is that the interpreter should seek first and foremost the literal sense of Scripture. This does not mean any message whatsoever that develops in the mind of the reader as he reflects on the words of Scripture. For Catholic exegetes, such a meaning would be called an "accommodated sense." *The literal sense is a message that was originally in the mind of the inspired biblical writer and expressed in the words he had written.* A reader studying these words in their context, that is to say, talking account of the language of the writer, his literary craftsmanship, his culture and his beliefs, establishes a mental bridge to the author's mind and lets the message pass from the sender to the receiver.

We must avoid the mistake of many fundamentalists who seem to give an absolute value to words. In fact, words are signs and they derive their value from the idea and reality they stand for. Words are to be used as keys to the mind of the human writer which, through inspiration, reflects the mind of God.

As corollaries to the basic rule of searching for the literal sense, *Dei Verbum* offers four other rules:

- (1) Attention should be given to "literary forms."
- (2) No less serious attention must be given to the context and unity of the whole Scripture.
- (3) The living Tradition of the whole Church must be taken into account.
- (4) We must be guided by the harmony which exists between elements of the faith. (In theological jargon this is called the "analogy of faith").

One who follows these rules assiduously and professionally deserves the title of "exegete" (*Dei Verbum* n. 12). In another part of the document it is said:

*Catholic exegetes then and other students of sacred theology, working diligently together and using appropriate means,*

*should devote their energies, under the watchful care of the teaching office of the Church, to an exploration and exposition of the divine writings. The sacred Synod encourages the sons of the Church and biblical scholars to continue energetically, following the mind of the Church with the work they have so well begun, with a constant renewal of vigor. (Dei Verbum, n. 23)*

It should be clear that the final say in the interpretation of Sacred Scriptures is a prerogative of the Church "which carries out the divine commission and ministry and guarding and interpreting the word of God" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 12).

### *The Historical Character of the Gospels*

People who come to believe that "Today is a good day to start reading the Bible everyday" tend to believe that they have to start with the first book of the Bible, Genesis. There is, however, a better way of becoming an enthusiastic Bible reader, and that is to start with the Gospels.

*It is common knowledge that among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special pre-eminence, and rightly so, for they are the principal witness for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Savior. (Dei Verbum, n. 18)*

While the Church continues to affirm the historical character of the Gospel (*Dei Verbum* n. 19), Vatican II admits that the transmission of the Gospel material has been colored by the Apostles "with the clearer understanding which they enjoyed after they had been instructed by the glorious events of Christ's life and taught by the light of the Spirit of truth." This is to admit that the words of Christ in the Gospels, from the historical point of view, are not the exact, stenographically recorded or memorized words of Jesus. However, the "Jesus of history" is not totally lost. He has just been robed with literary garments and seen from a theological perspective that belong to another time, maybe as far removed from His historical Ministry by as much as thirty years in the case of Mark, forty or fifty years in the case of Matthew and Luke, sixty or seventy years in the case of John.

The term, "form criticism" is not used in this document, but the substance of the form critical method is in fact adopted in the following words:

*The Sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing. Reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches, and preserving the form of proclamation . . .*

Pointedly, however, *Dei Verbum* adds:

*but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. (Dei Verbum, n. 19)*

In other words, Vatican II accepts the method of form criticism but rejects its bias about the impossibility or extreme difficulty of getting to know the man, Jesus, before he was idealized as the Lord and Savior. For Vatican II there is no contradiction between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith". Just as Jesus did not enter the world to remain a baby but progressed steadily in wisdom and age and grace before God and men" (*Lk* 2:52) without becoming a different human being, so also the "image" the disciples had of him developed as they learned to know him first as a preacher, then as a Master, then as Savior and Lord, and later as Partner in the work of the world's evangelization.

## Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church

A Filipino proverb says:

*Ang kawaling lupa  
Kahit malamig man,  
Pag-init ay daig  
ang kawaling bakal.*

Once an earthen pan becomes thoroughly heated it will remain hot longer than an iron pan.

We Catholics are the "*kawaling lupa*," the earthen pan. Hopefully, our National Bible Year will get us heated with enthusiastic

love for the Word of God. When that happens I think it will be truly said of us: "*daig ang kawaling bakal*," they have more heat than the iron pan. For this to happen, all we really have to do is get in touch with the fire already provided for us by Chapter VI of *Dei Verbum*. Truly this is the Magna Charta of the modern Biblical Apostolate of the Catholic Church. Let us listen carefully to its teaching, which can be summarized in twelve points.

### 1. *Two Tables of the Bread of Life*

Following the teaching found in John, chapter 6, the Second Vatican Council tells us that the Bread of Life is received by the Church and offered to the faithful not only from the table of Christ's body but also from the table of God's Word. I am sure it will be a surprise to many to read:

*The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord. (Dei Verbum, n. 21)*

How do we venerate the Body of the Lord? The best way of venerating the Body of the Lord is by going to Holy Mass and receiving the Eucharistic Bread in Holy Communion. Similarly, the best way to venerate the Word of God is by going to Holy Mass and participating in the first part, which is the Liturgy of the Word. Here we READ the Word of God and LISTEN to its Message, and resolve to APPLY it in our daily lives. All this is done in a context of communal prayers. This, according to Vatican II, is JUST AS important as the second part of the Mass, which is the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There should be *equal veneration* of the Word of God and the Eucharist.

For Holy Mass we need a priest and yet many times a priest is not available to the people. Many times, too, the time for Holy Mass is not convenient to the ordinary lay person who has to go to work or school. So we have to devise para-liturgical encounters with the word of God in a context of communal prayer, just like the *Seven Steps Bible Study in the context of a Prayer Meeting*, which in Tagalog we have called "*Bibliarasal*". In a way this has advantages over the Liturgy of the Word of Mass because it provides the faithful with a weekly opportunity for SHARING and SEARCHING for, or DISCOVERING the treasures of God's Word. Its disadvantage is that it is not immediately connected with the celebration of the Eucharist. In practice, however,

the weekly Bibliarasal has proven to be a very good preparation for better participation in the Sunday Mass.

One para-liturgical celebration of the Word of God which the Second Vatican Council commended by setting the example is the *Bible Enthronement*. Whenever the Council held its sessions, it always had a celebration of the Mass and then the Enthronement of the Bible.

## 2. *The Supreme Rule of Faith*

The Church has always maintained the divine Scriptures together with sacred Tradition as the supreme rule of faith. Consequently,

*All the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture. (Dei Verbum, n. 21)*

Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with Sacred Tradition, as its *primary and perpetual foundation*. . . and so the study of the sacred pages is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology.

By the same word of Scripture the Ministry of the Word also, that is, pastoral preaching, catechesis and all Christian instruction, in which the liturgical homily must hold the foremost place, is nourished in a healthy way and flourished in a holy way. (*Dei Verbum*, n. 24)

One great cause for elation during our National Bible Year is the approval by our Bishops of the Ministry of the Word to be entrusted to lay people. They said: "There is the challenge to recruit and train lay evangelizers who will confirm their brothers and sisters in the faith through their ministry of the Word of God. Just as we need lay eucharistic ministers, *we also need lay ministers of the Word.*"

In the mind of *Dei Verbum* chosen candidates are to be trained by Catholic exegetes and theologians so that:

*As many ministers of the divine Word as possible will be able effectively to provide the nourishment of the Scriptures for the People of God, to enlighten their minds, strengthen their wills,*



*and set men's hearts on fire with the love of God. (Dei Verbum, n. 23)*

### 3. *The Book of Encounter with God*

Many of us think that few are given the privilege to meet God. And there are those who think you have to go to a sacred place or city like Jerusalem or Rome, or you have to be led by a holy person, so as to be able to meet God. Vatican II, however, tells us that we can meet God if we read the Bible with the proper dispositions:

*In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the Word of God is so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life.*

### 4. *Power to Build Up*

As a preparation for the year 2000 there is presently in the Church a concern for a New Evangelization. One of the characteristics of an evangelization suited to our times is emphasis in building small Christian communities. Our Bishops have said: "We are challenged to devise pastoral approaches which will reach out all, especially those who are marginalized in our Churches, to make every member of the Church feel that he or she belongs to the Catholic Church in the small communities and in the parishes."

When we are engaged in community building, let us not forget the words of St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, as quoted by *Dei Verbum*:

*And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace that has power to build you up and give you your inheritance among all the sanctified. (Acts 20:32, Jerusalem Bible; see Dei Verbum, n. 2)*

### 5. *Easy Access to Sacred Scripture*

All the Christian faithful should be provided "easy access to Sacred Scripture" (*Dei Verbum* n. 22). This not only means that

every faithful should possess his or her own bible; it also means that

- a) it should be in the vernacular language;
- b) it should be in a modern translation so that it could be easily understood; and
- c) it should be in the handy edition that could be taken to the Church, the office or factory or to school.

At this point Vatican II abolishes a policy that has stood in the Church since the Council of Trent: the policy requiring Catholic vernacular translations to be based on the Latin Vulgate. Now the policy is:

*that suitable and correct translations (be) made into different languages especially from the original texts of the sacred books. (Dei Verbum, n. 22)*

Vatican II also endorses the idea of having "Common Bibles" to be used by all Christians:

*Should the opportunity arise and the Church authorities approve, if these translations are produced in cooperation with the separated brethren as well, all Christians will be able to use them. (Dei Verbum, n. 22)*

Most of the Filipino vernacular Bibles now in circulation have been translated in cooperation with our separated brethren under the aegis of the Philippine Bible Society.

## 6. *Growth in Understanding*

*The bride of the incarnate Word, the Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, is concerned to move ahead toward a deeper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures so that she may increasingly feed her children with the divine words. (Dei Verbum, n. 23)*

Growth in the understanding of Sacred Scriptures is rightly attributed to the Holy Spirit. In addition to this, it is the mind of *Dei Verbum* to point to the role of Mary as model in our endeavor to grow in the understanding of God's word.

*There is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (Lk 2:19, 51). (Dei Verbum, n. 8)*

In the biblical apostolate directed by the National Catholic Bible Center we have made it a point to also propagate devotion to *Our Lady of the Bible*. We invite the faithful to think of Mary as a Lady with a Bible on her left hand, the hand near her heart. Over her heart is a dove representing the Holy Spirit. Encircling her head is a crown of twelve stars suggesting that she is the woman in Apocalypse 12:5 who gave birth to the one who is to rule all the nations, Our Lord Jesus Christ. On the ground surrounding her are six jars to recall the changing of water into wine at Cana. Finally there is a quotation of her words, "Do whatever he tells you" (*Jn 2:5*). Experience has shown that when people have a devotion to Our Lady of the Bible, they grow in the understanding of God's Word.

*Dei Verbum* also tells us that we grow spiritually "through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which (we) experience and through the preaching of those who have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth" (*Dei Verbum* n. 8).

Finally, a deeper understanding of Sacred Scriptures is obtained through "the study of the Holy Fathers of both East and West and of sacred liturgies" (*Dei Verbum* n. 23).

#### 7. *Ignorance of the Scripture Is Ignorance of Christ*

"The Sacred Synod also earnestly urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the 'excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (*Phil 3:8*). 'For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.'"

#### 8. *Use of Media*

The media of social communication have not been expressly mentioned by *Dei Verbum*, but I believe they fall under "other aids" spoken of in the following text:

*They should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text, itself whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word,*

*or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose (seminars?) and other aids which, in our time, with the approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church, are commendably spread everywhere."*

#### 9. *Prayerful Reading*

*Let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together, for "we speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying." (Dei Verbum, n. 25)*

What is meant here is not just the prayer before and after reading Scripture. What is meant is prayer interspersed with the reading of the text. We do this best when we first read through a passage and then re-read it, pausing between words or lines so as to converse with God about what we have read.

#### 10. *Editions of the Bible*

Bishops are reminded to supply their flock with translations of the sacred texts "which age provided with the necessary and really adequate explanations so that the children of the Church may safely and profitably become conversant with the Sacred Scriptures and be penetrated with their spirit." This is meant especially for the New Testament "and above all the Gospels."

If possible, special editions should also be prepared for the use of non-Christians (*Dei Verbum*, n. 25).

#### 11. *Wise Distribution of Scriptures*

By using the term "wise distribution", Vatican II indicates that it does not favor the giving away of Scriptures even to people who are not particularly interested in them. A meaningful distribution of the Bible requires some effort from the receiver. This can take the form of a token sum of money or attendance in a seminar.

What is noteworthy here is that *Dei Verbum* puts the responsibility for the wise distribution of Scriptures not only on "pastors of souls" but also on Christians generally.

## 12. *A New Stimulus for the Life of the Spirit*

The conclusion of *Dei Verbum* puts this document in the mainstream of the renewal of the Church.

*Just as the life of the Church is strengthened through more frequent celebration of the Eucharistic mystery, similarly we may hope for a new stimulus for the life of the Spirit from a growing reverence for the Word of God, which "lasts forever." (Is 40:8; see 1 Peter 1:23-25)*

## NATIONAL BIBLE CONGRESS

# Good News for Christian Renewal

*"Halina, halina, mga kaliyag,"* says a line from a traditional planting rice song, *"at tayo ay mag-unat-unat. Magpanibago tayo ng lakas para sa araw ng bukas."*

Tomorrow we will be back planting the seedlings of God's Word in his Filipino rice paddy. We will be doing this still as we enter into the third millennium of the Christian era. So today let us follow the wisdom of the traditional song. Let us pause, stretch our limbs, and renew our strength. We will do this by turning to the Bible.

The aim of this paper is to examine selected biblical passages connected with reform and renewal and relate them to our own task of undertaking a new evangelization at the dawn of the third millennium.

### 2 Chronicles 17:7-9

"In the third year of (Jehoshapat's) reign he sent his leading men. . . to give instructions in the towns of Judah. With them went the Levites. . . and the priests. . . They gave instructions in Judah, having with them the book of the Law of Yahweh, and went round all the towns of Judah instructing the people."

Three aspects of King Jehoshaphat's reform are noteworthy: (1) he sent lay men together with Levites and priests to teach the people; (2) they brought with them the book of the law of Yahweh; (3) and they went round all the towns of Judah.

This strategy for reform can be applied to new evangelization and take the form of the following guidelines:

1. *The participation of the laity in evangelization must be maximized.* However, they should not work separately but hand in hand with bishops, priests, and deacons. The clergy, for their part, should recognize that the laity, by baptismal privilege and not merely by deputation from the clergy, have an indispensable role in evangelization.

2. *We need Lay Ministers of the Word.* "Just as we need lay eucharistic ministers, we also need lay ministers of the Word." (CBCP Statement on Fundamentalist Groups, Jan. 27, 1989, Pastoral Challenges, 5).

3. *Strengthen our "Share-a-Bible" projects.* Today, bringing the Bible to the people means giving *all* Christians "easy access to Sacred Scripture" so that *all* the Christian faithful could "gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself" (*Dei Verbum*). This logic is expressed in the Filipino proverb, "*Kung sino ang malapit sa balon, siyang laging nakaiinom.*" (He who is near the well has always water to drink.) We must not lag in our "Share-a-Bible" projects.

4. *Organize "Rolling Crusades of Evangelization.* Evangelizers must not wait for the people to come to them. They must go to the people. Evangelization should be organized as a "rolling crusade" that will bring the same team of evangelizers to different smaller units of locality. Every "*barangay*" or "*purok*" must be evangelized.

## 2 Kings 23:1-3

"(King Josiah) then had all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem summoned to him, and the king went up to the Temple of Yahweh with all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, priests, prophets and the whole populace, high and low.

In their hearing he read out the entire contents of the Book of the Covenant discovered in the Temple of Yahweh. The king, then, standing on the dais, bound himself by the Covenant before Yahweh, to follow Yahweh, to keep his commandments, decrees and laws with all his heart and soul, and to carry out the terms of the Covenant as written in this book. All the people pledged their allegiance to the Covenant."

In this passage we learn that the King Josiah did something new in Salvation History. By a solemn act he obliged the nation, now organized as a kingdom, to accept a Covenant with God. With Moses and Joshua it was the Twelve Tribes who had been bound to the Covenant, but with the development of the kingdoms of the North and the South, the old loyalties had broken down.

The ideal of a *holy nation* is here set out for the first time. This ideal will survive through the centuries and with the entry of the Gentiles into the People of God the same ideal will be reaffirmed in 1 Peter 2:9: "You are a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Scholars tell us that the "Book of the Law" found in the temple at the time of King Josiah (622 B. C.) was Deuteronomy or at least its legislative section, chapters 12 to 26 and chapter 28.

This book was used by King Josiah to initiate what has been called the "Deuteronomic reform." He reasserted monotheism, that is, belief in just one God, and he ordered all idols destroyed. He centralized the worship of Yahweh in the Jerusalem temple and he abolished all other sanctuaries.

Deuteronomy is the only book of the Old Testament which explicitly commands the people to *love God*. It is Dt 6:5 that Jesus will quote to answer the question on which is the greatest commandment of all (see Mt 22:37 and parallels). "You must love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Let us also notice that Deuteronomy emphasizes a religion of the heart (see Dt 6:5 and 23:3).



For these observations we can come up with the following guidelines for new evangelization:

1. *Top government and business leaders must be newly evangelized.* The whole nation must experience a new evangelization, starting with the leaders. Hence: a) A direct action must be undertaken to get the top executive, legislative and judiciary leaders involved in evangelization. Top businessmen and media people must be evangelized and must become evangelizers. b) Since our country is pluralistic, the new evangelization must be *ecumenical*, taking account of Christians who do not share our Catholic faith, and *dialogical*, respecting the beliefs of Muslims, Buddhists, and other religions.

2. *The Good News must be inculturated.* Evangelization also means the inculturation of the Good News among our people. The best practices of our indigenous culture be revived, preserved and developed. Those afraid of inculturation should heed the proverb: "*Ano man ay dapat din, kung pagiging-dapatin.*" (A thing becomes valuable when we deem it to be so.)

We can begin by integrating Filipino music, dance and religious rituals into our liturgy or at least into our paraliturgy. For example, we can integrate Filipino music and dance into the ceremony of Bible Enthronement.

A Filipino proverb says: "*Ang utang na loob, magpakaliit man, utang at utang din kahit mabayaran. Sa pakitang loob at tapat na damay, ay walang salaping sukat maitimbang.*" (A favor no matter how small, is a debt we must never forget, since no money can ever fully repay it.) The insight of this proverb is an example of a Filipino cultural value that can be placed at the service of evangelization. Similarly, values like the *bayanihan* and *pakikisama* already have the seed of the Gospel in them. We must preserve and update Filipino values like these and integrate them into the Christian moral and spiritual life.

3. *We must promote a religion of the heart.* New Evangelization must be perceived as the promotion of a religion that primarily consists of the love of God and is rooted in a conversion and a

consecration of the heart to the Lord. This, according to biblical scholars, was the hallmark of the Deuteronomic reform in the Bible.

Right now Filipino religious life is dominated by popular religiosity. While this is not altogether bad as some Fundamentalists might claim, it is time for us to purge our popular religious practices by eliminating everything that is superstitious and ostentatious. We have to introduce a strong catechetical orientation to these religious and cultural traditions so that they will become vehicles of popular instruction or "evangelization at the grass roots."

A Filipino proverb aptly expresses this stand on popular religiosity: "*Sipit alimango'y kaya pinupukpok, di sa kagalitan ni sa pagkapoot, kundi sa katuwaan sa laman sa loob.*" (One crushes the crab's pinchers, not because of hatred but to enjoy its meat inside).

### Nehemiah 8:1-3. 7-10

The passage tells us of the reform of the Jewish life and religion after the Babylonian exile. The reform was spearheaded by Nehemiah the Governor and Ezra the Priest-Scribe. It was inaugurated by the reading and explanation of Sacred Scripture.

Two characteristics of the post-exilic reform can be carried over to our present task of new evangelization:

1. *Sacred Scripture was read to the people and explained to them.* This should remind us to implement the desire of Vatican II that "by the same word of Scripture the ministry of the word, that is, pastoral preaching, catechetics, and all Christian instruction, in which the liturgical homily must hold the foremost place, should be nourished." (*Dei Verbum*, 29).

2. The people, including all the youth "old enough to understand" were exhorted: "do not be sad: the joy of Yahweh is your stronghold." This should remind us of three very important thrusts of new evangelization: a) *THE FAMILY LIFE APOSTOLATE* b) *THE YOUTH APOSTOLATE*; c) *JOY IN THE SERVICE OF THE LORD.*

## Luke 4: 16-22

“(Jesus) came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for He has anointed me to bring the Good News to the afflicted. He sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.’ He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them. ‘This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.’ And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips.”

1. *Good News to the poor.* The greatest reformist of them all is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ. Like that of Jesus himself, our evangelization must be good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. This requires a concentration of our efforts and resources for, as a Filipino proverb says, “*Madali ang maging tao, mahirap ang magpakatao.*” (It is easy to be born, it is hard to become humane).

2. *Decade of the Bible and new evangelization.* The text of Isaiah read by Jesus speaks of a “year of favour from the Lord,” which is an allusion to the Jubilee Year. In our own case the Jubilee of the year 2000 is not far away. I hope this National Congress will formalize the declaration of the decade before the third millennium, 1990 to 2000, as the “Decade of the Bible and New Evangelization.” Hopefully in this decade we will experience the “favour from the Lord.” As a Filipino proverb says, “*Ang araw ay bago sumikat, Nakikita muna’y banaag.*” (When you see the dawn, can the sun be far behind?)

## Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4. 14-21

1. *Revival of Prayer Life.* Luke is the Evangelist who, more than any other, emphasized the need for prayer. Just as prayer marked the beginning of the ministry of Jesus (Lk 3:21), so, too, did prayer mark the beginning of the ministry of the Church (Acts 1:14). Christian renewal or new evangelization must be marked by a revival

of the prayer life that so characterized the early Church. A Filipino proverb says, "*Ang masamang sasapitin, talo ng mabuting panalangin.*" (The dangers that threaten us may be overcome by a good, earnest prayer.)

To promote Christian renewal or new evangelization the National Catholic Bible Center propagates *BIBLIARASAL*. This is a name coined from four Filipino words:

BIBLIA  
AR — AL  
DASAL  
ASAL

These words have been put together to convey a message: "*MagARAL ng BIBLIA upang magDASAL at magbago ng ASAL.*" (STUDY the BIBLE so as to PRAY and experience RENEWAL.)

Through *BIBLIARASAL* we hope people will learn that praying with the Bible is not the same as the old practice of praying before and after reading the Bible. *Dei Verbum*, n. 25 says that "prayer should ACCOMPANY the reading of Sacred Scripture." This means that a passage of Scripture must be read not only once but at least twice in one sitting. As a Filipino proverb says, "*Iba ang tinitingnan, kaysa tinititigan.*" (There is a vast difference between glancing at an object and observing it with care.) The first reading is done for orientation — to get a general idea of the message. The second reading is done for prayer. Pauses should be made after every few words so as to engage God in a dialogue.

After the prayerful reading of the text *BIBLIARASAL* encourages a sharing of experiences rather than just ideas or insights. "*Ang karunungan, daig ng kabatiran.*" (Experience is better than knowledge.) The *BIBLIARASAL* method seeks to capture the same spirituality we find in the Bible, which is that of reflecting on God's revelatory WORD-EVENTS. The sharing session is concluded with prayer. The participants pray for the concerns of those who have shared their experiences.

The seventh and last step of *BIBLIARASAL* is again a moment of prayer after the doctrinal reflection and a consideration of "possibilities" for practical resolutions. This takes the form of "Bible Verse

Prayer." a participant takes a few words from the reading and relates it to a point in the doctrinal reflection and to one resolution. The idea is to get one's prayer started with the power of the inspired words and develop it with a doctrinal insight and a practical resolution.

These ways of praying are not exclusively propagated by BIBLIARASAL. In fact many renewal programs already used them or similar methods even before BIBLIARASAL did. They have been described here to emphasize that the new evangelization should go hand in hand with a resurgence of the importance of biblically based prayer in Christian living.

2. *Attention to Mary's role.* At this point let us note the place of Mary in new evangelization and Christian renewal. Fundamentalists want to ignore the role of Mary as though she is not given any importance in the Bible. On the other hand, among Catholics, there are Marian maximalists who interpret biblical texts with a big dose of "more than literal" meanings. The best stance for new evangelizers to take with regard to Mary has been explained in the Vatican document, "The Virgin Mary in Intellectual and Spiritual Formation," issued on March 25, 1988. We must accept the Mother of the Lord as a "datum of divine Revelation" and "maternal presence" always operative in the life of the Church" (n. 1).

The National Catholic Bible Center propagates devotion to Mary, "Our Lady of the Bible." To this end an image has been made to portray Mary holding a Bible in her left hand, close to her heart (not shown). This is to recall how Mary "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Lk 2: 19. 51). Six stone jars surround Mary to recall her intercession at Cana for the first miracle of Jesus, the changing of water into wine. Not to be overlooked is the quotation, "Do whatever he tells you," (Jn 2:5).

During this National Bible Year the image of "Our Lady of the Bible" has gone on pilgrimage to promote the biblical apostolate. The response of our people who received the pilgrim "Lady" has shown that new evangelization cannot succeed in the Philippines unless it is also perceived by the people as a promotion of Mary's role in the salvation of humankind.

3. *Spirit filled evangelizers.* The impact of the Charismatic Movement in the Philippines must be recognized as one of the forces

to be harnessed for new evangelization. Thanks to charismatics and all those who have joined renewal movements like the Focolare and the Neo-Catechumenate many sons and daughters of our country, the young and the "young once," have become spirit-filled. They have called on the name of the Lord and have been saved. Like the lame man cured by Peter shortly after Pentecost "in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene," they feel like "walking and jumping and praising God" (Acts 3:6.8).

What remains to be done now is for all the spirit-filled Catholics to become active prophets, evangelizers speaking in the name of the Lord and proclaiming his mighty works. Let them remember the wisdom of the Filipino proverb: "*Matalas man ang tabak, mapurol kung nakasakbat.*" (A keen sword becomes dull when it remains sheathed in the scabbard).

In conclusion let us note that the selected biblical texts we have considered are only a sampling of the power of the Good News for Christian renewal. Indeed, if we only take the Word of God like a seed sinking into rich soil, that is, into "a noble and generous heart" (Lk 8:15) it will yield a rich harvest of newly evangelized and renewed Christians.

Like the apocalyptic seer we will see "a new heavens and a new earth." We will see the One sitting on the throne speaking: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty" (Rev 21:1.6).

Fr. E. Rivera, O.P.  
National Bible Congress  
Philippine International Convention Center  
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# **A Re-evangelized and Re-evangelizing People\***

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*Most Rev. Teodoro C. Bacani, D.D.*

## **A Parable**

There once lived a mother who loved her little child very much. To make the child know that she so loved him she would play with him, smile at him, and breastfeed him when he cried out in hunger.

Now, this woman loved her child very much, but she was rather simple-minded. She knew of no other way to show her love for her child. Meanwhile, the child kept on growing and experiencing new things and new needs. But the mother kept on trying to play with him and smiling at him, and giving her breast to feed him when he felt hungry.

On the child's seventh birthday, the mother greeted him a happy birthday by playing with him and smiling at him as usual. And then she gave him her breast so he could have his breakfast of mother's milk. The child turn away from her. The mother wondered why the child did not seem to appreciate her gestures of love. (She did not notice, by the way, that her child had not developed as well as the other children in the neighborhood.)

I am sure that you are not surprised at the child's lack of appreciation of the mother's manifestation of love, or at the underdevelopment of the child. The mother was good-intentioned, and wanted to convey the simple message, "I love you." But she did not take account of the changing condition and circumstances of her child. The result was disastrous — the child did not develop normally, and finally refused to accept her signs of love.

## Adaptation, the Law of Evangelization

The Church too has a message. According to Pope John Paul II the central message of Revelation is: "God loves His people" (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 12). This is the good news we must deliver through word, work and life. But this good news, simple though it is, must be delivered to each generation in a manner adapted to that generation. In fact, the Second Vatican Council has stated that "this adapted preaching of the revealed word must remain the law of all evangelization" (*The Church in the Modern World*, no. 44).

We see this adaption operative in the formation of the Gospels. It is now generally accepted that there were three stages in the formation of the four gospels: (1) *The Jesus layer*. This is what Jesus actually said and did, what could have been video-taped of his teaching and actions. (2) *The layer of apostolic preaching*. This is how the apostles preached the message of Jesus. They did not present verbatim all that Jesus said, nor report with scientific accuracy all that he did, involved a selective and interpretative narration of the Jesus-event. (3) *The layer of the evangelists*. This was based on the Jesus layer and the layer of the apostolic preaching, but again it was not simply a repetition of the first two layers. It was also a selective and interpretative reporting of the Jesus-event. The evangelists wrote for their readers what they did record in order to respond to the needs of the communities they were writing for. That is why we have a multi-faceted gospel — the Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel according to Mark, the Gospel according to Luke, and the Gospel according to John. Each of them was written to bring to maturity the faith of their readers, and to respond to the apologetic, catechetical and liturgical needs of the communities they were writing for, and to meet as well practical requirements of Church order.



The Church is required by the Lord to continue this process and to explicitate for each generation what the meaning of Jesus is for that generation. Basing itself on the Bible and Tradition, the Church — all of us together — must search for new ways and means to deliver the Christian message effectively to this generation. (Parenthetically I may remark that the first element of fidelity according to Pope John Paul II, is *search*. In evangelization it is the *search* for concepts, language, symbols and action that will translate powerfully for our generation the message and life of Jesus.) The apostles did this effectively for their generation. The early Christians adapted their language and symbols to the Greek-speaking world. Subsequently preachers and missionaries did such a good job in Europe that the English writer Hilaire Belloc could claim that the faith was Europe and Europe was the faith.

### The Need to Re-evangelize our Country

We have to do something for the *now* generation of Filipinos. The Filipino people have to be re-evangelized. I am not referring here to the general need to be re-evangelized that the Pope John Paul II speaks of when he writes that the Church “always needs to hear the proclamation of the ‘mighty works of God’ which converted her to the Lord; she has a constant need of being evangelized . . .” (*E.N.*, no. 15).

I am speaking of a specific need to re-evangelize the Filipino people because a *new generation* has arisen which calls for a new evangelization.

This new situation is characterized by

1. a new awareness;
2. new challenges; and
3. new resources for evangelization.

### A New Awareness

I speak of a *new awareness*. Of what? Of the importance of *culture* in evangelization, first of all. Paul VI has strongly asserted: “What matters is to evangelize man’s cultures” (*E.N.* No. 20).

Some recent criticisms of our culture have brought out the need to re-evangelize Filipino culture. A foreign journalist has used the term "damaged" in referring to it. Cardinal Sin has, more benignly, called our culture "immature." And a recent important study entitled, "A Moral Recovery Program: Building a People—Building a Nation" has shown both the weakness and strengths of Filipino culture.

What all these studies have in common is the awareness of the need to change our ways if we are to progress as a nation. We cannot remain as we are to move ahead. For us to achieve this, the Gospel has to affect and even upset our "criteria of judgment, determining value, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and model of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation" (*E.N.* no. 17).

But culture is not only to be evangelized. Culture is also the most potent instrument of evangelization. It is my contention that our religiosity has so often been divorced from life because the Gospel has not been preached in such a way as to affect the whole of life. Our way of preaching Christianity till recent times has more often filled our heads than it has touched our hearts and motor nerves.

There are instances, when to get the desired result, it is not enough to convey the intellectual content of a message, for example:

There was a Japanese who married a very beautiful woman. But after a year, he wanted to divorce her already. His lawyer said to him, "Ajinomoto, you married the most beautiful woman in Japan, and she is so rich and gracious, why then do you want to divorce her?"

Ajinomoto answered, "Reason simple. Reason simple. Me no come to my wife. My wife no come to me. Baby come. How come?"

Now the joke elicited a total response from you. But it can do that only if I tell it in English. If I tell the story in Filipino, I will not be able to evoke an emotional response. See how this affects you: "*Hindi ako lumalapit sa aking asawa. Hindi naman lumalapit sa akin ang aking asawa. Nagkaroon siya ng anak. Paano iyon?*"

On the other hand, there are words that are evocative in Filipino but not in English. The Filipino words "*sipsip*" and "*tuta*"

or the expressions, "*Hindi ka nag-iisa*" or "*Sobra na! Tama na! Palitan na!*" evoke sentiments and feelings that their English translations cannot evoke.

My point is this: To drive home the conceptual content of the Christian message is not yet to deliver the message. The Christian message is fully delivered only when it elicits a holistic response. And a holistic response cannot be elicited as strongly when the message is preached in a foreign language, for often the effective and emotional resonances are left out. The recipient of the message learns the message but is not motivated by it. I find this true from personal experience that I prefer to preach in Filipino whenever I can. And it makes me glad that today in seminaries theology is starting to be taught in the vernacular, and theological terms are being translated in Filipino.

I believe that the time has now come to evangelize Filipinos in Filipino. How heartening to note that whereas during the International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila (1973) the Filipinos sang "*No Mas Amor Que El Tuyo*" and "*Gloria Que Jesus Se Encierra*," during the recent National Eucharistic Year we sang, "*Isang Pagkain, Isang Katawan, Isang Bayan*." Only the elite could profit from the first two songs. Professor Lucio San Pedro's Filipino hymn touches the hearts of all.

It is true, that even while using a foreign language one can evangelize in a Filipino way. You have magnificent examples of this in the best of Cardinal Sin's homilies which are characterized by a narrative style and punctuated by humor and pathos.

Besides an awareness of the role of culture in evangelization, there is a *new awareness of the poor*. It is not that we were not aware of the poor before. But today we realize that there are too many who are poor; that they need not be poor, that many are kept poor by unjust social structures, and that Christ wants us to exercise a preferential love for the poor.

The poor in the Philippines are really poor. For while Christ was sent "to bring the Good News to the poor" (Lk 4:18), and while the preaching of the Good News to the poor was given by him as proof that he was indeed the Messiah (Lk 7:22), many poor in the Philippines are not even reached by the Good News. While our Catholic churches

and Catholic schools are full, the greater majority of our Catholics do not come to church, and most of our children are either in public schools or out in the streets.

This awareness of the poor brings with it the awareness that we are responsible for the uplifting of the poor. Poverty is against the will of God. God does not want any of his children to lack anything necessary for decent living. And it is a part of the task of the Church to help bring about more humane and just living conditions for the poor. "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (*Synod of Bishops 1971*). Such action for justice will include struggling against unjust social structures.

Lately, we Filipinos have become more aware — and this is the third awareness — not only of our duty to transform the world, but of *our need to save it*. The greed of a few, and the need of the many has led to a dangerous depletion of our natural resources and the pollution of our environment. People are not only killing each other. They are destroying the very environment that supports life. With considerable alarm, the Philippine Bishops asked in their pastoral letter on ecology, "What Is Happening To Our Beautiful land?"

There has arisen also a fourth awareness: the *awareness of community*. This has come partly from the painful experience of extreme individualism and division which have brought us nowhere. We are coming to realize that we need to be united if we are to make any progress at all.

But again we discover that the way to community is through small communities. In small Christian communities people realize that "it has pleased God to make men holy and save them, not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds but to make them into a people. . ." (L.G. no. 8). Living in face-to-face relationships and reflecting together on their life situations in the light of the Word of God, members of small Christian communities grow in a spirit of critical discernment and mutual help.

These small Christian communities or basic ecclesial communities remain as the most promising Philippine pastoral initiative. The seventh Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC) held in Butuan focused on the BECs once again as agents of evangelization.

The fifth awareness is the growing *recognition by Catholics of the Church as "we" and not "they"*. It is true that for many Catholics the Church is more a social fact to reckon with than a community to which they belong. But there is no doubt either that the Church "is coming to life again in the hearts of men" (Msgr. Romano Guardini). The celebration of the National Marian Year, then of the National Eucharistic Year, and now the National Bible Year has contributed immensely to create this awareness that all of us together are the Church. The proliferation of BECs and charismatic prayer groups has also greatly helped. Strangely enough, the attacks launched against the Church by Fundamentalist groups has also helped Catholics to identify themselves with the Church.

And finally, there is the growing awareness of *our missionary mandate* to bring the Gospel to other parts of Asia. In 1980, an International Mission Congress was held in Manila. This was followed by the visit of Pope John Paul II, who told us Filipinos that he wanted us to become the foremost missionaries in Asia. Now we have a Fil-Mission Society, a seminary in Manila which trains future priests for work in China, a Philippine Lay Missionaries Program, and more than seven hundred priests, religious and lay people in the mission. And we are beginning to appreciate the missionary potentials of our Filipino migrants who seek to eke out a living in foreign lands.

### *New Challenges*

Combined with this new set of awareness are *new challenges* that face the Church. The most serious challenge is the challenge to show that our Christian faith can really transform the lives of people. For here we are, more than 90% Christians, more than 80% Catholics, and yet we are an impoverished, graft-ridden, unjust and divided society. The Catholic claim, as stated by Pope John Paul II is that "the Christian faith constitutes the only fully valid response... to the problems that life poses to every person and society" (C.L., no. 34). Here in the Philippines, the separation between faith and life, or faith and culture reaches tragic and scandalous proportions. We cannot be said to provide today "shining witness" (Paul VI) to all the people of Asia. We are Christians, and yet we seem incapable of disciplining ourselves, and of living and working together in a spirit

of justice and love. We are Christians, and yet we continue to destroy each other and even the environment that sustains our life. How can we say convincingly that the Christian faith offers fully valid response to the problems life poses to every person and society?

The second major problem is the challenge posed by religious sects. The local *Iglesia ni Cristo* as well as some Non-Catholic and Fundamentalist groups have been relentlessly attacking Church doctrines and practices, sometimes in a vicious manner. And they have been able to draw away many of our followers from the ranks of the Church. Their success, though modest, signals failing or deficiencies on our part as Church. Our bishops enumerated some of these deficiencies in their statement on Fundamentalist groups in the Philippines. How shall we make up for these deficiencies and respond to the attacks of these separated brethren?

### *New Resources*

We are fortunate that the Lord has been equipping the Church with *new resources* to cope with these new awareness and challenges.

The chief resource is undoubtedly *the Bible*, which, together with the Eucharist, serves as the Bread of Life for the nourishment and strengthening of the Church. Filipino Catholics are being attracted to read and study the inspired Word of God, and are discovering its power and effectiveness to transform their lives.

The second resource is the *Second Vatican Council*, the chief impetus and inspiration for this new evangelization. Vatican II has generated and inspired the Synod of Bishops and regional and episcopal conferences which have provided concrete up-to-date orientations for Christian living today. It is also the spirit of Vatican II that the new Code of Canon Law has sought to incarnate in Church life and structures.

The third, one whose role is increasingly being recognized as completely indispensable, is *the laity*. In fact, the present Pope points out that it is their responsibility "to testify how the Christian faith constitutes the only valid response. . . to the problems that life poses to every person and society." And he adds, "This will be possible

if the lay faithful will know how to overcome in themselves the separation of Gospel from life, to again take up in their daily activities in family, work and society, an integrated approach to life that is fully brought about by the inspiration and strength of the Gospel" (C.L. no. 34). It is heartening to see how an increasing number of the laity are awakening and living up to their Christian vocation. The lay faithful are indeed today the great hope and resource of the Church for the re-evangelization of our country. The very active role of the Council of the Laity of the Philippines in the life of the Church and our country is an excellent index of this.

The *basic ecclesial communities and other small Christian communities and movements* have been a vital part of this response of the laity. In them different *lay ministries* are coming alive and complementing the indispensable priestly ministry.

And finally, *the mass media*, which are taking an increasingly greater importance because of their pervasiveness, and because they are being used to attack the values and teachings that the Church upholds.

### *Characteristic of Re-Evangelization*

What will be the *characteristics of this re-evangelization*?

- (1) First, it will be a *proclamation of the Word of God*. The Church recognizes the primacy of the word of God in evangelization. All Church teaching is meant to serve God's word and is not intended to be a substitute for it. The word of God is living and effective (*Heb 4:12*). It is the bread of life, and serves as a lamp for our feet in our journey towards God (cf. *Ps 119:105*). It is "the sword of the Spirit" (*Eph 6:17*), and is useful "for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy" (*Tim 3:16*). It is first of all through the word of the living God that the Church finds its unity (*P.O.* no. 4).

### *Vatican II directs:*

... the "study of the sacred page" should be the very soul of sacred theology. The ministry of the Word, too — pastoral

preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place — is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture (D.V., no. 24).

- (2) Second, this re-evangelization will be *directed to the multitudes, especially the poor, the unchurched, and the "unfaithful faithful"* (Mrs. Tita T. de Villa), those who are in the margins of society and of the Church, in order to spur them on to take a hand in their own integral liberation and development. For still sometime to come, evangelization will have to lay emphasis on the importance and necessity of overcoming poverty and injustice, and of transforming our Philippine society so that all can live worthy of God's children.

Pope John Paul II, writing to the Philippine bishops, directs them to a preferential love for the poor, which must be according to him, one of the principal lines of action of their pastoral ministry (*Letter to Philippine Bishops on the occasion of their July, 1986 meeting*).

- (3) Third, re-evangelization will be a proclamation of the Word of God, but with a *conscious adaptation to our culture* — a culture of poverty, a culture of graft and corruption, yes — but also a culture in personalistic values of the human spirit. It will be an evangelization where there will be a conscious wedding of the Word of God with the world of men, a proclamation of the Word of God in the concrete situations and circumstances in which people find themselves, and using the elements of the culture of which is the warp and woof of their lives.

This will involve two things: first, pastors and theologians will have to preach the Bible for those themes which are most relevant to our country's situation. What key biblical messages need to be emphasized in a poverty-stricken, developing nation like us? What biblical message must be directed to an unjust, graft-ridden, and divided society like ours? The second Vatican Council has spoken of a hierarchy of truths (U.R., no. 11). There is, however, aside from this objective hierarchy of truths a subjective hierarchy of truths. One does not emphasize the same points of the biblical message in Scandinavia and in the Philippines. *The needs, the situation, and the questions of*



Filipinos will dictate which of the treasures of the biblical message we should bring forward and emphasize. The biblical message must impregnate, animate, and purify Filipino culture and respond to present day challenges like the ones indicated by the aforementioned Senate study on the strengths and weaknesses of our Filipino culture. In the light of the Philippine situation, we may ask whether we have given Genesis 1-2, the Books of Exodus and the Prophets the attention that they deserve.

The second thing required is that the biblical message be couched in truly Filipino terms. We will need a real translation of the biblical message which will evoke also its affective and emotional concomitants. A good example of this is the translation of covenant (*berith* and *diatheke*) into "*tipan*" in Filipino. Notice, too, how well "Fool" is translated as "*tanga!*" in Lk 12:20.

- (4) The re-evangelization I speak of will aim not only at the imparting of Christian information, but at *integral Christian formation towards a holistic spirituality*. The spirituality is well described by the participants of the Tagaytay echo seminar on the seventh Synod of Bishops. They describe this holistic spirituality as one. . . that unites faith in the Lord with justice and charity to His brothers and sisters and joins together a hope for the world to come with an intense commitment to transform the world; a spirituality that seeks the salvation of the total human person while keeping in mind the primacy of his/her spiritual needs; a spirituality that seeks for change not only in interior attitudes but in ecclesial and societal structures; a spirituality that witnesses through action to the faith he/she professes; a spirituality finally, that dynamically inter-relates communion and mission in the Church's life.
- (5) Because it aims at such a holistic spirituality, this re-evangelization will give emphasis to a *catechesis* that is both biblical and inculturated, a catechesis that will be an education towards the maturity of Christian faith, which is belief (*paniniwala*), trust (*pagtitiwala*) and obedience (*pagsunod*) together.
- (6) Since the goal will be a holistic Christian formation, special attention will be paid to *process*, while not neglecting content.

It will not be a mere imparting of information but a process of assimilation of Christian values, a process involving *pakiki-sama* and *pakiki-isa*, presence and dialogue in friendship with those being evangelized. This process will also include their active participation. The February 14, 1986 invitation of the bishops to "pray together, reason together, decide together" in a creative, imaginative way, under the guidance of Christ's Spirit, can be taken as a model of this process.

- (7) Since the goal is Christian formation, *the young* who are most in need of formation and at the same time most capable of it will be its special targets. The new evangelization will be an evangelization of the young most especially. In this connection, it is disturbing to know that the youth in the Philippines are not receiving as much catechesis as the children and adults. Let me recall to you that one of the two characteristics of the new evangelization is that "*it must be directed particularly to the new generations*" (cf. Bishop Almario's talk).
- (8) Both for practical and theological reasons this re-evangelization will have to be *carried out largely by lay people*. The lay people, by reason of their baptism and confirmation, share in the prophetic office of Christ. And in the Philippines, without their active collaboration, there cannot be any adequate evangelization or transformation of our society. From the parents who are the first evangelizers of their children to the highest public officials who must set an example of public service, lay people must all participate, for the Christian vocation is a vocation to the apostolate (A.A., no. 2).
- (9) But evangelization finds its greatest support and attraction not in individual evangelizers but in *evangelizing communities*. Hence, emphasis will be laid on the formation of evangelized and evangelizing Christian communities.
- (10) This evangelization's special and preferred method is *Christian witness* — the exemplary living out of the Christian message, the living translation of the Word of God in proclaimed lives, and testimony given to the experience of God's grace and mercy. Evangelization is most effective where it is a narration of what God has done for us and for others, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are the witnesses" (E.N., no. 41).

I have often verified the truth of this statement. Let me give only two instances. In August 1984, I was privileged to attend a retreat for priests and bishops in Rome. There were more than 6,000 participants. Outstanding preachers were invited to speak to us. But the one we most listened to was Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who, without rhetorical flourishes told us her experiences of God's grace in the people and touched us deeply.

A second instance. During the National Eucharistic Year, I was invited to speak in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. I gave the people a well-prepared, instructive, and occasionally entertaining lecture on the Eucharist. After my speech, the master of ceremonies said, "Now that we have listened to the main speaker, we shall now listen to Mrs. Tita de Villa, president of the Council of the Laity of the Philippines." Mrs. de Villa spoke to them not a lecture but a narration of her life experiences related to the Eucharist, and how the Eucharist had affected her life. She spoke for one hour and twenty minutes. The people listened to her in rapt attention. At the end of her speech, they gave her a rousing ovation, and many came to congratulate her, while hardly anyone congratulated me!

- (11) This evangelization, while always taking the Filipino as starting point, and while always going back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God (*E.N.*, no. 20) will nevertheless seek to *penetrate our culture itself*, our society, with Gospel values. It will seek the creation of a civilization of love (Paul VI). For this, the *utilization of the mass media* is a necessity. Pope Paul VI insists that evangelization cannot do without these means (*E.N.*, no. 45). There is no adequate re-evangelization today without the use of the mass media. I say this while sadly recognizing how inadequately the Church in the Philippines uses these modern means of communication in the service of evangelization.
- (12) Finally, this evangelization, while forming Christian persons and Christian communities and transforming human society will create in the evangelized a *sense of responsibility and mission for the whole of Asia*. Nothing of what I have said so far will happen, however, unless a *new spirit* inspires our re-evangelization efforts. We need to recapture the spirit of the first evangelizers. That spirit is first of all a *reliance on the Holy*

*Spirit.* In the Gospel according to Luke the disciples were not told to "Go" as in Matthew and Mark. They were told to "stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49). For it was only then that they could be his witnesses "not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth" (Act 1:8). When they went forth, they went as men filled with Spirit. And when they looked for collaborators, they asked for seven men "filled with the Spirit and with wisdom" (Act 6:3). The Church shown in the Acts of the Apostles was a Church "filled with consolation of the Holy Spirit" (Act 9:31), so much so that this book of Luke has been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. Today we again live "at a privileged moment of the Spirit" (E.N., no. 75). As evangelizers we must put our complete trust in Him and dare to do new and great things with His guidance and power. To dare to do new and great things! Yes, we need to dare. *Boldness* is a necessary quality of the re-evangelizer, as it was a quality of the apostolic preacher (cf. Acts 4:13, 30-31) and the first missionaries who came to this land. Fr. Horacio dela Costa once said, "Now there remain these three: faith, hope and charity, and the greatest of these is prudence!" While we continue to need prudence today, we have much greater need of the boldness of people who will dare to go on home to home visitation or dare to try new methods to bring the Good News to all. The call today is for boldness. Let us not be (to use Max Soliven's words) "gray men and women who dare not do anything because they don't want to be accused of doing wrong" with the result that nothing yet's done at all (*Philippine Star*, November 14, 1989, p. 6). Concomitant to this daring must be the spirit of *initiative* and *creativity*. We are to go to the poor, the unchurched, and those who have not accepted Christ. We are not to wait for them to come. We must go to them. If they do not come to listen now, we must discover new ways of approaching them. Rev. Paul Yonggi Cho, a very successful South Korean Pentecostal pastor tells of how some of his people ride elevators for hours, ever on the watch for people who may need their help. They offer their help, and return later to visit those whom they have helped, and to evangelize them. They have, in this way gotten many new members. why is it that advertising companies are endlessly thinking and imagining new ways of improving the advertisements of their products, and we are content to repeat what we have been doing year after year?

Should the children of this world always be wiser than the children of light? But together with this creativity, initiative and boldness must go the *love and fervour* characteristic of the Lord and saintly evangelizers. This love will be manifested not by emotional outbursts but by the quiet, competent and persevering *commitment and dedication* of the evangelizer. *Kailangan natin ang commitment na kitang-kita at nakakahawa!* (We need commitment that is obvious to others and contagious!) Such committed persons are perhaps still a minority in the Church. *Hindi mabongga pero mabunga!* (They are not showy, but they are fruitful). After they have done their utmost, they say simply, "We are merely servants. We have done no more than our duty" (*Lk 17:10*).

Nothing will attract more than this committed love which we see today in the face of a John Paul II, a Mother Teresa of Calcutta and hundreds of unproclaimed evangelizers. Nothing is more necessary. And nothing is more potent.

In summary, we can say that re-evangelization will be characterized by a new ardour, new methods, and new expressions (cf. Address of Pope Paul II to CELAM, 1983).

*Our assurance.* As you can see, this is a tall order and launches us to a big adventure. I must correct myself. The adventure is already being successfully experienced in many ways and in many places in the Philippines. I am sure you and I can cite many successful experiences to illustrate what I have been saying here about re-evangelization.

But our assurance comes from more solid grounds. Christ tells us, "I will be with you always" (*Mt 28:20*). *Hindi kayo nag-iisa!* That assurance of Emmanuel, God with us, should be enough. For "with God on our side who can be against us?" (*Rom 8:31*).

## **Final Statement of the National Bible Congress\***

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**"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13). With these words we, the participants of the National Bible Congress greet you, our brothers and sisters in the Lord, and fellow members of the Body of Christ.**

**For four days we celebrated the written Word of God, the Bible, which He entrusted to His Church to be safeguarded, proclaimed and interpreted to all peoples of all times. We started our Celebration on November 15, 1989 with a solemn concelebrated Mass at the Manila Cathedral. We then move on to the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), where we held our conferences and discussions. We climaxed our celebration with a Mass presided over by Francis Cardinal Arinze, the special envoy of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.**

**We can never thank the Lord enough for the grace of this Congress. It was a joyful experience of the Word of God gathering us together as one family, an experience of that Word heard, explained, discussed, prayed over, and made a real part of our lives by mutual fraternal service, hospitality and sharing. And for this we lift our hearts and say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord**

*\*Held at the Philippine International Convention Center, November 16-18, 1989.*

Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (*Eph 1:3*).

We realize that each of us and all of us together are called by the Lord to share with others this unsurpassable gift of the Good News, for the Christian vocation is by its nature a vocation to the apostolate (*Decree on the Lay Apostolate*, no. 2), and the Church exists in order to evangelize (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 14). This mandate becomes more urgent for us in the Philippines because of the widespread ignorance of the Word of God, and because of a new situation which truly calls for a re-evangelization of our people. Because of this we have resolved on the following:

1. As individuals and as communities in our local Churches we commit ourselves to read and listen prayerfully to the Word of God, and to live according to it. We are convinced that Christian witness is the first and most important means of evangelization.
2. The Word of God gathers a people and forms into an evangelized and evangelizing Christian community. We urge that the formation and nature of small Christian communities be truly rooted in, and centered on the Word of God. It is in such communities that a greater awareness of the Christian duty to share our resources and to participate in the responsibilities of community life in the spirit of justice and mutual help can be developed in the spirit of the Gospel.
3. We will work for the formation of both priests and lay people in the art of transmitting and explaining effectively the Word of God, so that our people may be nourished by it and may be defended from error. We emphasize especially the urgency of forming lay ministers of the Word.
4. It will be our special concern to bring the Good News to the poor and marginalized sectors of our society with the end in view of helping them not only to attain eternal life but also to improve the quality of their temporal lives in our society.
5. In gratitude for the gift of the Gospel we will share with each other our spiritual, human, and material resources to effectively meet the challenges of the new evangelization.

6. We will work for an inculturated, truly Filipino and biblical catechesis, which takes into account the real needs of our people. The goal of this catechesis is to form mature Christians in a holistic, integrated spirituality which will change persons and lead to the transformation of Philippine Society.
7. The Word of God bears fruit only when inserted in the concrete realities of our life and cultures. Our work of Christian formation should therefore, aim at this biblical spirituality which should be the dynamic force of our evangelization.
8. This new evangelization should be especially directed to the youth not only as objects but also as agents of evangelization. They should be recognized and given opportunities to fulfill their evangelizing role.
9. "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel (Synod of the Bishops, 1971). In the Philippine situation we shall proclaim the Word of God especially to government and business leaders, decision-makers who set the tone of our national life, so that through God's Word, structures of sinfulness may be dismantled.
10. We will urge our Church leaders to lead us in the formation of a unified pastoral vision pursued in a coordinated way by all Catholics. Without such plan, we can have no impactful integral formation. We rejoice at the coming Plenary Council of the Philippines which we hope will supply us with this unified pastoral vision.
11. We will use the potentials of our popular religion piety, purified and enriched by the Word of God as a vehicle for proclaiming effectively the Good News and incarnating it in the lives of our people.
12. We urge a greater and more professional and efficient use of the mass media to penetrate our culture with values of the Gospel.
13. We will form our people according to the Word of God in such a way that they will respond with a new fervour to the urgent call to share the Good News with fellow Filipinos and the peoples of



**Asia and the whole world in cooperation with the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA).**

14. **Because the Bible speaks to us of the God of Love who wills all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4), we will relate in a spirit of dialogue with other Christians and with brothers and sisters of other living faiths, while preserving and defending our Catholic identity.**

**In humility and faith we express these our resolves and urgent desire. But we realize that nothing will come out of them unless the Holy Spirit fill us to inspire, enlighten, direct, energize and make fruitful our actions.**

**The Lord Jesus seeks today new men and new women characterized by boldness and creativity, and animated with the burning fervour, commitment and love of Jesus and the first evangelizers. We want to be counted among these new evangelizers.**

**As we go back to our respective homes, we pause to gaze upon Mary, our model of the faith and star of evangelization. We take heart from her who first heard the Good News, pondered it in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 52), acted on it promptly, and shared it not only with Elizabeth and Joseph, but also with the nascent Church.**

**She who was ever the maidservant of the Lord praised God her saviour in words borrowed from the Scriptures. She received the Holy Spirit anew together with the first evangelizing community in Jerusalem.**

**To her, therefore, who was the first hearer, bearer, witness and sharer of the Good News, we entrust these our resolves to bring Jesus, the Word of God, to our fellow countrymen and the whole world as we journey in faith, hope and love toward the third millennium.**

**For the Delegates to the National  
Bible Congress**

**CIRILO R. ALMARIO, JR., D.D.  
Bishop of Malolos  
Chairman, National Bible Congress  
Executive Committee**

# Hear the Word of God and Keep It

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*His Eminence Francis Card. Arinze*

## Introduction

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ declared especially blessed "those who hear the word of God and keep it" (*Lk 11:28*). This magnificent National Bible Congress which is coming to a close with this Solemn Mass, is the high point of the current National Bible Year. The Filipinos want to hear the word of God and keep it. You are determined to read, to study, to listen to, to pray over and to live the word of God. You are working hard to verify at every level of your lives what St. Peter tells us: "Your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God" (*1 Pet 1:23*).

Let us therefore reflect on

- I. The great grace of the National Bible Year.
- II. The Power of Holy Scripture.
- III. The high Esteem of the Church for the Sacred Scriptures.

\*Homily at the closing Solemn Mass of the Philippine National Bible Congress held in Manila on 19th November 1989.

#### IV. Mary as our Model of devotion to Holy Scriptures.

#### V. What is expected of us?

### I. The Great Grace of the National Bible Year

Your current celebration of a National Bible Year is a great grace for the Church, the people, the society, the country. This can be seen in the context of signs, problems, action taken and encouragement received.

#### *Signs of God's Blessing*

The renewed interest which millions of people are showing in your country, as also in other countries, for Holy Scripture, comes at a providential time in the history of the Church. On 18 November 1965 the Second Vatican Council issued the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: *Dei Verbum*. This highest magisterial document in our times on Divine Revelation teaches and guides us especially on how to read, to understand, to live and to share the Bible. The liturgical renewal in the Church in the last twenty-five years has put a special emphasis on the Holy Scriptures. There is worldwide a growing availability of the Scriptures in many languages.

The Filipinos have not lagged behind in the general biblical revival. Your Bishops opened their 1985 Joint Pastoral Letter on the Biblical Apostolate with the observation: "All over the country we notice a growing hunger and enthusiasm for the word of God." Filipinos show special interest in the Psalms and the Gospels. Many of your parishes print Scripture readings for daily Mass. Many more Filipinos read Holy Scriptures on their own, or in their family. Others share it in Catholic movements, associations, or lay apostolate and renewal groups. We praise God for these graces.

#### *Some Problems*

This renewed interest in the Holy Scriptures is, however, not without its problems. Some people are not properly guided in their reading of the Bible. They give or follow wrong interpretations. They

impose subjective criteria on Holy Scripture. They understand or quote it out of context by forcing on it interpretations which spring from the prejudices of our times.

Other problems arise when people look for magic formulas in the Bible, especially the Psalms. More serious still is the failure to see the relationship between the Bible and the Church, as for example in the case of people who use Scripture as an external norm against the Church.

There are also such practical problems as illiteracy, and unavailability of the Holy Scriptures at prices within power of the poor person.

### *Action taken in the Philippines*

To channel this providential interest in the Holy Scriptures and meet the allied problems, the Church in the Philippines has taken praiseworthy pastoral action, especially through the Catholic Bishops' Conference. Let me mention a few initiatives.

In 1985 the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued a Joint Pastoral Letter to launch and promote the biblical apostolate. You have such structures as the National Catholic Bible Centre in Manila and six Regional Bible Centres. The Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate is currently promoting "A Bible for Every Family" Project, 1985-1994. The translation of the Bible into the principal languages of the country and an English translation produced in the Philippines are further evidence of your commitment.

I am in admiration of the thorough-going programmes you are carrying out as is shown by Bible Seminars, Bible Enthronement in parishes, Bible Exposition through the mass media, Installation of Lay Ministers of the Word and more intensive formation of priests and seminarians.

The most recent praiseworthy initiatives of your Bishops are their January 1989 Pastoral Statement on Fundamentalist Groups and their declaration of 1989 as a National Bible Year. The vigorous commitment with which you are celebrating this year at parish,

diocesan, regional and national levels is a clear manifestation of your will to read the Bible, live the Bible and share the Bible.

May God be praised for all these initiatives. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ" (Eph 1:3).

### *Papal Encouragement*

In the celebration of this National Bible Congress the Church in the Philippines is particularly united with our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. My coming to share these days of the celebration of our faith with you is one of the signs of this unity. As was read three days ago in the Holy Father's special telegramme for this occasion, when I was leaving Rome the Pope John Paul II asked me "to take his warm greetings to all those participating in this event which intends to underline the importance of the word of God in the life of the Catholic faithful." "Indeed," continues the Papal Message, "in the Sacred Scriptures God speaks to man with great love and through His word supports and gives strength to His Church for the task of nourishing the spiritual and apostolic life of her members." The Holy Father also prays that "Through an ever deeper understanding of the word of God, the faithful will increasingly grow in holiness, give valid witness of true Christian life and come to closer union with Christ the Son of God through whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of our sins."

To concretize this papal encouragement, the Holy Father has sent you a special Bible which I had the honour to bring along and which has been solemnly enthroned. Indeed the National Bible Year is a time of grace!

## **II. The Power of the Holy Scriptures**

The Holy Scriptures have great power for our salvation, for our good, and for the good of society as a whole. "The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely... it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts" (Heb 4:12).

## *The Scriptures form our Faith*

The Bible is a channel through which God's grace works in us. In it we get to know Jesus Christ and through him the eternal Father and the Holy Spirit. The Bible is of great importance in our formation as Christians according to the orthodox faith handed down by the apostles and their successors.

"Inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they (the Scriptures) impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and apostles. Therefore like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 21).

The Good News "is the power of God saving all who have faith" (*Rom* 1:16). It is the "message of salvation" (*Acts* 13:26).

## *The Scriptures give strength to the Church*

"The force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith of her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 21). The word of God is "able to build up and give the inheritance among all the sanctified" (*Acts* 20:32).

Therefore St. Paul exhorts Timothy in the second lesson of today's Mass: "Ever since you were a child, you have known the holy Scriptures — from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work" (*II Tim* 3:15-17).

## *The Scriptures teach us how to pray*

From the Bible we learn how to pray. Jesus prayed often and his apostles observed him with great attention. At their request, he gave us the model of all prayers, the Our Father (cf. *Lk* 11:1-4; *Mt* 6:7-

15). The Bible gives us the canticles such as those of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and of Zachary. The Psalms are a magnificent collection of elevations of the soul to God, and there are many other passages where we find examples of prayers, of praise, penitence or petition.

### *The Scriptures give life*

The Bible is the "word of life" (*Phil* 2:16). Peter declared the faith of the apostles in Jesus Christ: "You have the message of eternal life" (*Jn* 6:68). If we do not put obstacles in the way, the word of God will unfailingly produce its good fruit in us: "The word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do" (*Is* 55:11).

Those who abandon the word of God or close themselves to its influence will be like branches cut off from the vine. They dry up. They die. They allow to be verified in themselves the rebuke delivered to unfaithful people by God through the prophet Jeremiah: "My People have committed a double crime: they have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, only to dig cisterns to themselves, leaky cisterns that hold no water" (*Jer* 2:13).

We must, therefore, listen to the word of God in order to have life, because "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (*Dt* 8:3; *Mt* 4:4). The Scriptures will make "our hearts burn within us" (cf. *Lk* 24:32) if we are open and docile to them.

### *Balances faith and works*

The Sacred Scriptures provide us with proper guidance in giving due place to both faith and good works, to prayer and action. In his public life, Jesus prayed much and also was engaged in a very active work of preaching, healing and giving hope to the suffering. In the story of Martha and Mary, Jesus shows appreciation for Mary who sat at his feet to drink in his words as a disciple; but at the same time he does not undervalue the contribution of Martha who is busy at kitchen and table services (cf. *Lk* 10:38-42). St. James in his epistle tells us that faith must be matched with good works and that "if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead" (*Jas* 2:16).

## *Evangelizes a People*

The word of God is central in the evangelization of a people and their culture. "For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new," says Pope Paul VI (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 18).

This applies whether to a country like yours that accepted the Catholic faith more than four hundred years ago, or to one like mine, Nigeria, which was evangelized only one hundred years ago. Gospel values must be incorporated into our ways of thinking, into all relationships in society, and into the arts and professions. It is the power of the word of God which made it possible for martyrs like your own St. Lorenzo Ruiz and his companions to give their lives in witness of the faith received. And when the faith grows cold in a society and re-evangelization becomes necessary, the word of God recalls us to our first fervour, as the Lord said to the "angel" of the Church in Ephesus: "Think where you were before you fell; repent, and do as you used to at first, or else, if you will not repent, I shall come to you and take your lamp-stand from its place" (*Rev* 2:5; cf. also *Hosea* 6:4).

## *Addresses Problems of Society*

The word of God casts its light on the problems of our present-day society. Poverty, unemployment, hunger, injustice, oppression, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, together with aspirations to unity, sharing, solidarity and a proper use of modern means of communication and modern science and technology - these are some areas where the word of God must be allowed to confront our modern societies with its message of conversion, of love, of justice, of peace, of forgiveness and reconciliation, and of brotherhood and active solidarity under God our Father.

In the Gospel just read Jesus recalls the prophecy of Isaiah about himself: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (*Lk* 4:18; *Is* 61:1-2).



## *Evangelizes the Individual*

The word of God evangelizes the individual too. Each of us has a personal history of how God's word has touched us. Many of us can recall when the word of God really came home to us, opened for us a new way of life and helped to make firm our personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

At some moments of our lives the word of God can strike us personally with special force. So I was struck two weeks ago when I did a ten-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As I read the Gospel and prayed in Nazareth, Capernaum, in Bethany, in Jericho and in the various holy places in Jerusalem, the life and teaching of Jesus our Saviour came home to me as never before.

And when the faith of any of us grows cold, when our prayers become a matter of habit, when our daily life begins to lose the ardour of our first fervour, the word of God calls us back to a more authentic living of our faith, just as God, through the prophets recalled the wandering people of Israel again and again.

### *But only if we are disposed*

But all this is not automatic. The word of God will exert the above listed influences only if we are willing to receive it, if we are open to the action of the Holy Spirit in us. The Sacred Scriptures will show their great power only in "people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and (who) take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance" (Lk 8:15). "I, Yahweh, am your God, I who brought you here from Egypt; you have only to open your mouth for me to fill it" (Ps 81:10).

One who refuses to listen to the word of God or to act on it is "like a stupid man who built his house on sand. Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had" (Mt 7: 26:27).

### III. The Church Highly Esteems the Sacred Scriptures

#### *High Esteem*

From the above considerations we can see why the Catholic Church has a very high esteem for the Sacred Scriptures. "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures," says the Second Vatican Council, "just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since from the table of both the word of God and of the body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life, especially in the sacred liturgy" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 21). These strong words of the Fathers of the Council merit our reflection.

#### *An integral part of the Rule of Faith*

The Church has always regarded the Scriptures together with sacred tradition as the supreme rule of faith. Tradition and Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God which is committed to the Church. The authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church. This teaching office is exercised by the Pope and the Bishops in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it. Therefore "sacred tradition, sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls" (*Dei Verbum*, n. 10).

It is as a result clear that we should read the Holy Scriptures with and in the Church.

#### *Church's attention to the Holy Scriptures*

The Church, therefore, pays great attention to the Holy Scriptures. The Church declared which books are canonical (that is, part of God's revealed word) and which are not. The Church oversees the translation of the books of the Holy Scriptures and authentically interprets them. Even in apostolic times St. Peter warned the faithful

against private and false interpretation of Scripture. He told them that some points in the letters of St. Paul are "hard to understand; these are the points that uneducated and unbalanced people distort, in the same way as they distort the rest of the Scripture - a fatal thing for them to do" (II Pet 3:16). And St. Paul himself admonishes the Galatians: "And let me warn you that if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one we have already preached to you, whether it be ourselves or an angel from heaven, he is to be condemned" (Gal 1:8).

### *Honours the Bible*

The Church in her public worship, or liturgy, reserves special honours for the Sacred Scriptures. The word of God is carried in solemn procession. It is surrounded with lighted candles. It is incensed in a solemn way. It is enthroned at major celebrations such as General Councils. The Gospel is kissed at the end of the reading by the deacon or priest, to show that God is really present in His word and that we love Him and His word.

### *Exhorts her faithful to read and pray the Bible*

The Church exhorts all her children to read, reflect on and pray over the Sacred Scriptures. This applies to theologians, clerics, religious and the lay faithful. The cultivation of the Holy Scriptures is especially required of preachers lest any of them become "an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener of it inwardly" as St. Augustine says (quoted in *Dei Verbum*, n. 25). From frequent contact with the Scriptures, the followers of Christ will acquire the "excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:8) for as St. Jerome says, "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" (quoted in *Dei Verbum* n. 25).

## **IV. Mary our Model of Devotion to the Sacred Scriptures**

You Filipinos are rightly proud to call yourselves a "*pueblo amante de Maria*." To the joy of us all, our incomparable heavenly Mother is for us a model of faith and of devotion to the word of God.

### *Blessed because she believed*

When Mary visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth praised Mary for her faith: "Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled (*Lk* 1:45). Mary, without understanding how, accepted and believed the message brought her by God's archangel. She made "the obedience of faith" (cf. *Rom* 16:26; *II Cor* 10:5-6) and uttered her fiat. "Let what you have said be done to me" (*Lk* 1:38). "Mary," says Pope John Paul II, "who by the eternal will of the Most High stands, one may say, at the very centre of those 'inscrutable ways' and 'unsearchable judgments' of God, conforms herself to them in the dim light of faith, accepting fully and with a ready heart everything that is decreed in the divine plan" (*Redemptoris Mater*, n. 14).

### *Because she heard and kept the word of God*

Once as Jesus was preaching he was told that his mother and his brothers were standing outside and wanted to see him, but he said in answer: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice" (*Lk* 18:19-20). Jesus here underlines that the more important merit of his Immaculate Mother is not physical motherhood but her listening to the word of God and putting it into practice. Mary is the first disciple of Jesus (cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, n. 20).

Jesus made a similar remark when a woman in the crowd, in admiration at his exalted teaching, cried out: "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked" (*Lk* 11:27-28).

### *Mary our Model in Faith*

When the shepherds came to adore the Infant Jesus they related what the angels had said to them. "As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart" (*Lk* 1:19). When Joseph and Mary found the child Jesus in the temple on the third day of their sorrowing search, he said to them: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" The evangelist tells us that they did not understand what he meant. "His mother stored up all these things in her heart" (*Lk* 1:49-51).

"Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith," says the Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 58). Mary precedes us in this journey of trust. "Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church," says Pope John Paul II (*Redemptoris Mater*, n. 6). She journeys in faith from her acceptance of the angel's message to her glorious hymn of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, to the birth of Jesus in poor circumstances in Bethlehem, to the flight into Egypt, the hidden life with Jesus and Joseph at Nazareth, the public life of her Son, right up to mount Calvary and to the coming of the Holy Spirit and her spiritual mothering of the infant Church.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, always obedient to God the Father, loving towards God the Son and open to the hidden but powerful action of the Holy Spirit (John Paul II: *Prayer for the Marian Year*, n. 1), is our model in how to hear the word of God, to live it and to share it.

## V. What is Expected of us?

To conclude, my brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves what is expected of us.

### *Read the Bible*

Each of us can resolve today to give the Bible a greater place in our lives. One concrete way is to read the Bible prayerfully for about fifteen minutes every day. In the first reading of today's Mass we are told that Ezra the priest read for the people of Israel the Law of Moses, "he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the law. . . The people were all in tears as they listened to be words of the Law" (*Neh* 8:3, 9).

We should listen to the Holy Scriptures in humility, in a spirit of prayer, with a desire to be more and more converted to God, with and in the Church.

We should be doers of the word and not hearers only. Our daily lives should be clear evidence that the word of God is guiding our lives, that the Gospel works. The Gospel in particular should guide our private and public lives, our family and professional decisions, our political and economic options, our cultural and social goals. Speaking to the respected President of your Republic on 18 June 1988, Pope John Paul II said: "The Philippines cannot survive as a peace-loving, just and humane society unless Filipino families preserve their unity and resist the breakdown of the moral and ethical values which are society's support. This is a time to call upon the traditional Filipino commitment to the family and to the community, and the ethos of solidarity which so deeply mark the Filipino character. In your tradition there exists a spontaneous sense of certain aspects which I underlined in my recent Encyclical on the Church's Social Doctrine: the centrality of the human person in every process of development, and the need for a constant overcoming of the moral obstacles to development, obstacles such as an unbridled desire for profit or power, which is diametrically opposed to the Gospel invitation "to 'lose oneself' for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to 'serve him' instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38) The Filipino People, Madame President, possess those traditional qualities called *pagkakaisa* and *bayanihan* which can contribute to promoting social justice and to ensuring that each person's dignity and rights are respected and defended." And making special reference to Christian-Muslim collaboration in building up your beloved country, the Pope added: "Filipino Catholics, as well as their Muslim brothers and sisters, can find in their respective religious traditions the motivations and moral energy needed for a concerted effort to lead their country forward, out of present tensions, to a period of harmony, characterized by hard work in the cause of development and a high morality in all spheres of private and public life" (in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly English Edition, n. 29, 18 July 1988, page 3). The living of the word of God is very relevant to these responses in every country.

## *Share the Bible*

We can share the Bible in the sense of helping to put this most precious of books into the hands of everyone who can read. Translators, printers, distributors, and those who provide finances so that the poorer people may obtain the Bible at a price they can afford, are helping to share the Bible. When next you wonder what gift to donate to your loved one on a great occasion, make it the Bible.

But we can also share the Bible in the sense of helping others to discover the riches of this most famous book and of reading the word of God with others and sharing their insights and ours on how to apply God's message to our lives today. This can be done in the family, in the place of work or recreation, in Catholic movements and associations, in basic ecclesial communities and in the parish. Bible courses, seminars and lectures can help to deepen knowledge and understanding even further.

Catholics should also be zealous and courageous in sharing the word of God with the followers of other religions, with those who are indifferent to the demands of a living faith, and with those who apparently have no religion, but always doing this in a courteous, respectful manner.

## The Chaplain of a Religious House

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*Excelso E. Garcia, O.P.*

*Our convent has a church annexed to it from the time we were allowed to erect our house in the diocese. We use the church for all liturgical celebrations, for the pious exercises of the community and for the devotional practices of its individual members. The chaplain, who is new, has signified his plans to use the church for meetings with the youth, which he wants to organize. The sister in charge of the church has told him that it will cause some inconveniences to our religious life. He replied that the new Code in its canon 570 considers the chaplain of religious communities as rector of the church and, therefore, he can decide how the church will be used. May I know what is your opinion on the matter?*

*A Religious Superior*

The rector of a church and the chaplain of a religious house are two different offices in the new Code, as it was before. The description of the former is given in canons 556-563, while the latter is described in canon 564-567. Of course, other elements are found scattered in other parts of the Code.

Canon 556 gives us the definition of rectors of churches, by saying, "Rectors of churches are to be understood here those priests to whom is entrusted the care of a church which is not parochial nor



capitular nor one connected with a house of a religious community or of a society of apostolic life, which the community uses to celebrate the divine offices."

Canon 570, cited by the chaplain of the case, should be interpreted in conformity with canon 556. Canon 570 reads: "If there is a non-parochial church annexed to the house of a community or group, the chaplain should be the rector of the church, unless the care of the community or the church demands otherwise." Note that this canon does not say "church annexed to the house of a *religious community*" as in canon 556, but "church annexed to the house of a *community* or group." The community referred to in canon 570 is not a *religious community*. Canon 570 does not apply therefore, to our case, as the chaplain believes. Consequently, he cannot be considered as rector of the church annexed to the house of the religious community in which he is the chaplain.

Logically, the authority which the chaplain erroneously thinks he enjoys as *rector* of the church is proper to the superior of the religious house, since the chaplain as such does not have such authority. The church is part of the religious house. Its use, therefore, is subject to the religious superior's authority.

The foregoing interpretation was common among canonists when the 1917 Code was still in force. The new Code has not changed it. Canon 6, § 2 of the Codex says that "the canons of the new Code should be understood in conformity with the previous legislation as far as they reproduce the old law."

The canonical norms on this matter tend to favor the life and discipline to be observed in religious institutes, because of their peculiar vocation.

The question would be different if the religious community did not use the church for liturgical celebrations or did not hold their pious exercises in the same. In this case, the bishop could appoint a priest presented by the religious superior as rector of the church, and the norms contained in canons 556-563 would be followed. Obviously, said rector could be a member of the religious community itself.

Since it is stated in the case proposed to us that the community uses the church "for all liturgical celebrations, for the pious exercises of the community and for the devotional practices of its individual members," there is no rector of the church. The religious superior (male or female) has authority over the church since it is a part of the religious house.

## The Law of Fasting

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*The 1989 Ordo regulating the Liturgy of the Hours and Holy Mass in the Philippines on page 7 clearly indicates the age when the observance of abstinence or its commutables becomes obligatory; but with regards to fasting no age is given. What is the age when fasting becomes obligatory here in the Philippines?*

*A Priest*

It is true what our consultant says. The *Ordo of 1989* indicates the age when the observance of abstinence becomes obligatory; with regards to fasting, however, no age is given. Priests who have the *Manual for Parish Priests* (not all priests of course have the new *Codex*) could easily solve the difficulty. Number 799 of the *Manual* specifies the age for both the abstinence and fasting.

The answer to the question of the consultant is easy. Canon 1252 reads as follows: "The law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. The law of fasting binds those who have attained their majority, until the beginning of their sixtieth year." The law of fasting, therefore, binds those persons who have attained their majority. When does a person attain majority? Canon 97, § 1 gives us the answer. It reads: "A person who has completed

the eighteenth year of age, has attained majority; below this age, a person is minor."

Those persons, therefore, who have attained their majority, that is, have completed eighteen years of age, are bound by the law of fasting and they continue being bound by such law until they have completed their fifty-ninth year of age and begin their sixtieth year of age.

The new *Codex* has changed the age when the law of both abstinence and fasting starts binding. In the 1917 *Codex* the law of abstinence started binding at the age of seven years; in the 1983 *Codex* this obligation starts binding at the age of fourteen. The law of fasting started binding at the age of twenty-one years completed in the 1917 *Codex*, while in 1983 *Codex* it starts at the age of eighteen years completed.

With regards to majority, the Church follows the civil legislation of most nations, which establishes for majority the age of eighteen years completed. Unfortunately, the *Family Code of the Philippines* has maintained the age of twenty-one for majority. Its article 234 reads: "unless otherwise provided, majority commences at the age of twenty-one years."

Obviously, the law of fasting, being an ecclesiastical law, is to be interpreted in accordance with Church law, that is canon 97, which states that "a person who has completed the eighteenth year of age, has attained majority; below this age is minor.

## **DOCUMENTATION**

# **Message of the Holy Father for Lent 1990**

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**1. Each year the approach of Lent affords me the opportunity to invite you to make good use of this favorable moment, this "day of salvation" (cf. 2 Cor 6:2), so that it may be lived intensely both as a time of conversion to God and of love for our brothers and sisters. Lent calls us to a complete change of mind and heart in order that we may hear the Lord's voice inviting us to turn to him in newness of life and to make ourselves ever more sensitive to the sufferings of those around us.**

**This year, I wish to emphasize the problem of refugees and make it the subject of our common reflection. The enormous and increasing flow of refugees is a painful reality which no longer touches only certain regions of the world, but extends to every continent.**

**As people without a homeland, refugees seek a welcome in other countries of the world, which is our common home. Only a few of them are allowed to re-enter their countries of origin because of changed circumstances within those countries. For the rest, the very painful experience of flight, insecurity and an anxious search for an appropriate place to settle**

continues. Among them are children, women -- some of them widows -- families that often are split apart, young people whose hopes have been frustrated, and adults uprooted from their work and deprived of all their material possessions, their house and their homeland.

2. Considering the extent and the seriousness of the problem, all the Church's members must be sensitive to this appeal, inasmuch as they are followers of Jesus -- who himself experienced the condition of a refugee -- and bearers of the Good News. Christ himself, in the moving Gospel passage read in the Latin Church on Monday of the first week of Lent, wishes to be identified and recognized in every refugee: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me . . . I was a stranger and you did *not* welcome me" (*Mt* 25:35, 43).

The words of Christ must lead us to a careful examination of conscience with regard to our attitude towards exiles and refugees. We find them everyday in so many of our parishes. In fact, for many of us they have become next-door neighbours who are in need of charity, justice and solidarity from all Christians.

3. For this reason, I address to you, the individual members and communities of the Catholic Church, this urgent Lenten exhortation: Seek to help our brother and sister refugees in every possible way by providing a welcome that will lead to their full participation in the everyday life of society. Show them an open mind and a warm heart.

Concern for refugees must lead us to re-affirm and highlight universally recognized human rights, and to ask that the effective recognition of these rights be guaranteed to refugees. For the presentation, on 3 June 1986, of the John XXIII International Peace Prize to Thailand's Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), I recalled that already in the Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* Pope John had emphasized the urgent need to recognize the rights of refugees precisely because they are persons. I stated that "it is our obligation always to guarantee these inalienable rights, which are inherent in every human being and do not depend on prevailing conditions or socio-political situations" (*Insegnamenti* IX, 1, 1986, p. 1751). Thus it is a matter of guaranteeing to refugees the right to establish a family or to be reunited with their families; to have a stable, dignified occupation and a just wage; to live in dwellings fit for human beings; to receive adequate education for their children and young people, as well as adequate health care -- in a word, all those rights

solemnly sanctioned since 1951 in the Convention of the United Nations on the Statute for Refugees, and confirmed in the 1967 Protocol on the same Statute.

4. I am well aware that in the face of this grave problem, international organizations, Catholic organizations, and movements of various types have worked intensely, with the support and collaboration of many people, to provide adequate social programmes. I thank them and encourage them to show even greater concern, since it is clear that although much has been done, it is still not enough. The number of refugees is growing, and the resources for receiving and assisting them often prove to be inadequate. Our first commitment should be to take part in charitable initiatives, to animate and support them through our testimony of love, so that in every country they may have an impact on the processes of educating children and young people in particular, in mutual respect, tolerance and a spirit of service at every level, both in private and public life. In this way many problems will be more easily overcome. I also address myself to you, my dear brothers and sisters who are refugees: live united in your faith in God, in mutual charity and in undaunted hope. All the world knows your problems. And the Church is near to you with the help that her members are working to provide, even though they realize that it is insufficient. In order to alleviate your sufferings, good will and understanding on your part are also necessary. You are rich in your own civilization, culture, traditions and human and spiritual values.

From these you can draw the ability and the strength to begin a new life. As much as possible, you too must help and assist one another in the places where you are temporarily being hosted.

We who are Catholics will accompany you and support you on your way, as we recognize in each one of you the face of Christ the Exile and Refugee, who said: "Insofar as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

At the beginning of Lent, I invoke the fullness of grace and light that flow from the redeeming mystery of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, so that every individual and all ecclesial groups and religious communities within the Church may find the inspiration and energy needed for practical works of solidarity on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are exiles and refugees. In this way, comforted by the loving support and interest of others, refugees may recover joy and hope in order to continue along their difficult path.

May my blessing bring forth an abundance of the Lord's gifts upon those who will respond to this pressing appeal.

From the Vatican, on 8 September 1989, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

JOHN PAUL II



## Appointment of Mons. Camilo Gregorio

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JOANNES PAULUS Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Venerabili fratri Camillo Gregorio, Episcopo hactenus titulo Girensi atque Auxiliari Praesulis sacri Caebuani, ad vacantem in praesentia Sedem Bacolodensem translato, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem Praestitutam iure Ordinariorum aetatem haud ita pridem complens Venerabilis frater Antonius Fortich gregis dilectissimi Bacolodensis, quem viginti duos gubernaverat sedulo annos, curationem pastorem atque cotidianam administrationem ultro Nobis meritissimum otium recedens commendavit qui eidem deinceps clero ac populo fidei idoneum maxime exercitatum que praeficeremus pastorem. Ne diuturnior igitur eiusdem sedis vacatio quidquam inibi detrimenti spiritalis importet, eo spectantia hodie capimus apta consilia acte, Venerabilis frater, talem esse arbitramur spectatum iam sacrorum Antistitem rerumque moderatorem utpote qui Nostra pariter voluntate ac destinatione episcopus creatus sis et laudabiliter adhuc in Auxiliaris muneribus versatus inter ecclesiam communiatem Caebuanam. Sententia proinde audita Venerabilium fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium aliorumque Excellentissimorum Praesulum negotiis Congregationis pro Episcopis addictorum, pro apostolicae potestatis Nostrae plenitudine omnibus te vinculis exsolvimus prioris ecclesiae tuae titulo Girensis necnon officiis in ecclesiam Caebuanam ac legitime te tranferentes pastorem praeponimus dioecesi Bacolodensi, concessis simul iuribus cunctis et additis obligationibus quae ad canones sacros cum eodem ac dignitate coniunguntur. Licet necessitate eximaris iterandae professionis fidei, ius iurandum tamen fidelitatis erga Nos Nostroque iurabis suc-

cessores eiusque formulam ad Congregationem pro episcopis transmittes. Convenienter praeterea videbis ut clerus ac populus Bacolodensis de hac Nostra tui ipsius nominatione certior fiat. Dum amatissimos illos filios filiasque in Domino cohortamur ut te, Venerabilis frater, quam maxima suscipiat benevolentia teque auctoritate ducentem alacri sequantur animo, vehementer item cohortamur te ut duplicato iam tuo apostolatus episcopalis studio et novo confirmato in gregem Bacolodensem amore totum te dedas posteros in annos perquam diligenti eius aedificatione perpetuaeque renovationi. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo mensis Maii anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo nono, Pontificatus Nostri undecimo.

Joannes Paulus PP II

## Appointment of Mons. Benjamin Almoneda

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JOANNES PAULUS Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Dilecto filio Beniamino Almoneda, presbyterio metropolitanae Cacerensis Sedis, Praelato Nostro honorario atque hactenus Pontificii Collegii Philippini in Urbe Rectori, electo dioecesis Daetiensis Auxiliari atque Episcopo titulo Thimidensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. In beati Petri Cathedra constituti omnium Ecclesiarum particularium earumque Pastorum bono magna sollicitudine consulimus. Cupientes igitur preces audire, quibus Venerabilis frater, Caelestinus R. Enverga, Antistes Daetiensis, petivit nuper Episcopum Auxiliarem, te, dilecte fili, virum pietate, doctrina ac prudentia praeditum necnon sacrarum rerum abunde peritum, idoneum quidem putavimus cui huiusmodi concederemus officium. Auditis ergo Venerabilibus fratribus Nostris S.R.E. Cardinalibus atque Venerabilibus fratribus Archiepiscopus Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praepositis, summa Nostra potestate usi te nominamus Daetiensis Ecclesiae Auxiliarem simulque Episcopum titulo Thimidensem, cum omnibus iuribus et officiis, quae ad normam communis iuris eidem muneri competunt. Ad episcopalem vero quod attinet ordinationem tuam, ut paternae Nostrae in te benevolentiae signum ostendamus, eam nosmet ipsi tibi libentes, Deo dante, conferemus die sexta proximi mensis Januarii inter Missarum sollemnia Epiphaniae Domini in Patriarchali Basilica Vaticana Apostolorum Principis. Antes tamen tuum erit, catholicae fidei professionem facere, teste Venerabili fratre Nostro S.R.E. Cardinali Praefecto Congregationis pro Episcopis, atque iusiurandum dare fidelitatis erga Nos et Nostros Successores, teste Venerabili fratre Nostro S.R.E. Cardi-

nali Protodiacono. Tibi denique, dilecte fili, in Successorum Apostolorum Collegium cooptato, quem diligenti Daetiensi Pastori eiusque Sedi Episcopum mittimus Auxiliarem, Virgine deprecante Maria, superna poscimus dona quibus suffultus officium creditum valeas obire diligentia, sapientia ac, praesertim, caritate et spiritu servitii, memor verborum Sacrae Scripturae: Jucundus homo, qui miseretur et commodat. . . quia in aeternum non commovetur-Ps 112,5-6. Deus pacis sit iugiter tecum. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die undevicesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentissimo octogesimo nono, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

Joannes Paulus PP II

# **Decree of Suppression**

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## **Unappointed of Mary -- Marian Youth Crusades**

**WHEREAS**, a short time after the erection of the association called **UNAPPOINTED OF MARY -- MARIAN YOUTH CRUSADERS** its members broke into two opposite groups for reasons of money and ideology;

**WHEREAS**, the two groups are still at odds with each other living in separate houses and under the direction of different superiors;

**WHEREAS**, one faction has so far practically refused to follow the dispositions given by the Bishop in Charge appointed as Apostolic Visitor and invested with special powers by the Holy See through the Apostolic Nuncio;

**WHEREAS**, the meeting-dialogues organized by said Bishop in Charge to reconcile the two factions have failed to produce any positive results;

**WHEREAS**, the abnormal situation now prevailing is not conducive to the adequate spiritual, intellectual formation and material support of all its members;

**WHEREAS**, the continuous breach of discipline and various pending litigations in civil courts constitute a source of scandal to the faithful;

**WHEREAS**, having heard the respective moderator and major officer of the two factions in accordance with canon 320,§3:

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, MONS. BRUNO TORPIGLIANI, D.E.** Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Institute of Apostolic Life, do hereby issue this Decree of Suppression of the Association ANOINTED OF MARY -- MARIAN YOUTH CRUSADERS.

**FURTHERMORE**, it is hereby decreed that:

1. Both factions of Anointed of Mary -- Marian Youth Crusaders should be dissolved;

2. The members of both factions should be sent home until the time the Holy See deems it fit that a reorganization is effected. The clerics should report to the dioceses of their incardination.

3. The formation House in Antipolo, its compound and other properties, mobile or immobile, should be vacated. The Formation House should be surrendered to the Bishop of Antipolo. Other building and properties, mobile or immobile, as well as assets in cash or in kind should be placed under the custody of the person(s) appointed by the Holy See until the abovementioned reorganization be achieved.

4. Meanwhile, provisions shall be made for the establishment of a new association with a new designation in which the previous members may be admitted upon submitting application individually made to the Apostolic Nuncio, or his representative, which will be processed before admission.

5. The original charism and main apostolate of the Institute shall be preserved in the new association, namely, youth apostolate and devotion to the Blessed Mother.

This decree shall take effect on January 8, 1990. Copies of the Decree shall be furnished to all persons concerned for information and proper implementation. Given in Manila this 6th day of January, in the year of our Lord, 1990.

## HISTORY

# Philippine Episcopology

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Charles Bransom, et al.

### VI. 1981-1988

223. 1981, 28 January, at Roxas City, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Msgr. Antonio Frondosa, Archbishop of Capiz assisted by Msgr. Reginald Arliss, Titular Bishop of Cerbali and Msgr. Fernando R. Capalla, Bishop-Prelate of Iligan consecrated: *Msgr. Dinualdo D. Gutierrez*, Coadjutor Bishop-Prelate of Marbel born at Romblon 20 February 1939; priest 7 April 1962; named November 1980; succeeded to the Prelate of Marbel 1 October 1981; first Bishop of Marbel 15 November 1982.<sup>1</sup>
224. 1981, 29 January, at Lipa Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Ricardo J. Vidal, Archbishop of Lipa and Msgr. Cirilo R. Almario, Bishop of Malolos consecrated: *Msgr. Leoncio Lat y Leviste*, Titular Bishop of Sila,

<sup>1</sup>BEF, 1981, p. 569 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of the Prelature of Marbel *cum jure successionis*); Cfr. also the invitation program to the Episcopal ordination of Most Rev. Dinualdo D. Gutierrez, D.D. . . . in AUST, *loc.cit.*, Box IV, No. 1.

Auxiliary of Malolos, born at Malvar (Lipa) 16 September 1917; priest 21 March 1942; named 30 October 1980; Auxiliary of Manila 8 January 1986.<sup>2</sup>

225. 1981, 7 February, at Naga City, Cathedral. *Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani*, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by *Msgr. Teopiste Alberto y Valderrama*, Archbishop of Caceres and *Msgr. Vicente Ataviado y Tumulad*, Bishop of Maasin consecrated: *Msgr. Wilfredo B. Manlapaz*, Titular Bishop of Tanudaia, Auxiliary of Maasin, born at Daet 7 April 1941; priest 6 December 1964; named 22 December 1980; Bishop of Tagum 31 January 1986.<sup>3</sup>
226. 1981, 5 April, at Manila, Cathedral. *Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani*, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by *Msgr. Antonio Frondosa*, Archbishop of Capiz and *Msgr. Amado Paulino y Hernandez*, Titular Bishop of Carinola, consecrated: *Msgr. Gabriel Reyes y Villaruz*, Titular Bishop of Selsea, Auxiliary of Manila, born at Kalibo 3 August 1941; priest 2 December 1968; named 20 January 1981.<sup>4</sup>
227. 1981, 7 June, at Cebu, Cathedral. Cardinal Julio Rosales y Ras, Archbishop of Cebu assisted by *Msgr. Manuel S. Salvador*, Titular Archbishop of Zarna and *Msgr. Pedro R. Dean*, Bishop of Tagum consecrated: *Msgr. Patricio H. Alo*, Titular Bishop of Tibiuca, Auxiliary of Davao, born at Cebu December 1939; priest 14 March 1964; named 14 April 1981; first Bishop of Mati 9 November 1984.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>BEF, 1981, p. 423 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Malolos); Also: Program of the "Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Leoncio L. Lat. ..." at the AUST, loc. cit., Box, III, No. 2. BEF, 1987, p. 372 (Auxiliary Bishop of Manila).

<sup>3</sup>BEF, 1981, p. 572 (Bull of appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Maasin).

<sup>4</sup>BEF, 1981, p. 574 (Bull nominating him Auxiliary Bishop of Manila; "Souvenir booklet. Episcopal ordination of the Most Reverend Gabriel V. Reyes. ..." at AUST, loc. cit., Box III, No. 3.

<sup>5</sup>BEF, 1982, p. 139, (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Davao; "Solemn rites. Episcopal ordination of the Most Reverend Patricio Hachang Alo, D.D. ..." at the AUST, loc. cit., Box IV, No. 3.



228. 1981, 15 October, at Palo, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Cipriano Urgel y Villahermosa, Archbishop of Palo and Msgr. Salvador T. Modesto, Titular Bishop of Margum, consecrated: *Msgr. Filomeno Bactol y Gonzales*, Titular Bishop of Germaniciana, Auxiliary of Palo, born at Carigara (Palo) 29 November 1939; priest 6 June 1968; named 29 July 1981.<sup>6</sup>
229. 1981, 30 November, at Cebu Cathedral. Cardinal Julio Rosales y Ras, Archbishop of Cebu assisted by Msgr. Patrick Cronin, Archbishop of Cagayan de Oro and Msgr. Teofilo Camomot Bastida, Titular Bishop of Marcianopolis consecrated: *Msgr. Christian Vicente F. Noel*, Titular Bishop of Tuccabora, Auxiliary of Cagayan de Oro, born at Asturias (Cebu) 17 November 1937; priest 18 March 1961; named 1 October 1981; first Bishop of Talibon 6 September 1986.
230. 1982, 18 February, at Manila, Church of Christ the King. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Francisco Cruces y Raval, Archbishop of Zamboanga and Msgr. Odilo Estpueler, Bishop-Prelate of Bangued, consecrated: *Msgr. Cesar Raval*, Divine Word Missioner, Titular Bishop of Cerbali, Auxiliary of Bangued, born at Laoag 17 December 1924; priest 22 May 1952; named 15 December 1981.
231. 1982, 27 April, at Manila, Chapel of the Priory of Saint Scholastica. Cardinal Jaime Sin y Lachica, Archbishop of Manila, assisted by Msgr. Teopisto Alberto y Valderrama, Archbishop of Caceres and Msgr. Concordio Maria Sarte, Bishop of Legazpi consecrated: *Msgr. Lucilo B. Quiambao*, Titular Bishop of Nabala, Auxiliary of Legazpi, born at Bacacay (Legazpi) 30 October 1932; priest 2 April 1960; named Titular

<sup>6</sup>"Episcopal Ordination of the Most Reverend Filomeno Gonzales Bactol, D.D., Titular of Germaniciana, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Palo, Leyte, Philippines, Thursday, the 15th of October, 1981, at 9:00, A.M. Transfiguration Cathedral Church, Palo, Leyte", (Cfr. AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box. IV, No. 2)

Bishop of Bavagaliana and Auxiliary of Legazpi 31 March 1977, but was not consecrated; again named Auxiliary of Legazpi and given the Titular See of Nabala 23 March 1982.

232. 1982, 2 July, at Tuguegarao. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Teodulfo Domingo y Sabugal, Archbishop of Tuguegarao and Msgr. Pedro R. Dean, Bishop of Tagum, consecrated: *Msgr. Ramon Villena*, Titular Bishop of Tucci, Auxiliary of Tagum, born at Reina Mercedes (Tuguegarao) 16 March 1939; priest March 1963; named 16 March 1982; Coadjutor Bishop of Bayombong 17 August 1985; succeeded to the See of Bayombong 15 September 1986.
233. 1982, 7 October, at Manila, Basilica. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Antonio Frondosa, Archbishop of Capi and Msgr. Vicente Reyes, Bishop of Cabanatuan consecrated: *Msgr. Ciceron S. Tumbocon*, Coadjutor Bishop of Cabanatuan, born at Ibajay (Jaro) 6 May 1922; priest 13 March 1946; named 18 August 1982; succeeded to the See of Cabanatuan 7 April 1983.<sup>7</sup>

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PALO**--Established 15 November 1982. Suffragans: Dioceses of Borongan, Calbayog, and Catarman.<sup>8</sup>

**DIOCESE OF BANGUED**--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Bangued. Suffragan of Nueva Segovia.<sup>9</sup>

**DIOCESE OF BAYOMBONG**--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Bayombong. Suffragan of Tuguegarao.

<sup>7</sup>BEF, 1983, p. 271, Auxiliary Bishop of Cabanatuan *cum jure successionis*: Souvenir booklet. Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Ciceron S.M. Tumbocon, Coadjutor-Bishop (c.j.s.) of Cabanatuan. . . (AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box III, No. 1).

<sup>8</sup>BEF, 1983, p. 540 (Bull of establishment of the Archdiocese of Palo).

<sup>9</sup>BEF, 1983, pp. 538-539 (Bull erecting the diocese of Bangued).

DIOCESE OF IBA--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Iba. Suffragan of San Fernando.<sup>10</sup>

DIOCESE OF ILIGAN--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Iligan. Suffragan of Cagayan de Oro.

DIOCESE OF KIDAPAWAN--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Kidapawan. Suffragan of Cotabato.

DIOCESE OF MALAYBALAY--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Malaybalay. Suffragan of Cagayan de Oro.

DIOCESE OF MARBEL--Established 15 November 1982. Territory : same as Prelature of Marbel. Suffragan of Cotabato.

DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE DE ANTIQUE--Established 15 November 1982. Territory: same as Prelature of Antique. Suffragan of Jaro.

234. 1983, 23 January, at Manila, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Francisco Cruces y Raval, Archbishop of Zamboanga, and Msgr. Oscar V. Cruz, Archbishop of San Fernando consecrated: *Msgr. Antonio Tobias y Realubin*, Titular Bishop of Tipasa in Numidia, Auxiliary of Zamboanga, born at Manila 13 June 1941; priest 21 December 1965; named 3 November 1982; Bishop of Pagadian 14 September 1984.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>BEF, 1984, p. 373 (Msgr. Paciano Aniceto, Bishop of Iba).

<sup>11</sup>BEF, 1983, p. 437 (Auxiliary Bishop of Zamboanga); see also program of the "Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, D.D." in the UST archives, Section of Programs (Ecclesiastical Authorities), Box IV, no. 4. As already stated in a previous footnote, these programs contain a brief biographical sketch, a good photograph and the coat-of-arms with its explanation.

**ARCHDIOCESE OF OZAMIZ**--Established 27 January 1983. Suffragans: Dioceses of Dipolog, Iligan, and Pagadian, and Prelature of Marawi.<sup>12</sup>

**DIOCESE OF ANTIPOLLO**--Established 27 January 1983. Territory: East Rizal, taken from Manila. Suffragan of Manila.<sup>13</sup>

**APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF SAN JOSE IN MINDORO**. Established 27 January 1983. Territory: Mindoro Occidental, taken from Calapan.<sup>14</sup>

235. 1983, 21 February, at Manila, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Oscar V. Cruz, Archbishop of San Fernando and Msgr. Amado Paulino y Hernandez, Titular Bishop of Carinola, consecrated: *Msgr. Teodoro J. Buhain*, Titular Bishop of Bacanaria, Auxiliary of Manila, born at Bacoar (Imus) 4 August 1937; priest 21 December 1960; named 5 January 1983.<sup>15</sup>
236. 1983, 25 March, at Roxas City, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Cornelius De Wit, Titular Bishop of Respecta and Msgr. Alberto Piamonte y Jover, Titular Bishop of Gubaliana, consecrated: *Msgr. Raul Martires y Quimpo*, first Bishop of San Jose de Antique, born at Kalibo 9 February 1983; priest 18 March 1961; named 5 January 1983.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>BEF, 1984, p. 63 (Establishment of the Ecclesiastical province of Ozamis: "A Souvenir of the . . . Solemn Constitution of the Ecclesiastical Province of Dipolog-Ozamis, etc.," in AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box III, No. 4.

<sup>13</sup>BEF, 1983, p. 441; 1984, pp. 255-256 (Erection of the diocese of Antipollo).

<sup>14</sup>BEF, 1983, p. 684 (Erection of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose, Mindoro).

<sup>15</sup>BEF, 1984, p. 65 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Manila).

<sup>16</sup>BEF, 1984, p. 494 (Bull naming him Bishop of Antique); See also the program of his Episcopal ordination in AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box IV, No. 5.

237. 1983, 29 June, at Manila, Church of Christ the King. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Simeon O. Valerio, Titular Bishop of Mimiana and Msgr. Federico G. Limon Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, consecrated: *Msgr. Vicente C. Manuel*, Divine Word Missioner, Titular Bishop of Albule, first Vicar Apostolic San Jose in Mindoro, born Calintaan (Calapan) 18 November 1938; priest 1 December 1986; named 17 March 1983.
238. 1983, 10 August, at Manila Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Oscar V. Cruz, Archbishop of San Fernando and Msgr. Gregorio Espiga e Infante, Titular Bishop of Aphnaeum consecrated: *Msgr. Francisco C. San Diego*, Titular Bishop of Zica, Coadjutor of Palawan, born at Obando (Manila) 10 October 1935; priest 21 December 1963; named 6 June 1983; succeeded to the vicariate of Palawan 18 December 1987.<sup>17</sup>
239. 1984, 12 January, at Tuguegarao, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Teodulfo Domingo y Sabugal, Archbishop of Tuguegarao and Msgr. Miguel Purrugganan y Gatan, Bishop of Iligan consecrated: *Msgr. Diosdado Talamayan y Aenlle*, Titular Bishop of Girus, Auxiliary of Tuguegarao, born at Manila 19 October 1932; priest 20 November 1956; named 20 October 1983; Archbishop of Tuguegarao 31 January 1986.<sup>18</sup>

DIOCESE OF MATI-Established 16 February 1984. Territory: Davao Oriental, taken from Tagum. Suffragan of Davao.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>BEF, 1984, pp. 66 (Coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Palawan)

<sup>18</sup>BEF, 1984 (Auxiliary Bishop of Tuguegarao); 1987, p. 238 (Archbishop of Tuguegarao).

<sup>19</sup>BEF, 1986, pp. 182-183 (Erection of the Diocese of Mati).

**DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE**-Established 16 February 1984. Territory: Towns of Carranglan, Cuyapo, Guimba, Licab, Llanera, Lupao, Munoz, Nampicuan, Pantabangan, Quezon, Rizal, Santo Domingo, Talugtug, and San Jose, taken from Cabanatuan. Suffragan of Lingayen-Dagupan.<sup>20</sup>

**DIOCESE OF GUMACA**-Established 9 April 1984. Territory: Eastern part of Quezon and the Island of Alabat, taken from Lucena. Suffragan of Lipa.<sup>21</sup>

240. 1984, 12 April, at Manila, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Amado Paulino y Hernández, Titular Bishop of Carinola and Msgr. Paciano B. Aniceto, Bishop of Iba, consecrated: *Msgr. Teodoro C. Bacani*, Titular Bishop of Gauriana, Auxiliary of Manila, born at Bataan (San Fernando) 16 January 1940; priest 21 December 1965; named 6 March 1984.<sup>22</sup>
241. 1984, 14 July, at San Jose. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Federico G. Limon, Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan and Msgr. Ciceron S. Tumbocon, Bishop of Cabanatuan consecrated: *Msgr. Florentino F. Cinense*, first Bishop of San Jose, born at Guimba (San Jose) 14 March 1938; priest 21 December 1963; named 24 May 1984; Coadjutor Bishop of Tarlac 17 August 1985; succeeded to the See of Tarlac 21 January 1988.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>BEF, 1984, p. 731 (Bull erecting the Diocese of San Jose); "Proclamation of the Canonical Erection of the new Diocese of San Jose and the Episcopal ordination and installation of His Excellency Most Rev. Florentino Ferrer Cinense, D.D., etc.," (in AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box IV No. 6).

<sup>21</sup>BEF, 1985, p. 310 (Erection of the Diocese of Gumaca); "Canonical Erection of the Diocese of Gumaca. Episcopal ordination and installation of the Most Rev. Emilio Marquez, D.D., as the first Bishop of Gumaca, etc.," (AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box IV No. 8).

<sup>22</sup>BEF, 1984, P. 730 (Auxiliary Bishop of Manila).

<sup>23</sup>BEF, 1985, p. 463 (Bull appointing Msgr. Cinense Bishop of San Jose).

**DIOCESE OF ALAMINOS**-Established 12 January 1985. Territory: Towns of Agno, Aguilar, Alaminos, Alos, Anda, Bani, Bolinao, Bugallon, Burgos, Dasol, Infanta, Labrador, Mabini, Mangatarem, and Sual, taken from Lingayen-Dagupan. Suffragan of Lingayen-Dagupan.<sup>24</sup>

**DIOCESE OF URDANETA**-Established 12 January 1985. Territory: Towns of Alcala, Asingan, Balangas, Binalonan, Natividad, Pozorrubio, Rosales, San Manuel, Santa Maria, San Nicolas, San Quintin, Santo Tomas, Tayug, Umingan, Urdaneta, and Villasis, taken from Lingayen-Dagupan. Suffragan of Lingayen-Dagupan.<sup>25</sup>

242. 1985, 29 January, at Gumaca. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Ricardo J. Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu and Msgr. Ruben T. Profugo, Bishop of Lucena consecrated: *Msgr. Emilio U. Marquez*, first Bishop of Gumaca, born at Lopez Quezon (Lucena) 28 May 1941; priest 6 June 1964; named 15 December 1984.
243. 1985, 24 June, at Tagbilaran, Cathedral of Saint Joseph the Worker. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Antonio Mabutas y Lloren, Archbishop of Davao and Msgr. Onesimo Gordoncillio y Cadiz, Bishop of Tagbilaran, consecrated: *Msgr. Juan de Dios Pueblos*, Titular Bishop of Zaba, Auxiliary of Davao, born at Leon (Tagbilaran) 8 March 1943; priest 30 March 1968; named 29 April 1985, Bishop of Kidapawan 3 February 1987.<sup>26</sup>
244. 1985, 22 August, at Malolos, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by

<sup>24</sup>BEF, 1986, pp. 212-213 (Establishment of the Diocese of Alaminos).

<sup>25</sup>BEF, 1986, pp. 214-215 (id. of the Diocese of Urdaneta).

<sup>26</sup>BEF, 1986, p. 555 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Davao); 1988, p. 87. (promoted to Bishop of Kidapawan), "The Episcopal ordination of His Excellence Most Rev. Juan de Dios Pueblos y Mataflorida, Auxiliary Bishop of Davao, etc.," (AUST, *loc. cit.*, Box IV, No. 9).

Msgr. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, Archbishop of Caceres and Msgr. Cirilo R. Almario, Bishop of Malolos consecrated: *Msgr. Deogracias S. Iñiguez*, Titular Bishop of Claterna, Auxiliary of Malolos, born at Cotabato 10 December 1940; priest 13 December 1963; named 3 July 1985.<sup>27</sup>

245. 1985, 5 December, at Vigan. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Odilo Estpueler, Bishop of Bangued and Msgr. Edmundo M. Abaya, Bishop of Laoag consecrated: *Msgr. Patricio Lopez y Maqui*, Titular Bishop of Abra, Auxiliary of Nueva Segovia, born at Bangar (San Fernando, La Union) 14 November 1926; priest 10 March 1951; named 16 October 1985.<sup>28</sup>
246. 1986, 8 January, at Manila. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Pedro G. Mangubat, Bishop of Urdaneta and Msgr. Manuel C. Sobreviñas, Titular Bishop of Tulana consecrated: *Msgr. Severino M. Pelayo*, Titular Bishop of Bilita, Military Vicar for the Philippines, born at Candaba (San Fernando) 8 January 1934; priest 23 March 1958; named 19 December 1985.

DIOCESE OF TALIBON-Established 9 January 1986. Territory: Towns of Anda, Bien-Unido, Clarin, Duero, Jetafe, President Garcia, San Miguel, Sierra Bullanes, Talibon, and Ubay, taken from Tagbilaran. Suffragan of Cebu.<sup>29</sup>

247. 1987, 15 January, at Vigan, Cathedral of San Pablo. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Emiliano Ma-

<sup>27</sup>BEF, 1987, p. 235 (named Coadjutor Bishop of Malolos)

<sup>28</sup>BEF, 1986, p. 484 (Bull promoting him to Auxiliary Bishop of Nueva Segovia).

<sup>29</sup>BEF, 1987, p. 491; "Canonical erection of the Diocese of Talibon and the solemn installation of the Most Rev. Christian Vicente F. Noel, D.D. first Bishop of Talibon, Tuesday 3rd December, 1986. . . , Blessed Trinity Cathedral, Bohol, Philippines.



dangeng, Titular Bishop of Trofimiana and Msgr. Orlando B. Quevedo, Archbishop of Nueva Segovia consecrated: *Msgr. Ernesto Salgado y Antolin*, Titular Bishop of Buruni, Coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of the Mountain Provinces, born at Santa Lucia (Nueva Segovia) 22 November 1936; priest 23 December 1961; named 17 October 1986; succeeded to the Vicariate 18 December 1987.<sup>30</sup>

248. 1987, 16 March, at Cebu, Cathedral. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Manuel S. Salvador, Titular Archbishop of Zarna and Msgr. Angel N. Lagdameo, Coadjutor Bishop of Dumaguete consecrated: *Msgr. Leopoldo Tumalak y Sumaylo*, Titular Bishop of Lesvi, Auxiliary of Cebu, born at Santander (Cebu) 29 September 1944; priest 30 March 1972; named 12 January 1987.<sup>31</sup>
249. 1987, 17 March, at Ormoc, Parish Church of Saints Peter and Paul. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Godofredo Pedernal Pisig, Bishop Emeritus of Borongan and Msgr. Nestor C. Cariño, Bishop Emeritus of Borongan consecrated: *Msgr. Leonardo Medroso y Yuson*, Bishop of Borongan, born at Ormoc (Palo) 6 November 1938; priest 30 March 1963; named 18 December 1986.<sup>32</sup>
250. 1987, 29 March, at Rome, Saint Peter's Basilica. Msgr. Jose Sanchez, Archbishop Emeritus of Nueva Segovia, Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, assisted by Msgr. Cesare Zacchi, Titular Archbishop of Maura and Msgr. Antonio do Carmo Cheuiche, Titular Bishop of Saturnuca consecrated: *Msgr. Camilo Gregorio y Diaz*, Titular

<sup>30</sup>BEF, 1987, p. 490 (Bull appointing him Coadjutor of the Apostolic Vicar of the Mountain Provinces *cum jure successionis*).

<sup>31</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 85 (Auxiliary Bishop of Cebu).

<sup>32</sup>BEF, 1987, p. 492 (Bull naming him Bishop of Borongan)

Bishop of Girus, Auxiliary of Cebu, born at Cuyapo (San Jose) 25 September 1929; priest 1 December 1963; named 12 January 1987.<sup>33</sup>

**DIOCESE OF KABANKALAN**-Established 30 March 1987. Territory: Towns of Aguisan, Binalbaan, Candoni, Cauayan, Dankalan, Himamaylan, Hinobaan, Ilog, Isabel, Kabankalan, La Castellana, Moises Padilla, Payo, and Su-ay Himamaylan in Negros Occidental, taken from Bacolod. Suffragan of Jaro.<sup>34</sup>

**DIOCESE OF SAN CARLOS**-Established 30 March 1987 Territory: Towns of Calatrava, Canlaon, Guihulngan, La Libertad, New Escalante, Old Escalante, Quezon, San Carlos, Toboso, and Villehermoso, taken from Dumaguete; and Caduhaan, Cadiz, Fabrica, Manlapa, New Sagay, Old Sagay, Pandanan, and Vito, taken from Bacolod. Suffragan of Jaro.<sup>35</sup>

251. 1987, 4 July, at San Fernando. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Oscar V. Cruz, Archbishop of Iba consecrated: *Msgr. Jesus Galang y Castro*, Titular Bishop of Tibiucia, Auxiliary of San Fernando, born at Tarlac 25 December 1932; priest 17 March 1962; named 23 May 1987.
252. 1987, 25 July, at Parañaque, Church of Mary Help of Christians. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Gabriel Reyes y Villaruz, Titular Bishop of Selsea and Msgr. Pedro Bantique y Natividad, Bishop of San Pablo consecrated: *Msgr. Leo M. Drona*, Salesian, Bishop of San Jose, born at Pangil (Lipa) 18 October 1941; priest 22 December 1967; named 10 June 1987.
253. 1987, 19 August, at Malaybalay, Cathedral of San Isidro. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana,

<sup>33</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 84 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Cebu).

<sup>34</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 212 (Bull of erection of the Diocese of Kabankalan).

<sup>35</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 114 (Bull of erection of the Diocese of San Carlos).

Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, assisted by Msgr. Gaudencio B. Rosales, Bishop of Malaybalay and Msgr. Francisco F. Claver, Bishop Emeritus of Malaybalay consecrated: *Msgr. Jose Manguiran y Ricare*, Bishop of Dipolog, born at Carcar (Cebu) 27 August 1936; priest 27 December 1966; named 27 May 1987.

254. 1987, 1 December, at Calbayog, Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. Cardinal Ricardo J. Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu assisted by Msgr. Pedro R. Dean, Archbishop of Palo and Apostolic Administrator of Calbayog and Msgr. Manuel S. Salvador, Titular Bishop of Zarna consecrated: *Msgr. Maximiano Cruz y Tuazon*, Titular Bishop of Tanudaia, Auxiliary of Calbayog, born at Catbalogan (Calbayog) 4 April 1923; priest 30 November 1947; named 10 November 1987.<sup>36</sup>
255. 1988, 25 February, at Baguio City, Cathedral of Our Lady of the Atonement. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Ernesto Salgado y Antolin, Titular Bishop of Buruni Msgr. Emiliano Madangeng, Titular Bishop of Trofimiana consecrated: *Msgr. Sebastian Dalis y Acol*, Titular Bishop of Tabraca, Auxiliary of the Vicariate of the Mountain Provinces, born at Sablan (Mountain Provinces) 25 March 1925; priest 15 December 1953; named 18 November 1987.<sup>37</sup>
256. 1988, 16 March, at Cotabato, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Philip Francis Smith, Archbishop of Cotabato and Msgr. Jose Maria Querexeta y Mendizabal, Titular Bishop of Eressus consecrated: *Msgr. Romulo de la Cruz y Tolentino*, Coadjutor Bishop-Prelate of Isabela born at Balasan, Ilo-Ilo (Jaro) 24 June 1947; priest 8 December 1972; named 17 December 1987.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 217 (his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Calbayog).

<sup>37</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 217 (Bull naming him Auxiliary Bishop of the Mountain Provinces).

<sup>38</sup>BEF, 1988, p. 223 (his appointment as Bishop-Coadjutor of Isabela).

257. 1988, 6 April, at Tagbilaran, Cathedral of Saint Joseph the Worker. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Antonio Mabutas y Lloren, Archbishop of Davao and Msgr. Onesimo Gordoncilio y Cadiz, Archbishop of Cadiz consecrated: *Msgr. Alfredo Baquial y Banluta*, Titular Bishop Bavagaliana, Auxiliary of Davao, born at Tagbilaran 28 1941; priest 28 May 1966; named 2 February 1988.
258. 1988, 25 July, at Bacolod, Cathedral of San Sebastian. Msgr. Bruno Torpigliani, Titular Archbishop of Malliana, Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines assisted by Msgr. Alberto Piamonte y Jover, Archbishop of Jaro and Msgr. Antonio Fortich y Yapsutco, Bishop of Bacolod consecrated: *Msgr. Vicente Salgado y Garrucho*, Bishop of Romblon, born at Bacolod 20 April 1936; priest 23 December 1961; named 30 May 1988.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Program of the Episcopal ordination of the Most Rev. Vicente G. Salgado, D.D., Bishop-elect of Romblon, on the twenty-fifth of July, nineteen hundred and eighty-eight San Sebastian Cathedral, Bacolod City, Philippines" (with a large colored photograph, coat of arms and its explanation, and bio-data).

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## **HOMILETICS**

# **Homilies for March and April 1990**

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*Roman Carter, O.P., et al.*

### **First Sunday of Lent, March 4, 1990**

*(Gen 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11)*

Brothers and sisters, we have just heard accounts of two temptations. In the first reading, the story from Genesis recounts the episode in which Adam and Eve, while living in Paradise, were tempted by the serpent to eat the forbidden fruit. The gospel reading likewise recounts how Jesus, having fasted for forty days and forty nights in the desert, was tempted by the devil.

What is most striking in both accounts is the seeming good sense and logic behind the temptations. God's command does seem absurd to Adam and Eve, and the tempter's line of argument is quite intelligent. The serpent's remarks sound right and appealing. The same holds true for the temptations of Jesus. They seem to be so full of good sense that they are hardly debatable.

The two temptations also promise autonomy and personal power of man. In Eve's case, the serpent told her that the moment she (and Adam) ate the forbidden fruit, "they would become like God," capable of knowing

what is good and what is bad. So also in the case of Jesus' three temptations. The first is to use miraculous power to provide for the ordinary material needs "by turning stones to bread." The second deals with the use of this power to produce a "sign," a spectacular and convincing display that would compel belief in his throwing of himself from the pinnacle of the temple unharmed. The third is for Satan to give Jesus power over all things on earth with kingly glory and honor.

However, when we notice how the tempted parties reacted the two accounts differ. Eve pays heed to the suggestion of the serpent. She perceives his seemingly inner logic and is seduced by his superficial appeal. Perhaps, in reality, the fruit was highly captivating to the eyes. She is likewise fascinated by the benefit she can derive from heeding the temptation. Even though she knew that God had forbidden it, she still ate the fruit. She disobeyed him. She even went to the point of inviting Adam to eat as well, which the latter consented to also. Thus they both sinned against God. They became knowledgeable regarding evil and were "expelled" from paradise. Thus, death and sin entered into the world by God's curse.

Jesus, unlike Eve, stood firm and fought against the allurements of the devil. First, he proclaimed a basic scriptural truth integral to man's nature: "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus, in this remark, does not deny man's biological needs. But he emphasizes that these are subordinated to the revealed Word of God. Besides, Jesus will not fulfill his mission by providing for basic necessities alone, but by proclaiming God's Word that gives life. Secondly, he did not succumb to the devil's temptation to reveal himself as a magician or a political liberator with all the kingly power and glory. Jesus could not just have such a very distorted notion of himself. He strongly rebuked the devil to leave. Thus, the devil separated from Jesus, showing his own utter defeat and Jesus' capacity to overcome every possible occasion of disobeying the will of his Father.

The allurements of the devil must have been very inviting. They showed a lot of promise for wealth, glory, honor and power. But Jesus stood firm and proclaimed the truth. These earthly "glories" are nothing compared to the glory to be revealed by God. After he was tempted, Jesus set out to realize his mission and proclaim the kingdom of God. He called the disciples, cured the sick, denounced hypocrites, and witnessed the love of God for his people. This led to his suffering, crucifixion and death. However, he is glorified with his resurrection.

My friends, the victorious message of Christ should echo within all of us today. The temptations our Lord Jesus has undergone are for us a source of encouragement and consolation. If our Lord underwent temptations, we cannot and must not expect to live a Christian life without experiencing similar tests and trials. Today, our basic temptations in life are like his: bodily comforts and pleasure, the quest for wealth, honor and power. Unfortunately, there are those who use whatever means they have to attain these things, even to the extent of depriving others of their rights. Many lives are sacrificed and many people have suffered because of this. But such things are temporary. They will just come and go. For everyone will have to leave this earthly glory very soon. The glory we await is endless.

Today let us look into our hearts and honestly examine our reaction to these temptations. Do we imitate our Lord and Savior and say, "Be away, Satan!"? Our final destiny is not in this world. We are here for a few short years, then we hope for the unending life which Christ has won for us. Would we not be foolish to give in to the devil and suffer in the long run?

This season of Lent is a golden opportunity for us now to review our past and make sensible resolutions for our future. (*Sem. Reynaldo B. Matunog*)

## Second Sunday of Lent, March 11, 1990

(*Gen 12:1-4; 2 Tim 1:8-10; Mt 17:1-9*)

Today is the Second Sunday of Lent. Our first reading tells us of the infinite love of God for us despite our unfaithfulness to him. That's why the Lord called Abraham to a mission which involved a promise (a promise of God's blessings). Abraham was to be the father of God's chosen people and through them he would reveal himself to the world. Remember that Abraham was not even a monotheist when the Lord called him to his mission. During the time of Abraham to leave one's tribe and one's relatives was to risk one's life. It means to undergo trials, self-surrender, sufferings and even perhaps death. But because Abraham was convinced, he trusted implicitly and wholeheartedly that the one who called him and gave the promise of divine blessing was the true God, and that he alone should be served. So he did as God told him to do without question or hesitation.

Then in the second reading, St. Paul reminds Timothy of his pastoral duty as shepherd of the community. The power and gift he received from Christ (through the laying on of Paul's hand) must be used for the spread of the Gospel, even if it causes Timothy suffering and humiliation. As baptized Christians we are called to walk in holiness according to an eternal plan of grace by participating in the divine sanctity and happiness of God. This has been manifested and has been made known to us through the coming of Christ, that is through his incarnation. However, the death of man called sin has prevented us from attaining this eternal plan. But because of "the appearance of our savior Jesus Christ," in his second coming, he will abolish the spiritual death of man and give to all men who accept him the eternal life of which Timothy must preach and gladly suffer for.

Our third reading from Matthew's gospel gives a glimpse of future divine glory with God, i.e., the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was witnessed by his privileged disciples. This event happened probably at Mount Tabor, which is possibly a symbolic mountain on which the events of Mount Sinai are re-enacted from the life of the new Moses, Jesus Christ. The appearance of Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets. Notice the reaction of Peter who was thrilled and overwhelmed with the vision and felt joy at such holy company. He tried to prolong this fascinating vision by suggesting the setting up of three tents in which Christ, Moses and Elijah could sojourn. This erection of tents would symbolize "the Feast of Tabernacles" in which the Jewish tradition identified God's final blessings of the world. Eventually God himself enters by manifesting himself in the form of bright clouds whose representation is being referred to as Yahweh's appearance to Moses at Mount Horeb. The voice of God says, "This is my beloved Son," for he is a revealer, a true messenger of God's salvation and, therefore, the authority of teaching rests upon him. The disciples fell on their faces when they heard the voice of God, as a sign of adoration and humility and unworthiness to be in God's presence.

God's message today tells us the necessity of suffering, self-mortification and surrender and the willingness we should have to suffer ourselves as living sacrifices for God by whom we are called to observe such things in this season of Lent. Once we respond to the call of God, like Abraham we shall be willing to deny ourselves, and follow the will of God despite our unworthiness. We should have that kind of strong faith, determination, commitment and willingness to endure the challenges in life in order to be worthy of God's promise which accompanies his call. The same is true of

the message of St. Paul to Timothy, that we are to bear witness to our Lord's Gospel effectively although it may involve sufferings and hardships. Yes, (depending in our disposition) we have received many graces both spiritual and intellectual from our Christian life which could be used for the good of all the faithful. Jesus Christ himself gives us this source of encouragement, strength and perseverance. He incites us to be willing to suffer as a part of our Christian life as true followers of Christ. To that end, this experience of transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us a glimpse of his divine future in heavenly glory. But unless we learn to accept and be firmly convinced that the suffering of Christ can be a gateway to a new life (and eternal life), we still find it hard to accept suffering. Let us remember that our journey through life is no mere Calvary but an entrance to resurrection, the life of glory in our Saviour Jesus Christ. The person who takes up his cross willingly, knowing its value for his real life, finds it becoming lighter and often not a burden but a blessing. The man who tries to abandon his Cross, and who curses and rebels against him who sent it, will find its weight double. He loses all the value the Cross was intended to have for his true welfare.

Finally, let us try to reflect and evaluate ourselves as Christians. Are we willing to sacrifice for the sake of God's call in us? If so, do we wholeheartedly open ourselves to the graces which God bestowed upon us and be committed to make use of them for the good of his faithful? And as we approach and receive the banquet of the Lord, we pray that we may experience his transfiguration, that Jesus who called us is alive. (*Sem. Rey E. Corridor*)

**Third Sunday of Lent, March 18, 1990**  
(*Ex 17:3-7; Rom 5:1-2,5-8; Jn 4:5-42*)

What God wants is to direct us to and to give us our eternal salvation. Such is the life-giving water of Jesus Christ.

It is a fact that before we can arrive at our goal, we have to undergo the journey. This involves passing through a way or a process. The essence of Christianity is to attain the grace of eternal life. For this we first must pass through the long journey of Christian life.

In the first reading, the Israelites are seen on the way to the Promised Land, their salvation. Along the way they had to pass through a desert. What happened was that they clamored for water. But in clamoring they

committed blasphemy. They accused God of being their murderer because they feared death from thirst of water. The sad thing was that they thought God was not with them on their journey.

We have to accept that now in our time there are also some of us who act like the Israelites of old. When we are prosperous, at the peak of success and abundance of things, we do not think anymore about the presence of God. We take it that success comes through our own efforts. When troubles come, problems arise and trials test us, we accuse God of not being with us. We fail to remember the times when God had provided for our needs. Our perception of the things that God gave us are blackened by the trials we face. How ungrateful we become sometimes. We have to note that if we are given things by God, it is not because we have the right to them, but it is by God's generosity. It is but proper to pay back that generosity through our thankfulness and praise of him, not accusing him of not guiding us as the Israelites did. We have to learn to thank God for the things he gives us.

We have to accept that on our journey to eternal life we have to pass to test. That is what Meribah and Massah mean. This test alone will lead us to our destination. The motto which goes "There is no glory without sacrifice" must be a guiding principle in our journey.

Moreover, it is a trend of this present age to value only those things which can give us convenience. We now have machines, computers which make our work easy. However, the journey to Christian perfection cannot take place in a convenient way. The road to eternal life entails hardship which can make us strong. There is no short-cut way in attaining our life-everlasting. It does not please God to see us as convenient Christians.

Just like the Israelites, we have to pass through a desert: our problems and trials. Christianity demands of us the bearing of those things with a purpose in mind, that of unending life in the future. But we don't mean merely passive bearing of problems. It is not just following the commandments or not committing any sin. We have to work, and be active to reach our goal and even to receive temporal needs. God is the one who leads us, but if we become indifferent to his guidance, he cannot force us to be led. Our everyday works of charity in the end will help us to attain our ultimate end.

We may ask why we have to struggle to achieve success in life. What we are now obtaining are just temporal things, earthly water. We have to attain the water with which we will never be thirsty again.

In the case of the Israelites on their journey, what they received was that water which quenched thirst momentarily. They had not yet found that life-giving water which would be their salvation.

In the Gospel, we heard the Samaritan woman told by Jesus that she would be given that water with which she would never be thirsty again. At first, the woman just understood it as a temporal or earthly water. Jesus wanted her to realize her need for his life-giving water, of which whoever drinks it will never be thirsty again.

It is a trend of today to give more importance to the earthly goods without thinking of their ultimate purposes. In Christianity we are taught not to find satisfaction with such earthly things, but rather to seek spiritual things, which will last forever. The idea is that we have to go to everlasting perfection through an earthly journey.

Because of our attitude to give too much weight to earthly things, we can no longer see the needs of others. We are too much preoccupied with what we ourselves should have. But God gives earthly blessings for all mankind. The mere accumulation of such goods will entail accumulation only of the goods of the earth. Christ said, "does it profit a man to own the whole world but lose his very life?" Let us recall that the things of this world are mere preparations for the goods of everlasting, that is, eternal life. (*Sem. Roy F. Mejias*).

#### Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 25, 1990

*1 Sam 16:1, 6-7, 10-13; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41*

Today on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, we have heard in the reading how God interferes and intervenes in the history of mankind in such ways as to raise it from the dull chronology it could be the History of Salvation all his own in which we share. God sets up and anoints a King. He brings Risen Life to men and women who believe in him and he (in the person of Christ) gives sight to the blind. Let us examine each of these occurrences and ask how they apply to our presence here at the Mass and to our ongoing Christian lives.

Samuel's almost secret anointing of David, because of the rejection of Saul, is a quaint tale, fraught with fear (of Saul's possible reprisals) and local color in which seven of Jesse's eight sons will not do for the prophet, and an eighth (the insignificant youngest) has to be presented. In time, David will become publicly acknowledged King, first over Judah for seven years, then over all Israel for thirty-three. From a merely human point of view he was first a courtier, then a royal son-in-law. He served as a mercenary guerilla against Saul for the Philistine enemy. He usurped the position of "military dictator" first of "his home Province" then of the whole "Banana Republic" which was Israel in the ancient world. A man of mixed blood (his grandmother was a Moabite foreigner), of crafty disposition and a lover of blood vengeance, he doesn't seem to have the making of greatness.

From God's point of view all is different. For the spirit of the Lord rests on David from the day of his first anointing. He is God's and God is his. He becomes the very type, the living symbol of a future reality, of Jesus Christ our lord. In his holy ancestor, David, the Son of God as Prophet, Priest and King is humanly foreseen and divinely foreknown.

In the second reading, where light and darkness are put into vivid contrast, St. Paul commands the Ephesians not only to "wake up" but to "rise from the dead." He can do this because both he and they have been struck by the grace of Christ. God has freed them from black sin and brought them into his own wonderful light. And they can and should enjoy it.

The Gospel takes us deeper and farther. Jesus himself comes into a man's life. The man was born blind, but by washing off the mud paste made by the hands of Jesus he finds sight. Water leads to vision once cleaning has taken place.

What are we doing here at Mass? We, too, are being anointed by God as Prophets, Priests and Kings, like David and like Christ. We entered this Church as relative "nobodies", but now by his Word God has anointed us as his sons and daughters. He has done more. He has raised us from the dead hum-drum of our habitual sins. He has given us wakefulness and vision, resurrection and life. For neither the lectors nor I, nor the ancient writers Samuel, Paul or John have been speaking to us. God the Holy Spirit, the inspirer of the written word, has brought us the Word-made-flesh Who is our Lord. And right now Jesus is bringing us to the Father by



opening our eyes to the wonders of his love we are about to celebrate at the altar.

What shall we do when we leave this building? Can we, like David, live our lives anointed by the Spirit no matter what other people think? Can we, like the Ephesians, wake up and be resurrected? Can we, like the blind man, obey Christ and use this season of Lent to wash off our mud and regain our sight? Of course we can. And we will, if we allow what we see and hear today at Mass, on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, to penetrate to the depths of our hearts. Then we can start to glow with the received fire of God and brighten, cheer and enlighten the world! (*Roman Carter, O.P.*)

**Fifth Sunday of Lent, April 1, 1990**  
(*Ez 37:12-14; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45*)

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent we both commemorate (as we do on all Sundays) and anticipate (the season being Lent) the mystery and the celebration of Easter. The mystery is resurrection and life, the Triumph of the Spirit and the Exaltation of Christ. The celebration involves this Liturgy of the Word in which we are now engaged. In the reading from the Prophet Ezekiel, from the Apostle Paul to the Romans and from John's superb theological Gospel, the themes of resurrection and life are interwoven in a holy tapestry.

Let us step back from this tapestry and view it a little better by first looking at the parts one by one, and, then, let us try to apply them to the rest of this Mass and to our lives.

The thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, from which the first reading is taken, forms the next to the last part of a long section near the end of the prophecy. The section (Chapter 33 to 37) is concerned with the conditions for and the process of the restoration of Israel. "Resurrection" here is the homecoming, renewal and re-establishment of an exiled people. Ezekiel with graphic skill tells his story in terms of the opening of their graves for the exiled dead of Israel to return to their native land, not only alive but Spirit filled so that they can resettle on the soil of their rightful inheritance according to the plan and because of the intervening deed of God.

St. Paul tells the Romans (in one of the most difficult passages of these complex letter) that the contrast between "flesh" -- things unredeemed and

lost in time -- and spirit -- what is God's own and, thus, eternal -- is both of radical and lively importance for them. God the Holy Spirit empowers us too, with new life in Christ. But this life is not just a gift from God. It involves us in a process of ongoing self-realization initiated and carried through by the Spirit in every sphere of our being until it culminates in the very resurrection of our mortal bodies through the immortal touch of life itself that they have received.

In today's Gospel the not-yet-risen Lord (for John always cognizant of the power of his divine life inseparable from the Father) faces tragedy of Bethany: four days dead Lazarus. He only bring his friend back to life. He made clear to Martha that he, Jesus IS the Resurrection and the Life. Thus he is, indeed, and even remains so for us.

Each Sunday Mass is a festal gathering at the table of Our Risen Lord. Here we are called from exile, sin and the "tomb" of our day-to-day into a glory of heavenly "resettlement". Here we receive the Spirit of Immortality. Here we encounter Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. In some of this earth's languages (including Russian) it is impossible to say "Sunday" without saying "Resurrection". We cannot aptly celebrate the sacred mysteries without entering into Life.

The risen power and life we are to receive as we continue our liturgical act on this Fifth Sunday of Lent is risen power and life not for some vague future after death. It is risen power and life which is dynamic, active and personal (for it is Christ Himself) for everyday of our lives, for all time and for all eternity. May God give each of us the grace to perceive (and embrace Our Risen Lord in this Eucharistic Encounter. May He fill us with His Spirit and save us from all our sins. And may we all through this inestimable grace, perdure into Life Everlasting. Amen! (*Fr. Roman Carter, O.P.*)

**Palm Sunday, April 8, 1990**

(*Is 50: 4-7; Ph 2-6-7; Mt 26:14-27, 66*)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we have just heard St. Matthew's Passion. Whether it is sung to the tune of Bach or read by our able and loyal lectors and myself, I think the Passion speaks for itself. And, although this Palm Sunday is rightly called in liturgical terms "Sunday of

**Our Lord's Passion**" I wish to say no more about this most precious Gospel narrative which I hope has moved you as much as it does me every year.

Rather, let us turn back in memory for a few moments to the first two readings. The part of the great roll or scroll of Isaiah which scholars call Deutero-Isaiah (meaning the "other" or "second" Prophet involved) begins with what is designated the fortieth chapter. Our reading today was from the fiftieth which is one of the eight "hymns" which are found from the forty-ninth to the fifty-fifth chapters. Our reading was from the "Hymn of Israel in Darkness." Here the prophet tells us in superb Hebrew poetry of the Suffering Servant (who "sang" first in Chapter Forty-two and again in Chapter Forty-nine) who trusting in God unflinchingly bears torments with NO resistance! How difficult it is to make NO complaint! How right it is, however, in all things to trust in God.

St. Paul takes us in the second reading from his buoyant letter to his beloved Philippians into another realm of reality. He, too, sings a hymn but it is not merely one of an unknown resistantless Servant prophesied of old. St. Paul sings an explicit hymn of Jesus Christ, of his pre-existent glory, his self-emptying human life and death and of the Resurrection the Father has bestowed on his Son as glory restored and the content of a universal confession of faith! The Church wisely puts the whole plan of salvation before us in these words of St. Paul to the Philippians at the beginning of Holy Week.

Here at Mass on Palm Sunday we are (as at all Masses "showing forth the Lord's death" but we are meant also to unite ourselves not only with the Saving Act but also with the very sentiment of Christ. In other words we are here to acquire anew a Christ-like attitude. This is far from the attitudes of haughty belligerence and egoistical self-defense typical of the world around us. We have come here to learn non-resistance. However we learn it not for the sake of suffering as such but for the sake of the glory to be revealed. Mass is our chance to identify with the self-emptying Lord so we may identify forever with the Risen Lord of Glory.

What a pity it would be if we were to leave this place unconvinced, no more trusting in the Father's love and care than we were when we came in. What a miserable celebrant I would be if the Mass had no effective response from us and if I effected nothing more by it than my priestly duty. God has great graces in store for you and me today. But they want us to share with the world. Our words, our deeds as example, because based on our heartfelt sentiments and clear thoughts, are to transform the world.

May every day of Holy Week be as blessed for us as this first day. And next Sunday, when Risen Glory is celebrated with no holes barred, may we already have "stored up" so many blessings for ourselves and our neighbors that we can set the world on fire with patient love. (*Roman Carter, O.P.*)

**Easter Sunday, April 15, 1990**

(*Ac 10:34a, 37-43, Col 3:1-4, Jn 20:1-9*)

"Peace be with you!" The triumphant and consoling cry of the Risen Christ rings down the ages into our liturgical assembly today. At this Mass Jesus as if newly risen from the dead greets us one and all. He lets us know the dull coldrums of Lent are over, the fast, the penances, the violent gloom. Forty-days ending in Passion and Death are done and gone. The Lord has risen, indeed!

But what is His Risen Life? Why do we celebrate it? How can we live it in, through and with Him? The first reading from Acts makes it clear enough that Jesus as Risen Lord is still a concrete, Incarnate Person. In his discourse to Cornelius and his household at coastal Caesarea St. Peter not only recalls how Jesus lived and died but how God raised Him to life, how He was seen by Peter and others. They ate and drank with Him. They now awaits Him as coming Judge and proclaim Him as forgiver of sins.

In the second reading we have heard how St. Paul taught the Colossians that the effect of Christ's Resurrection is our own being raised up in mind and heart. Having died through Baptism our vision is already one of Heavenly Glory. Our life here and now (since we share in what we see by faith and experience by love) is hidden with Christ in God. Our whole is in a full, last and lasting revelation not only of Christ but ourselves in Him. Then what is hidden will be made manifest. Our Easter Glory will be forever.

The Holy Gospel raises us still higher for here neither Peter nor Paul talk to us in explanation or speculation Christ really speaks to us today (as never before) in the Gospel. He tells us not with words but from the silent empty tomb with all the freshness of His Risen Life that nothing can contain Him. Death and the grave with all their said trappings of shroud and head cloth have no hold over Him. As He is absent from the place and death, He is present in Life -- a new life, a Risen Life, a fresh start. This

gives up hope. This clarifies and reinforces our faith. This intensifies our love for God.

Every Sunday Mass is meant to be an Easter Feast. We eat and drink with Jesus Our Risen Lord here at this altar. Because He Himself is our Feast, our Food and our Drink, all our beings should be raised heavenward when we eat His Body and drink His Blood. And all merely earthly things, all creatures generated and corrupted in time and space, all that has no further, no eternal use, all these fade in significance. Much of the world becomes an empty tomb, its ornaments the rags of death.

However, we can never be content merely to contemplate these great realities of basic Catholic Christianity. We must put them into practice. How? By living RISEN LIVES of Victory and Joy here and now on this earth! If you and I truly believe in Christ we shall share our exalted vision with all who can bear it. We shall make the Risen Lord the very center of our existence on all levels, in all relationships, at work and at play, in the midst of our responsibilities and recreation. Then all who wish to will be able to perceive in us the Risen Lord, object of our faith, promise of our hope, hidden but real and partially revealed pledge of our love. By our witness forgiveness (because we forgive) will come into the world; by our tolerant fore-bearance (because we refuse to judge) all mankind will be prepared for the Judge who is to come in Glory. Peace, the peace of the Risen Christ will then reign in the world through us: witnesses, brothers and sisters, friends and sharers of Peace of Jesus Our only Risen Lord!  
*(Roman Carter, O.P.)*

**Second Sunday of Easter, April 22, 1990**

*(Ac 2:42-47; 1 Pt 1:3-9; Jn 20:19-31)*

During this age of sophisticated technology, sights and sounds capture the attention of just about everyone who can see and hear! We all are injected whether we like it or not with signs and symbols which define for us their own meaning and asserts themselves for our approval. Take for instance the use of computers. All we have to do is feed the computer with the necessary data and in a minute we have the result of our inquiry served in a delectable platter of convenience. Thus, we seem to be convinced with almost absolute certainty that "to see is to believe". This has become an expression of our empiric-practical approach to life. However, have we come to consider that this can also be a cruel saying, for it implies a lack of trust in another?

At first glance the doubting Thomas of today's gospel manifested a lack of trust. He wanted to see Jesus before he would believe. He stubbornly refused to believe the word of the other ten apostles. He needed personal evidence and the merciful Savior gave him that evidence. The Lord asked Thomas to prove for himself that his body bore the marks of the crucifixion. Whether Thomas did touch the sacred wounds, we are not told but his statement: "My Lord and my God" proves how convinced he now was. His statement goes further in expressing the divine nature of Christ than that of any person in the four Gospels. "Lord and God" were the words used in the Old Testament to stress the true God-Yahweh Elohim.

In the second reading we hear St. Peter saying: "Although you have not seen him, you love him, and without seeing you believe in him." There are matters in our life that we simply do not need the evidence of sight and sound.

However, faith is more than just accepting the truth of the resurrection. It is in faith that we come in contact with Jesus. Our contact certainly is not by touching the wounds of Jesus but by receiving from the risen Jesus the gift of divine life, especially in the sacraments. It is good to notice how our Lord greeted his apostles in the gospel. "Peace be with you," he says. Jesus saluted them by wishing peace, that is, health and prosperity both in the material and spiritual sense. Here, Christ is not only wishing well being, but he is precisely giving it. And this is exactly what we receive in his sacraments.

The Feast of Easter, the glorious resurrection of our Lord, which we are still celebrating in its second week, brings us to reflect on at least three sacraments. The first is Baptism. From our second reading St. Peter tells us that God "in his great mercy gave us a new birth unto hope which draws its life from the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, a birth to an imperishable inheritance." Baptism is indeed the sacrament of birth in Christian life. Through baptism we receive the divine life which is in Jesus. We receive it as a seed, something that needs to be nourished that it may grow and develop and bear fruit. This brings us now to these second sacrament of Easter which is the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

In the first reading St. Luke tells us "The brethren devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the breaking of bread and to the prayers." Here we see how the early Christian communities' reverence to the breaking of the bread, the Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is meant to

develop within as the seed of eternal life. It is the food and drink of our soul. In this Mass we will receive our glorified Lord in Holy Communion.

The third sacrament of Easter is penance. In our gospel today we are told that Jesus in the night of the resurrection breathed on the apostles and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." This is a saying whose true meaning we must be careful to understand. One thing is certain -- no man can forgive any other man's sin. But another thing is equally certain -- it is the great privilege and obligation of the Church to convey the message of God's forgiveness to men. Catholic Tradition has rightly seen in this occasion the origin of the sacrament of penance. The sacrament of penance restores within us the life of the resurrected Christ if we lose it by mortal sin, and it gives us strength to combat temptations and evil inclinations:

In these three sacraments of Easter we neither see Jesus our Lord with our bodily eyes nor touch with our bodily hands. It is faith that makes the great difference. It is in faith that we are convinced that in the sacraments Jesus makes the very first move to establish a more intimate union with us and it is in this same faith that we say "My Lord and my God."

And so as we continue with our celebration, let us thank the Lord for the great gift of faith. Let us also ask him to increase this faith in us. Let us once again in ourselves renew our baptismal promises and examine our attitude towards the sacrament of reconciliation. Do we approach this sacrament frequently to receive our Lord's forgiveness? In a very special way, let us also thank the Lord for the Holy Eucharist and ask Him to continually nourish our life that we may give glory to Him in the service of our brothers. (*Sem. Ariel G. Musngi*)

**Third Sunday of Easter, April 29, 1990**  
(Ac 2:14, 22-28; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-33)

My dear brothers and sisters in the Triumphant Risen Lord Jesus, two weeks ago we began this fifty-day celebration which recalls the life of our Fathers in the Faith nearly two thousand years ago and evokes the Eternal Life promised by Christ and shared by us and all who truly believe in Him. Many years ago I begged of the Lord that my whole life on earth (the rest of it at least) might be one long Paschaltide. I am not shy,

therefore, to share with you that this is my favorite season of the year these are my favorites Sundays, my favorite Scripture readings.

How glorious it is to hear in Acts, in the first apostolic sermon ever preached, how carried away St. Peter (newly endowed with the Holy Spirit) is with the Person of the Risen Christ. Devout Jew that he is, the Prince of the Apostles, Christ's first Vicar on earth, once he has proclaimed the Saving Good News that the One put to death by men has been raised up by God, cannot contain himself in his own words. St. Peter shouts a hymn of joy, Psalm 16, verses 8 to 11.

The same Apostle's preaching (taken from what he said many years later) is reiterated in the second reading. Here in his First Letter, Peter tells us that the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the source, means and very price of our ransom and redemption. Christ's Blood (because of His Resurrection) becomes as well the foundation of our faith and hope.

We are not always on a Petrine high over Christ. Sometimes we walk disconsolate like the disciples going to Emmaus. But Jesus is always ready and willing to appear to us in the Gospel. He is ready and willing to explain Himself as Word to us in the light of the written word of Scripture. He is always gracious enough to be our guest. Best of all, everyday He is willing to reveal Himself as broken Bread.

How should we react to Jesus Christ as Risen Lord? By celebrating His Sacred Mysteries in this Mass here and now! He wants us to proclaim His death and rising. He wants us to sing psalms and canticles. He wants us to taste His Precious Blood and know we are not what we were before but something much better in His sight. For He brings us, He gives us faith, He gives us hope, best of all, He is PRESENT to us.

It is true that not all of us can preach sermons or write letters like St. Peter. But we can tell the Good News by our basic attitude, our mild (and even silent) reflections and the good deeds of our lives. If our faith is deep and strong, if our hope is real we shall love with the love of the burning hearts of the Emmaus pair. And we, who have seen the Lord, who have eaten His broken body and drunk His Precious Blood can rush to every Jerusalem gathering and hear our witness confirmed "It is true! The Lord is Risen and has appeared to Simon." He has appeared to one. Has he appeared to you? (*Roman Carter, O.P.*)



## FROM OUR READERS

### Jubilarian's Hobby Tips

*Venancio Portillo*

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Just like all other human beings, a priest needs some time to himself: time for reflection, for relaxation and for indulging in his favorite pastime. Aside from our divine calling, hobbies are worthwhile means to pass our spare time while at the same time, we enrich ourselves with priceless knowledge relevant to our interest. I am telling you this from my almost fifty years of life and my experiences as a priest and a hobbyist. Priesthood and hobbies can surely go together. My ordination was on December 29, 1940. Thanks for it go to the late Fr. Jose Croonen, MSC. He was for eighteen years the Parish Priest of my birthplace Tago, Surigao del Sur. He solemnized my parents' marriage in 1910. He baptized me in 1912, and he sent me to the Jesuit Seminary at P. Faura Street, Ermita, Manila in 1925. I can boast of a very long list of assignments from my MSC Superiors. I have seen and set foot on practically the entire Philippine Archipelago for my assignments took me to various parishes in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. I also had a sojourn in far away Holland where I made my postulancy and novitiate and even part of my scholasticate. Then there were brief stopovers in Belgium, France, (including Lourdes, Germany, Switzerland, Italy (including Rome). Of all these assignments, my stint as retreat master in the parishes of Surigao del Norte and del Sur, sparked my interest and inspired me to start what is now known as *FR. PORTILLO'S CONCHOLOGICAL EXHIBIT*. This happened when during my holy retreats to the coastal towns and barrios of Surigao del Norte and del Sur, I noticed that the ordinary or common viand of people in the area, consisted of fish and shellfish the shells of which were just thrown away

empty. It was then that I requested my retreatants to collect the empty shells and to send them to me at the MSC Regional House in Surigao City. Their willingness and cooperation contributed much to the realization of the conchological exhibit which I subsequently provided with international sea shell catalogues, books, encyclopedias, pamphlets and literature on sea shells from America, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, India, Europe and Oceania. Believe it or not, some of the rarest and costliest sea shells in the world such as Gloria Maris or Glory of the Sea, the Cypraea Aurantium or Golden Cowry and many other rare ones are found in the Philippine Deep, which extends from Davao up to Samar. Its deepest depth is just five miles off Pilar, which is 1950 and 1956, was part of parish of General Luna. It may be worth mentioning that the biggest Dueterium deposit in the world is on the East side of Pilar. In the beginning what was just an improvised "Fr. Portillo's Conchological Exhibit" in time became a tourist attraction. Natives and foreigners alike came to see and inquire about the exhibit. I have met and interviewed Americans, Japanese, Germans and other Europeans who took interest in my Conchological Exhibit.

Another hobby of mine is philately or stamp collections. I inherited my philately from the late Fr. Gerardo Tangelder, MSC, who himself inherited the same from the original stamp collection of late Fr. Jose Croonen, MSC. As of now my Philippine stamp collection has been turned over to our dear Father Provincial, Fr. Lope Castillo, MSC, to insure its continuity. However the other 60 volumes of international stamps are still with me, waiting for inheritors. As I am a member of the MSC Community, all these philatelical and conchological collection I have acquired are the property of our MSC Province.

My love for plants and flowers has made me a self-made horticulturist. From the beautiful flowers in our big garden to the fruit-bearing trees surrounding us which I diligently planted and tended with the help of our boys, I see the infinite wisdom and bounty of the Creator of things visible and invisible. Interested people are welcome to learn some of the techniques in planting, cultivating and propagating flowers and trees which include the knowledge of medicinal plants and their uses. I am planning to classify and identify our horticulture products for the people's references and facility in learning. Another hobby of mine which is quite expensive is photography. I learned the techniques of taking good pictures from books and literature on the subject. I am gratefully thankful to Fr. Pete Arguillas MSC who together with his MSC Confreres in our Philip-

pine Mission in Korea, sent me a very modern camera equipped with "dater" which prints the exact date of each picture I take as I take it! My latest hobby is numismatics or collecting of coins of different countries.

On top of all these hobbies I have mentioned which help me persevere in my Priesthood is the one I learned from the pioneer Jesuit educators when I entered San Jose Seminary, Manila, way back in 1925. I have determinedly kept until now "to avoid close contact with the development of close relationships with the opposite sex." How am I doing it? I do not employ women in my immediate parish administration as helpers: After all, I have "mayordomo" my sacristan mayor and my convent boys! Some people might have judged me as a woman-hater, for even my own youngest sister, Sister Adelina Portillo, S.P.C. the ninth in our family who is at present the Sister Superior of St. Michael's College in Cantilan, Surigao del Sur, had to stay in my school teacher's residence, not in my convent, when she visited me in General Luna. I am not a "woman-hater". Neither I am a homo-sexual. I am just following, what our the Bible teaches. After God created Adam he taught (Genesis: 2:18-25; "Yaweh God, said: "It is not good that MAN should be alone. I will make HIM a HELPMATE. So from the soil Yaweh God, fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These He brought to the MAN to see what HE would call them; each one to be at the NAME the MAN would give it. The MAN gave NAMES to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But NO HELPMATE suitable for MAN was found for HIM. So Yaweh God made the MAN fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his RIBS and enclosed it in flesh. Yaweh God built the RIB He has taken from the MAN into a WOMAN and brought HER to the MAN. The MAN exclaimed: "THIS AT THE LAST 13 BONE OF MY BONES AND FLESH FROM MY FLESH; THIS IS TO BE CALLED WOMAN FOR THIS WAS TAKEN FROM MAN". This is why a man leaves father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they BECOME ONE BODY.) That man and wife become one body in Marriage. I am not married being a priest. God willing I shall be celebrating my Golden Jubilee in the priesthood on December 29, 1990. Let me enjoin you to thank the Good Lord with me for giving this length of time to serve him faithfully and wholeheartedly. THE LORD BE PRAISED \_ SACERDOS IN AETERNIUM secundum ordinem Melchisedek!. AMEN!

# OFF THE PRESS

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