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## Preparing Priests for the Third Millennium

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*Vicente G. Cajilig, O.P.*

The office of the Assistant Secretary General of the Asian Bishops' Conference encouraged formators (rectors and spiritual directors of Asian seminaries) to continue and develop the projects for priestly formation which had been started earlier; the projects refer to the Congresses of Rectors and Spiritual Directors held respectively in 1988 and 1989. As a response to this encouragement the Joint Colloquium of Rectors and Spiritual Directors was held this year (February 9-15, 1990). Ten Asian countries were represented.

The theme of the Colloquium was "Priestly Formation: Interiorization and Integration." This theme will be one of the topics to be discussed during the coming Synod of Bishops this year in Rome which will dwell on "Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day."

Prior to the synodal meeting in Rome, the bishops of Asia will meet in Indonesia in July. Schedule is set for the discussion of the stand of Asian bishops regarding the points raised in the *lineamenta*. Questions such as how Asian Churches should work for more vocation, how the clergy should conduct themselves, and how they exercise their ministry considering the present and the beginning of the third millennium, will be dealt with.

The *Boletín* is publishing the major papers delivered and discussed during the said Joint Colloquium. This is our own contribution to the preparation of the next Roman Synod.

We are also publishing the statement of the Colloquium containing recommendations to the FABC, the bishops, the formators and the seminarians. The recommendations are reflective of major needs which should be attended to if we want to have fitting ministers of God for the third millennium.

## To Grow to the Measure of the Stature of Christ

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Godehard Schaller, S.V.D.

### The Measure Is Christ

The topic proposed to me asks for a "self-examination on growth in holiness, founded on the biblical ground that each believer can grow in personal holiness, but only if such is accompanied by the spirit of Jesus."

To any spiritual existence and to any spiritual community belongs that old-fashioned word "holiness" or "sanctity." For any priest, yet also for any other Christian, there is no way to God, if not to strive for holiness, without the desire for perfection. From the Sermon on the Mount (cf. *Mt* 5-7) and from other sayings of Jesus, we know well that sanctity does not mean just any product of our own efforts; but it consists in the fact that we are sanctified, consecrated to him who is the totally other; he who is not under our calculations; he who alone is the Holy, having the source in himself. And we are sanctified when we are consecrated to him in such a way, that there is only he in us. Since we are called to holiness (cf. *1 Pet* 1:15), it is meant in this sense, that really all (!) are called to live in such a way, that nothing remains in us than he. "Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution, so that you can put on the new self, that has been created in God's way, in the goodness and holiness of truth" (*Eph* 4:24). And in the Benedictus we pray every morning: "that he would grant us . . . to serve him in holiness and virtue in his presence, all our days" (*Lk* 1:75).



Usually, when we organize seminars, colloquiums etc., we try to get our panel of resource persons, the specialists or experts from all fields, even import them, if needed. It has to be; but easily we forget that the only formator for our field of activity, the environs of priestly life and formation, can only be one: Christ himself. And the primary source of our reflections has to be his teaching. So often we formators and administrators have rules and regulations ready to be applied to those in formation, and we forget that we ourselves have to be formed, by constantly reaching out towards growth in holiness, towards that fullness of maturity which St. Paul calls the "measure of the stature of Christ."

The word is taken from the exhortations of the letter to the Ephesians, where Paul elaborates on our call to unity and our new life in Christ. "And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the Body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself" (*Eph* 4:11-13).

## On a Journey

When I started to put down my thoughts, it happened to be the feast of the Epiphany. The liturgy of this feast can give us some light for our reflections. Epiphany reminds us that the Magi came from the East to adore Jesus. On that occasion God's plan for mankind was disclosed, his plan to call the pagans to share the inheritance as the chosen people, to form with them the same Body. This plan has been concealed from previous generations, and has now been revealed to the holy apostles and prophets (cf. *Eph* 3:5). The feast of Epiphany recalls a past event, but it celebrates a dimension of salvation history which is always present, a dimension in which we are involved. We too have been called to share the same inheritance, to form the one Body of Christ.

The Epiphany, therefore, celebrates the process of salvation: God's initiative and man's response. Into the dough of humanity God

has thrown the leaven of his Son. Like leavened dough, humanity begins to rise, allowing itself to be penetrated by this new life. It sets out to express this new life fully.

The liturgy of Epiphany throws light upon the social aspect of this process. The peoples converge on Jerusalem with their gifts (cf. *Is* 60:1-6); the pagans are called to form the one Body of Christ (cf. *Eph* 3:6); all nations and races find their unity by gathering together towards Jesus. However, this presupposes the individual dimension: each people draws close to Jesus to the extent that the individual members of the people draw close to him.

It is obvious that this journey towards Jesus is spiritual, not geographical. We draw close to Jesus to the extent that we allow ourselves to be penetrated and illumined by his light, by his word, by him. We draw close to him to the extent that we are clothed with Christ (cf. *Col* 3:10 and others), that we grow in him and he grows in us.

Every human group has to travel a great distance if it is to arrive at Jesus and be enlightened by him, if it is to become his presence, revealing him gradually. This distance is what separates two different ways of living together. On the one hand, there is a living together which is full of tensions, of divisions, of conflicts, which can be camouflaged or even structured, a life in common held together, for the most part, by structures and common interests. On the other hand, there is a life in common which is a living unity "in the name of Jesus." This is permeated by love. It is a life in which Jesus can express himself and reveal himself. A group will cross the distance between these two life-styles if, and only to the extent that, its members undertake to do so. They must first cross the terrain of the "old man," with all that this implies, before they enter into the promised land of the "new man," who is Jesus.

The Epiphany celebrates the dynamic process of the Kingdom of God in us, who are clothed with Christ, and in our midst, since we are many in one Body. It is the feast of gathering together in Christ all peoples, all mankind, all the members of every community; it is the feast of the convergence in Christ of every aspect of life, of all man's powers of life — until he reaches the fullness of Christ's stature, until

the final Epiphany, when "Christ will be all in all" (*Col 3:11*), and all shall be one in him.

## **Baptized into Christ**

Scripture presents the Christian life as a passage from the reign of law to the reign of grace. Since we are children, we are still being taught until we come of age (*Gal 3:24f*). The night is far gone, the day is at hand (*Rom 13:12*). With our baptism the night has passed, but it is not yet daytime.

For Paul, baptism was above all an invitation to a new life. Baptism binds one to Christ and the order of life represented by him. Through baptism one leaves behind everything in such a way, that Paul speaks of a death that one has to undergo in order to enter into this new life. The Christian dies to the Law and to sin (*Gal 2:19*). Thus he identifies himself with Christ in his death and resurrection. The new life which the baptized receives brings with it a real change of morals (*2 Cor 6:11*). Paul's religious experience near Damascus colours his understanding of baptism, which becomes for him the realization of his faith in Christ Jesus. It takes a certain maturity for the person to step into this new life which, after all, means a total surrender to Christ and the Church. Through baptism we are the children of God in Jesus, but we are still minors. Baptism has given us new life, but only in a seed; this new life needs to be developed. The new life into which the baptized enters is not a mere individualistic experience. One is received into a new people, into a new community. St. Paul insists very strongly on our communal life in Christ. And he requires that we live this life also in our way of behaving and acting; in fact, we must be increasingly like this. From the way in which he expresses himself, it seems clear, that for him baptism is not a magic rite which transforms the individual and the community in a complete, definitive way, as it casts a spell. On the contrary, baptism is only the beginning of a gradual process of transformation and growth. It is the fruit of the powerful interaction of the Holy Spirit, who is the vital force of this new life, and of our personal and communal efforts.

## Being a Christian

On the part of the individual, this does not mean doing things, launching oneself into activity, observing laws and commandments, behaving according to Christian customs and practices. It means being Christian, and being always more Christian, that is being other Christs, being Love incarnate.

Some years ago I was teaching in a college seminary. And I was taking up the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of the Second Vatican Council. Going through the requirements asked of a lay apostolate, I asked myself: What has there to be added in the formation of a seminarian, or a future priest? I could only say, that if someone is able to live those precepts, we would have the "ideal seminarian," because he would be the "Christian of our time," upon whom we would have only to bestow the sacrament of Holy Orders.

I quote: "Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the Word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom we 'live, and move, and have our being' (Ac 17:28), seek his will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they be close to us or strangers, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal" (Vatican II, *Decree in the Apostolate of the Laity*, nr. 4).

Basing itself on scriptural passages, the document continues to point out the attitudes which should be "natural" for a Christian of our time: "Impelled by divine charity, they do good to all men . . . laying aside 'all malice and all deceit and pretense, and envy, and all slander,' and thereby draw men to Christ. This charity of God, which is 'poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us,' enables the laity to express the true spirit of the Beatitudes in their lives. Following Jesus who was poor, they are neither depressed by the lack of temporal goods nor puffed up by their abundance. Imitating Christ who was humble, they have no obsession for empty honors, but seek to please God rather than men, ever ready to leave all things for Christ's sake, and to suffer persecution for justice' sake. For they remember the words of the Lord, 'if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'" (*ibid.*).

And then as a kind of admonition, the paragraph concludes with some characteristics expected from a Christian: "They should also hold in esteem professional skill, family and civic spirit, and the virtues relating to social behavior, namely, honesty, justice, sincerity, kindness, and courage, without which there can be no true Christian life" (*ibid.*).

## Supernatural Brotherhood

On the part of forming a seminary community, it does not mean so much being well organized according to Canon Law and the rules for the Houses of Formation. It means being the Body of Christ, being always more so the Body of Christ, being mutual love, being Love incarnate — a lived unity which makes real what Jesus promised: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (*Mt 18:20*). It means very concretely, that when we are three together, we are actually four. But his presence does not come "automatically," but it is the result of living the New Commandment of Jesus "Love one another as I have loved you" (*Jn 15:12*), in a radical way, to the letter, so to speak, which produces in the soul a real qualitative change and becomes a community witness which does not go unnoticed. It gives meaning and life to that supernatural brotherhood, which we are called to live as priest.

The Eucharistic consecration occurs immediately: it is enough that the bread be bread, and the wine be wine. Our transformation into Christ, however, is progressive. It lasts a lifetime, and will probably require some extra time in purgatory.

It is important that we realize that: whatever our age, we have not yet arrived at our destination. We are still becoming what we ought to be. We are always in formation, even if we are eighty years old, even if we are in charge of formation in a seminary or any other formation house. The formation of the formators seems to me the primary importance in all colloquiums and seminars which talk on the formation of future priests.

## Being Formators

We have to be, rather than do: to be Jesus, to be "Love incarnate," in such a way that what we do gives expression to him, rather than to ourselves. That is why we must constantly compare ourselves with him, with his word, with his example. We must ask ourselves, what would be his thoughts, his feelings, his behaviour in each situation we find ourselves confronted with, and we must try to shape up to what the Spirit says within us.

We have to adopt the spiritual attitude of St. Paul. "Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ" (*1 Cor* 11:1), he encourages us; and he offers himself as an example: "I do not claim that I have already succeeded . . . the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and to do my best to reach what is ahead. So I run straight towards the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above" (*Phil* 3:12-14). Saul, who was seized by Christ on the road to Damascus, becomes Paul who presses forward, to try to lay hold of Christ, who slips away before him like an unattainable ideal. At the very last, Paul tries to lessen the gap between his way of living, of acting and reacting, and that of Jesus. This Paul is the model for what must be our spiritual outlook. If we maintain this attitude, we will progress day by day, we will grow in Jesus. We will succeed in seeing the love of God not only in the beauty of created things, in the successful results of some activities, in rich insights and inspirations, in the affection and kindness of our brothers. We see also the love of God in disasters, in sufferings, in failures, in aridity, and in misunderstandings.

Since there was a cross standing on Calvary and a God who died on it, all the pain and sufferings have a name: "Jesus Crucified." It is the fathomless mystery, the infinite suffering that Jesus experienced as a man. Only those who live supernatural love can have some comprehension of it. He gave the measure of his love for inasmuch as he wanted to take on himself the separation that kept us far from the Father and from one another, and after crying out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me," he was able to entrust himself into God's hands (cf. *Mt* 27:46 and *Lk* 23:46).

In loving this God, Jesus Forsaken, in all evils that surround us, a Christian finds the motivation and strength to face them, to overcome them, and to offer in this way their own personal remedy. This Suffering Jesus is thus the key to restore our union with God and with one another, and to heal every division.

## Doing God's Will

Our sensitivity to the Will of God will increase. We will recognize it not only in explicit commands, in laws, in the great events of history. We will see it in moments of inspiration, in the ordinary events of each day. We will not only accept the will of God; we will seek it out and love it, since God and his will are identical. We will not only carry it out, but live it in such a way that we identify with it ever more closely. The more I let myself fall into God's will alone, the more I will emerge as that person, as which he has thought me to be. A saint is a person who loves God above everything else. Therefore he does what God wants from him and is ready to do God's will. We could say that Pope John XXIII was such a saint, who was living according to this norm: "I must do everything, say every prayer, obey the rule, as if I had nothing else to do, as if the Lord had put me in this world for the sole purpose of doing that thing well, as if my sanctification depended on that alone, without thinking of anything else" (*Journal of a Soul*).

Gradually, as God's will becomes everything to us, we will develop an awareness, that is ever more acute and forceful, that the essence of God's will for us is that we ourselves are love in the concrete circumstances of our lives. And this love will grow stronger and spread. It will become more natural and spontaneous for us to love everyone, our fellow priests, the faculty members, the employees and helpers, the seminarians entrusted to us. We will be the ones to love first by putting ourselves at their service and to love without expecting results or anything in return; to love in a concrete way, seizing opportunities to console, to help, to serve, to waste time with someone, to set aside our plans and programs, even our life, making thus the New Commandment of Jesus the measure of our love: "as I." We will be able to keep our eyes and ears open to our brothers, even when we feel crushed by the effort, torn apart in body and soul, sunk

in the darkness of agony and the feeling of loneliness, failure and desolation. What remains at the end of every day is how much we have loved.

## The Word and the Eucharist

In a parallel manner, our relationship with the Word of God will develop. From being an object of study and meditation, it will become a call to concrete action. Instead of being a slogan, something proposed to us, it will become a living communion with the essential Word, Jesus. We will also allow ourselves to be penetrated by him, to let him live in us. It is through "living the Word" that we acquire a new mentality towards the full stature in Christ. The Word makes us free. It purifies, converts and brings comfort and joy. It gives wisdom, produces works, discloses vocations. The Word generates Christ in our soul and in the soul of others. It is in this Word where Christ, the Teacher, becomes tangible in formation.

"Anyone who has my words and puts them into practice is like the wise man who built his house on rock" (Mt 7:24). "There is no word of God that should not be fulfilled; and everything that has been said, carries within itself the need to be put into practice. The Words of God are decrees" (St. Hilary).

And I add one word from St. Clement of Rome from his second letter to the Corinthians: "When the pagans hear from our lips the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness. But when they observe that our actions are unworthy of the words we utter, they turn to blasphemy, saying it is only a myth and deception."

In a similar way, our relationship with the Eucharist will mature: from faith in the presence of Jesus and the cult of adoration, it will develop a practical insight into the meaning of the Sacrament, through which Jesus says to us: "I am your life, live Me!"

The Fathers of the Church have often put the Word of God and the Eucharist on the same level. Vatican II takes up this idea when it states in the Decree on Liturgy: "The Church has always venerated



the divine Scriptures 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 Liturgy."

No other mystery of our faith has so much to do with our spiritual growth than the Eucharist. Through it man's unity with God is fully consummated, as well as the unity among men, and man's unity with the entire creation. But it also presupposes a life with Christ, and a life based on his Word. Its celebration, actually, presupposes Christ's presence among his followers, and it helps to sustain and to build up this presence of his. The Second Vatican Council puts it in few words: "The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth, that is Christ Himself" (*PO* nr. 5).

Our seminarians should one day be, what we priests are already, ministers of the Eucharist. Maybe through the daily routine of saying Masses, we can lose sight of the transforming power of this presence of Jesus. Yet it is precisely the Eucharist that forms the family of the children of God, brothers of Jesus and of one another. Says Pope Paul VI: "... the Eucharist was instituted to make us brothers; so that out of strangers who were scattered apart and indifferent towards one another, we become united, equals, and friends. It is given to change us, from an apathetic, egoistic mass, from people divided and hostile towards one another to a people, a true people, full of faith and love, one heart and one soul."

## Growing as One Body

Whatever our center of formation might be like, even if it is already somehow beautiful or blessed with success, it has not yet arrived at perfection. It, too, is always on the road towards what it should be; it is always in formation. Every member of our institute, even the most recent arrival, or the one doing the most insignificant job, has a responsibility to make his own contribution to its formation as the Body of Christ.

Grateful for the brothers God has put at our side, and for the community in which he has placed us, we must strive to make it even

Grateful for the brothers God has put at our side, and for the community in which he has placed us, we must strive to make it even more beautiful, ever more the living, harmonious Body of Christ, a community increasingly "united in his name." We must not allow ourselves to lose our bearings and wander off course, because of all that needs to be done, all that has to be travelled: We must strive, by our presence and behaviour, to ease and make supernatural our relationship with one another, gradually smoothing out and banishing all that divides, and strengthening what unites. We have to encourage participation and the spirit of joint responsibility and collaboration. We must increasingly involve all in our institutions of formation in the effort to lay hold of Jesus personally, and to affirm him in the community, so that it is always he who acts in the activities of the individuals, he who expresses himself in the various features of community life and formation.

St. Grignon de Montfort says that Jesus will become flesh in us to the extent that he finds Mary in us. The essential Marian devotion is life: to reproduce Mary in ourselves. She is the disciple *par excellence*, the perfect Christian, our model. Her primary function was that of being the mother of the physical Christ, and now of spiritually generating Christ among persons. We must make her feelings ours; to adopt her spiritual disposition; to live her virtues; to be silent like her, so that the word may take shape in us and through us; to be empty like her, so that we can be filled with the Holy Spirit, "who will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you" (*Jn 14:26*).

"Draw us to you, and we will run after you, attracted by the fragrance of your ointment."

# Interiorization of the Components of Formation

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*Ernest D. Piryns, C.I.C.M.*

## THE PERSON OF THE FORMATOR — AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Asia, a huge combination of positive and negative factors: great cultures and great world religions, gigantic possibilities and responsibilities. A servant of Jesus Christ and the Church, a son of Asia or an expatriate missionary, should be able to look deeply into the Asian realities. He should try to interiorize their values. Especially if he is responsible for the formation of younger Asians, willing to serve, he must be able to enter into an empathic dialogue with this wonderful continent and let its values sink deeply into his own heart; then only he can make them conscious of what they really are: not just Christians in Asia but Asian Christians: born, nurtured, grown up and rooted in Asia and in God.

### 1. The openness of a "Christian in the making"

I start from a double assumption: we are openness to more than we are now and we are Christians in the making. The two parts of the assumption are interconnected; because we are openness to the more, we are always in the process of change towards the better, and in our case, our being Christians has not yet reached its completion. Let me delineate a little more sharply: "We are Christians in the making who have not yet found completely their home in Christianity." Are we not a little bit like the Buddha, who left his home and became homeless

in search of the truth? This does not mean that we are no Christians at all.

It means first of all that all of us are essentially openness to the reality around us, to people of the same faith, our Christian brothers and sisters, to people of other faiths, other cultures, etc. This brings us closer to each other and it is because we are close, that we are able to enter into a real dialogue with each other. I consider this to be crucial for a formator; he must be open for communication, mutual esteem, exchange of thoughts and sharing of vision about the road to follow that all of us are seeking or called to seek. This dialogue becomes a shared investigation of the truth we all want to follow.

It means in the second place that, because we are openness towards the more and let us call now this "more" God —we are never fully Christians in the sense that we may become complacent and say: "I can rest now; the struggle is over; I have reached what I wanted to reach; I *am* a Christian." We will always be Christians in the making and the formator should be conscious of it. This calls for prudence and humility. It prevents him from being too much imposing upon his disciple, from demanding maybe too much rigid obedience and not giving enough freedom for self-realization.

Both parts of my statement "the openness of a Christian in the making" are obviously very general and vague and need some more concretization.

Everybody experiences himself as a specific member of a community, small or great. He speaks its language, shares its concepts and adopts its way of life. He measures spontaneously everything by the standards of his own people or ethos and this allows us to speak of ethnocentrism as something familiar to all human beings. The term ethnocentrism has to be understood positively and not in an anti-universalistic and nationalistic sense. At the same time, when using the term ethnocentrism in its right sense, we are of course speaking of cultural relativity. One universal culture does not exist,

but there exist many cultures through which healthy ethnocentrism express themselves.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that the openness of an Asian Christian in the making has to express itself through the screen of Asian cultures. Although the Asian scene is very much varied because of its religious pluriformity sitting at the heart of a cultural pluriformity, it is possible to draw some general lines, valid for the greater part of Asia and for Asian Christians and Non-Christians. Formators should be anxious to stay as close as possible to the Asian mentality, remolded, crystallized and re-expressed through the screen of the values of the message of Jesus. Formation as such must be characterized by the fine qualities of Asia and must be Christian at the same time. There is thus no way to escape the acceptance that the message of Jesus has a critical function in the Asian context.

## 2. Religious experience and religion in Asia

The basis of all religion is experience. The Holy manifests itself and calls upon man. Human beings are able to respond to the call of the Holy and in this sense a dialectical process originates. This call-answer is taking place deep in the human heart and we may assume that the answer to the call of the Holy is rather pre-worded or unworded; it is couched in the intuitive experience as such and is overwhelmingly subjective, although there should not be necessarily a total lack of objectivity. From the very moment we try to make explicit this basic experience, we start using words and formulate creeds, theologies, etc. Religion comes about. This is in a certain sense a process of objectivation and there is always a danger of emptying the experience and of completely extrapolating it. We may not forget that, when it comes to religion, the *inward facts* or what the religious content *means* experientially to somebody, is more important than the outward facts or the objective religious data. Of course, I do not deny that God is not present in the religious systems as such, but I am convinced that the dialectics between God and man is stronger in the

<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Dupré, "Ethnocentrism and the Challenge of Cultural Relativity," *Concilium*, New York, no. 135 (1980), 3-13.

process of the basic religious experience (though not necessarily more conscious) than in the religion itself that can be so easily separated from daily life — and in fact is in the case of so many Christians living in western countries.

To be a Christian is to participate in the dialectics between God and us and these dialectics are a divine-humane complex. To fail to see the human element would be absurd and to fail to see the divine element would be obtuse.<sup>2</sup> This presupposes of course that one is sensitive to God and also to the manner the Holy appears in the experience of people of other faiths, in Asia.

In Asia, the validity of a religion is tested to religious experience. If it does not reflect the experience itself, it loses its influence on daily life. This is a danger threatening with petrification all established religions. People react spontaneously to this phenomenon by the creation of new religious movements that bring back to life the nearness of Ultimate Reality.

The formator has to cultivate the feeling for religious experience in himself and his disciple without forgetting the interrelatedness between experience and religion itself. He may not allow that systems, structures and rationalization supersede intuition.

### 3. Naturalness and religion

The way people in Asia experience the reality is not compartmentalized, but total and all-embracing. Compartmentalization of the reality is the result of exaggerated rationalization and destroys the unity of all things with the cosmos, with the human and the divine. Notwithstanding all rationalization with its technological inroads, the divine and the human are still connected with each other in Asia. This basic unity could be called Asia's naturalness. The term itself "naturalness or nature" does not designate the same as "natural sciences or the laws of nature." The underlying assumption of these

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Towards a World Theology*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1981, 34.

latter terms denote a subject (man)-object (nature) relationship and refers to nature observable by man as if he were standing outside of nature, as opposed to it. Naturalness or nature in the Asian sense are understood as a reality in which man participates and with which he is in harmony. Asians want to be one with nature; they want to be natural.<sup>3</sup> This way of viewing the reality finds clear expressions in Buddhism and philosophical Taoism.

The great Zen-master Dogen (1200-1253) says that the truth which people are in search for is nothing but the world of our daily experience. That is why he can write the following statements that run completely along the lines of real Zen Buddhism that accepts the omni-presence of Ultimate Reality in everything: "impermanence is Buddhahood; the impermanence of grass, trees and forests is verily Buddhahood; the impermanence of human body and mind is verily Buddhahood; these mountains, rivers and earth are all the sea of Buddhahood."<sup>4</sup> Dogen gives witness to his integration in the totality of nature.

Philosophical Taoism has something very similar. A human being is inclined to impose himself on the others and the world. The Taoist calls this "aggression." Through introspection and self-knowledge one can discover what one really is: part and parcel of the eternal Tao or the ongoing order of this world and cosmos, of the hidden power that makes the cosmos move, of the highest principle of meaning, existence and morality. When going into oneself, one finds his original self, his own naturalness. The result is eternal tranquility and the dropping of all imposition and aggression; one melts together with the Tao and henceforth acts naturally, lets go himself, without analysis and without judgment. One just abides in the Tao and becomes absorbed into it.<sup>5</sup>

All this has a deep religious meaning: world and humanity are rooted in their naturalness which is a way of being. I did not mention here the term "creation". Indeed, the monistic religions of Asia have

<sup>3</sup>Hans Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness. Foundations for a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*, New York, Paulist Press, 1980, 101-106.

<sup>4</sup>Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Asian Peoples: India - China - Tibet - Japan*, Honolulu, The Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1974, 351-352.

<sup>5</sup>Holmes Welch, *Taoism. The Parting of the Way*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1966.

no theology of creation; the cosmos has in fact no beginning and no end; there is no divine act through which the cosmos came into being. If these religions speak of creator-gods, they use a popular symbolic language that refers to Ultimate Reality that always was and always will be. The Zen-Buddhist and Taoist would simply say: "things are so because they are so; they are like that, because they are like that."

This is very different from Christianity and all other monotheistic religions with their basic emphasis on creation, but I do not think that we can reject outright this naturalness. There is no problem in accepting that our innermost core is present within all reality. After all, also the God of Christianity is not sitting on top of his creation; he is related to his creatures. Since creation, God is no more a solitary being who is the noble prisoner of his own glory; he has become a God who is related to us in the most intimate way possible. This relatedness, I think, is not just that God accepts us and considers us to be worthy of his love; there is more than that. He is the most intimate core of ourselves and of everything and not just somebody who touches and pushes us forward every now and then. We are anchored in God; we are in him; has this not certain similarities with the Asian religious naturalness?

There is a second meaning to naturalness and nature to which I alluded already above. We speak of "the natural world" as the world shaped and changed by man through technology which is of course not bad in itself. There is, however, a danger that we separate too strictly this "natural world" from its "natural source" or basis which is the divine in the eyes of the Christians. If so, we would create for ourselves a world without relatedness to God and that would be disastrous. A God divorced from our human joys and sufferings would be no-God at all. The world would be a desolate place where only secularism reigns. We would be left in the cold without firm axis upon which we can rely. A concomitant pitiful consequence would be that we would have to wait till we cross the barriers of death in order to find fulfillment as the reward for a life of suffering and pain.

#### 4. History and religion

Connected with the "natural world" as second to "naturalness" and "nature" is history. The "natural world" that we can dominate by



means of our interference, finds of course its origin that greater reality of "naturalness and nature." We can shape and change the "natural world" and this is at the basis of concrete history as an evolutive process. This natural world and the world of history are important for the Asian Christians vis a vis their relationships with people of other faiths. Since these religions have no theology of creation, their concept of time and history is very different from the Christian one. According to Buddhism and Hinduism, the cosmos turns around into endless *kalpas* or immense circles that roughly run through three stages; there is a climbing movement from chaos going to a peak and then down back to destruction and chaos from which a new circle takes shape. A *kalpa* can be called a cosmic unit of time; *kalpas* follow up each other without end. This view of time results in a cyclical view of history and is not historical at all. The same is more or less valid for the archaic religions where man and community have always the mythological acts of the gods. These acts have to be repeated and in doing so, the freshness of pristine time is recreated. Also these religions lack a view of real history.<sup>6</sup>

This shows that human beings are afraid of history as an ongoing process from the past through the present towards the future. It might be better to speak here of the "terror of history," a kind of existential fear for the unknown that seems to upset man who is then, in a certain sense not only anti-historical, but wants to be a-historical.

Christianity is different. The silent God who existed before all ages, has loudly spoken from the moment on he ventured himself into creation; he spoke most clearly in his co-creating Word (Logos) who entered into the created world as Jesus of Nazareth; this Jesus is a historical person who has brought the joyful message about the Reign of God. When the Word became incarnate, God broke the chains of the terror of history, Jesus became theophany or manifestation of God through his life, death and resurrection.<sup>7</sup> In him the Christian can see what he himself can become, because the Risen Lord is the "new

<sup>6</sup>Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History. The Myth of the Eternal Return*, New York, Harper & Row, 1959; *Images and Symbols. Studies in Religious Symbolism*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1969, 57-91; 119-124.

<sup>7</sup>Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 102-112.

Adam," the prototype of a renewed cosmos. He is the future of man. The whole of creation is moving to what he is already. This movement towards the future is linear — or better — spiral. Worshipping Christians commemorate every year in the liturgy the event of the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In Jesus, the eternal return to the very beginning has been demythologized; since his coming, time moves forward while we continuously commemorate what he did for us.

## 5. World and religion

Connected with "history and religion" is the question: "what is the religious value of the world in Asia?" My focus is on Hinduism and Buddhism.

Ignorance about ourselves is a basic principle in both religions. It is our task to dispel our ignorance about ourselves so that we may see (experience) the way we really are.

According to Hinduism, one has to go in search for his true self or *atman* in order to find out that it is the same as the Great all-embracing and all-penetrating Self or *Brahman*.

What is the role of the world in this search? There seem to be two possibilities. The *first* possibility is that this world is accepted as a set of realities to which we attribute a value in as far as it serves as a medium to discover what we really are. In that sense, the world is a preliminary condition that we need and is illusion or *maya* in as far as it helps to keep away from *Brahman* or the transworldly Reality. In this case, the world can have a positive value and contribute to the religious fulfillment of man. The second possibility is that this world is nothing else than optical illusion or *maya* in its full meaning and does not exist in fact. Here the value of the world can become denied, the world becomes a place of darkness and gloom, preventing us to dispel our ignorance about ourselves; it becomes a formidable block on the road to our conscious union with *Brahman*.

In both possibilities, this world in all its concreteness has a deep religious meaning. It is the dwelling place of all of us who are in need of pushing through this material and historical world to the highest

trans-mundane and trans-historical Ultimate Reality. The ideal is then *Sat-Cit-Ananda*; *Brahman-Atman* is eternal being (*Sat*), eternal awareness (*Cit*) and eternal bliss (*Ananda*) which is the same as the discovery of *Tat-Tvam-Asi* or "You are That."

But Hinduism also needs correction, I think, from the message of Jesus that throws a clearer light on this world as God's precious gift to us. However, there is also a warning coming to us from Hinduism. Have we Christians, and especially Western Christians, not become too much attached to this world and its riches? Do we not want to go too much the way of consumerism? Are we not too much profiteering of mother earth? Did we not become too much extrovert and superficial? Hinduism can certainly teach us precious lessons when it comes to asceticism that has become obsolete for many Christians.

Let us now switch over to Buddhism where things are somewhat similar to and somewhat different from Hinduism. Buddhism denies categorically the existence of the self (person). Whatever is, is nothing else than a conglomerate of continuously changing elements, never supported by a substantial core, an Ego, a self. Nothing is stable; everything is contingent, frail and impermanent. But in our ignorance about ourselves, we imagine that we are a self and this wrong conviction is at the root of all our sufferings. In order to eradicate suffering, we must extinguish all desire to be a self and become selfless. The one who thinks that he is a self, has lost his real self which is the no-self. The road to follow to the extinction of desire to be a self is the eightfold path which is a set of moral precepts. Once this extinction is realized, we are no more the subjects of suffering; we are extinguished, enlightened; we have reached *nirvana* (extinction); this is a state that can eventually be realized during this life as was the case of the historical Buddha.

At first sight, this view of life seems to be atheistic, because the Buddha never claimed to have founded a religion and was not interested in metaphysical questions. However, in reality Buddhism is very religious. It points to and accepts *nirvana* as a reality that goes beyond all present day conditions; therefore, it is of a religious order and it is a religious category.

Coming now to both great branches of Buddhism, we can say that *Hinayana* or the Small Vehicle is outer-worldly and tends to be strongly ascetic and monastic, giving practically only to monks and nuns the possibility of reaching enlightenment. *Mahayana* or the Great Vehicle broadens up this possibility for everybody, especially its Japanese Pure Land branches that have become the most liberal interpretation of the message of the Buddha. Generally speaking, both branches of Buddhism, *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*, look upon world and life more or less in the same way as Hinduism. A special position has been reserved, however, for Japanese Buddhism that is a curious mixture of outer- and innerworldliness.

On the one hand, it has left on the Japanese mind a strong sensitivity to impermanence, frailty and contingency that sometimes even leads to nostalgic psychological attitudes together with an inclination to withdraw from the busy market place of the world. On the other hand, Japan has a long tradition of "celebrating" this world, its beauty and positive aspects. However, I do not agree fully with the theory that "the phenomenal is actually the real" as hailed in Japan by the philosophers of the post-Meiji period (1868-1912).<sup>8</sup> Although the Japanese inner-worldliness is very strong, people are able to go beyond the flat horizontal dimension of this world and life, otherwise there would not be a deep concern for spiritual realities like the continual presence of the ancestors, spirits, etc. Of course, a trans-worldly vision is rather weak, especially when it comes to the notion of Absolute Reality. People would have some trouble when asked to give a name to this Absolute. Examples given by the famous Zen-philosopher Nishitani Keiji are: the authentic Being or the authentic Existence (*jitsuzai*) that underlies the world of the phenomena, the Reality I am indebted to (*katajikenai mono*), the Absolute and Immutable (*zettaiteki na mono*) or simply this Something (*nani ka*). It is true, however, that the emphasis is not that much on the beyond-character of Absolute Reality but on its immanence.<sup>9</sup>

A philosophical key-word is *sokushin jōbutsu* (becoming a Buddha alive in the human body) that runs through the whole of

<sup>8</sup>Nakamura, o.c., 350.

<sup>9</sup>Waldenfels, o.c., 99-101.

Japanese Buddhism. Even in these groups where the term is not used, the idea is certainly present. It means that everybody can become enlightened in this world, because Absolute Reality or the Buddha-nature is latently present within us (called *hongaku* — original enlightenment) and can wake up in our consciousness (called *shikaku* — acquired enlightenment) through meditation. If we translate this philosophical notion into popular language, we use the word *ikibotoke* (a living Buddha), so familiar to the adherents of Japan's new religions that move along Buddhistic lines.

The other Asian religions and philosophies like Confucianism, and philosophical Taoism with their strong religious overtones, have always been bent over into the strong Japanese inner-worldliness. The Tao and the Ri, respectively belonging to Taoism and Confucianism, are seen as within us. All this coincides with Japan's own tribal religion — also in its modern forms — that claims that the *kami*-nature (the divine nature) is within us. I was always impressed by the brazenness of the poet, who was living in olden times, and who wrote boldly without hesitation: "the shrine of the *kami* (the gods) is the body of my own." This is an expression of a full-fledged dedication to this world.

If Christianity wants to bring a message to Asia, it should be attentive what regards the Asian insights of world and religion and not discard them as having no value. We should be aware of Christianity's background and tradition. No one will doubt that the model of Christianity brought over to Non-European countries was and unfortunately still is to a large extent a western model. Western philosophy and theology were able to fix God strongly in his transcendental dimension. Could the Asian religions not correct this rather rigid view of God through their view of the immanent dimension of Ultimate Reality? Christians, called to serve the message of Jesus about the Reign of God in Asia, should be enabled to open up their hearts for this kind of encounter of religions.

## 6. Christian mysticism and Asian Non-Christian mysticism

Is there complementarity or radical incomplementarity between Christian and Asian Non-Christian mysticism?

The development of Catholic theology of the religions has its departure in the centuries old johannine Logos-doctrine of the early Church Fathers and apologists who hold that seeds of the Word of God (Logos) are present in the intellect or heart of Non-Christian people. Vatican II has built further upon this Logos-doctrine and came to a positive appreciation of the Non-Christian religions in a special decree.<sup>10</sup> Similar positive ideas are running here and there through other Vatican II documents.

Theology today comes to the obvious conclusion that there is a common basis among Christians and Non-Christians for acceptance by God and also for experiencing him. But how do they experience him? If religion in Asia is indeed more experience and intuition than rationalization and intellectual processes, much more subjectivation than objectivation, what is then the nature of this experience both for the Non-Christian and the Christian? In other words, what is the nature of mysticism in the Asian religions and in Christianity? Maybe an analysis of the mystical process can bring us some clarity.

It seems that there are three phases in the mystical process. During a *first phase*, the mystic, Christian and Non-Christian, face what can be called a personal Ultimate Reality. This is certainly true for the Christian; I think that it is equally true for the Non-Christian who, even trained philosophically or theologically, imagines for himself as a means of practical tool, Ultimate Reality as having a personal structure; with Ultimate Reality he has a kind of personal relationship on the psychological level. For example, a devote Amidist would have no problem in attributing a pseudo-personal character to Amida, the seemingly personal, merciful and compassionate manifestation of impersonal Ultimate Reality, although our Amidist knows that this Amida is in reality backed by Ultimate Reality that is fully impersonal, namely the Buddha-nature. The case of the Christian is different. He knows that he is a person and that God, the Father of Jesus Christ and his Father, is also a person. And he should not necessarily be able to trace this back to the mediating function of Greek philosophy.

<sup>10</sup>*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.*

*In the second phase*, both mystics move more and more deeply into the divine Reality. The encounter of the human being with the divine becomes so close that they seem to coincide, to melt together and to flow over into each other. Where is now the human and where is the divine? One has to read the writings of the mystics in order to know that man and Ultimate Reality are blurring up; the Hindu, the Buddhist or the Taoist have reached here their final goal. They are or have become one. Perfect union has been realized. The Non-Christian mystics, being adherents of monistic religions, have become Absolute Reality themselves. Their life has developed more and more into Absolute Reality until they finally dissolve into its silent timelessness without leaving any trace. During their lifetime, they still appear to us as realities separate from Absolute Reality, but on the deepest ontological level, they are already one with it. The Hindu would say: "I am That" "Brahman is Atman"; the Buddhist would speak of *sokushin jobutsu*: "I have become a living Buddha in this life." When these mystics break through the barrier of death, only the pious remembrance of their personal existence remains, but in fact they have become annihilated. The final goal, union with Absolute Reality, is realized consciously. This union is called *union mysticism*; man and Absolute Reality are ontologically one.

What then about the Christian mystic? They use words and images that are confusing; are they pointing to a complete union with God? There is for example the image of the flame and the candle. If we look at the flame, we see that its core is dark; the more we look away from this core to the sides the color becomes yellow. But where does the dark color cease and make place for the yellow? If the dark core is the image of God and the yellow crown the mystic, where do we draw the dividing line between the two? Has the Christian become God himself like the Hindu and the Buddhist are Ultimate Reality? The Christian faith says that man never becomes God, but that he shares in the divine nature. This means that Christianity aims at the divinization of man (*theiosis*). This presupposes that the divine nature is the ultimate and most intimate constitution of man.<sup>11</sup> Did Augustine not write in his Confessions: "*Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo?*" Our divinization is not to be

<sup>11</sup>R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, New York, Paulist Press, 1978, 89.

understood in terms of perfect union or identification but in terms of participation in the divine nature: "*participes divinae naturae*." When the Christian passes away, it is not just pious remembrance that is left. The Christian has entered definitively into God's eternity and is now enveloped by him. The traditional expression says: we contemplate God face to face. This is what we call participation — or communion mysticism.<sup>12</sup>

Is this second phase then the end of a possible comparison between the experience of a Christian and a Non-Christian mystic? I am not that sure. Absolute Reality in Christianity is a personal category; in the monistic religions it is a transpersonal category. The Christian mystic comes to a *third phase* when he seems to face Absolute Reality not in exactly the same way as in the first phase. Of course, he is still in the presence of a personal God, but this God seems now to be more; he has now a kind of transpersonal character in which the personal is included. This can be of great importance for interreligious dialogue. Ultimate Reality is after all an unspeakable and unutterable mystery that is openness and so is the God of Christianity.

## 7. Jesus the avatara or bosatsu

Many Asians consider Jesus as an *avatara* or a *bosatsu* (*bodhi-sattva*). Both terms are taken respectively from Hinduism and Buddhism. They are very frequently used. They refer to a seemingly personal manifestation of Ultimate Reality, that appears in this world to save people. They have very concrete names like Amida, Kannon, Miroku, etc. They are but seemingly "personal gods," temporary manifestations in this world of the impersonal Absolute. They are ontologically the same as Absolute Reality. Once their task is finished, they withdraw into the timelessness and endlessness of it without leaving any trace.

<sup>12</sup>Jacques-Albert Cuttat, *The Encounter of Religions*, New York, Desclee, 1960, 35-41.



There is not any problem for the Christian to accept Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God into this world. As a matter of fact, this belongs to the core of our Christian faith: "and the Word became flesh." Jesus is God's Word incarnate. However, he is not just *one manifestation* of God; he did not just appear temporarily among us to save us. We confess that Jesus is for us Christians a unique manifestation. He did not withdraw again into God after his resurrection; though united with the Father, he is still with us and continues actively his redeeming work through the Spirit. As Christians we have to emphasize the historical and personal character of Jesus.

There is something more. The *avatara* or *bosatsu* are concretizations of Absolute Reality; as such they belong to a kind of horizontal inner-worldly level and symbolize the overwhelming presence of Absolute Reality within this world. Though they point to the trans-historical and the transcendental, they reaffirm strongly the immanence of Absolute Reality. Jesus Christ, however, being true man and true God, suggests something more. He is not only the manifestation of the inner-worldly and immanent presence of God among us, reaffirming in that sense the value of this material world because Jesus is human, but at the same time he throws open this world towards the transcendence of God, because he is also the Son of God and divine. He brings into this horizontal world a vertical character. He is the point where immanence and transcendence meet each other. This is the result of the incarnation of God's own life and Word. All this does not mean that Jesus destroys the value of the *avatara* and the *bosatsu*. The latter ones retain their value as referring to and bringing near the human beings Ultimate Reality.

In Asia there are many people who have a great respect for Jesus and who follow him without becoming members of the Church.<sup>13</sup> This view of Jesus is co-determined by the *avatara*-theology but with a special accent. They seem to have problems with the ontological unity of Jesus Christ with God and consider him more as an exponent of unselfishness and self-emptying love. They are impressed by the high level of morality emanating from Jesus, for example in the sermon on

<sup>13</sup>A. Camps, "The person and function of Christ in Hinduism and Hindu-Christian Theology," *Bulletin — Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis*, Rome, no. 18(1971), 199-211.

the mountain. He was so selfless that he blew away his selfish personality and became filled with the divine; he is humanity divine. He is often accepted as a universal moral example for the whole of mankind.

## 8. God's emptiness - Jesus emptiness - the emptiness of the Christian

Emptiness has many synonyms: selflessness, vacuity, void-of-self, nothingness, thusness, suchness, Ego-lessness, etc. I prefer to use the term emptiness and I will elaborate on it in the Buddhist context, because the notion is better known to me in that sense.<sup>14</sup>

Here is the moment to inquire into the nature of Absolute Reality of Buddhism and of the God of Christianity, his Son Jesus Christ and the Christians.

The nature of Absolute Reality as emptiness is difficult to grasp. The great Nagarjuna (100-200) defines it as transcending both substantialism and nihilism. Going beyond being and non-being, it transcends all duality. It is right in the middle and one grasps it only through transcendental wisdom, through the denial of all duality. Emptiness is the innermost core of everything.<sup>15</sup> Everything is Ego-less, selfless.

Is there a comparison possible with the God of Christianity? Usually we think of God as fullness. But it is equally possible to see God as unspeakable and unutterable; he is mystery, transcending all concepts of being and non-being. And this God as mystery is openness to all sides.

God is a saving mystery that opens up itself continuously creating and recreating the world and the whole cosmos, revealing itself through nature, prophets of all sorts and Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>14</sup>Edward Conze, *Buddhism. Its Essence and Development*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975, 130-135.

<sup>15</sup>Heinrich Dumoulin, *Christianity Meets Buddhism*, La Salle, Ill., Open Court Publ. Col., 1974, 137.

This God, being absolute fullness, is able to empty himself from his fullness without losing it so that his fullness and emptiness are identical to each other. A God who reveals himself in creation and nature, empties himself without falling into non-existence.<sup>16</sup>

Things become a little bit easier when we reflect on emptiness in terms of Jesus Christ. The new testamentic companion word for emptiness is *kenosis*. Christian theology sees in the *kenosis*-passage Paul's interpretation of the mystery of Christ, his incarnation, his way through suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection. The passage on the emptying of God of Paul is classic and can be found in his letter to the Philippians (2:5-8): "In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus. His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross."

This self-emptying of God in Jesus has also another side. The self-surrender of God to the world in his Word corresponds to the total obedience of Jesus of Nazareth in his total self-surrender to his Father. Therefore, in Jesus of Nazareth, the self-emptying of God and the self-emptying of man coincide, because Jesus is the Word that became flesh, a human being. This is why Jesus, the figure of the empty God, is also the figure of the empty man.

When we claim the title of "Christians," our eye turns from Jesus to the world, to the others and the whole creation. Jesus is the object of our contemplation and imitation so as to take form within our very selves. In our minds we must be the same as Jesus Christ. And Paul describes our sharing in the mind of Jesus in images of transformation: "stripping off our old behavior with our old self" (*Col* 3:9; *Eph* 4:22), "putting on a new self" (*Eph* 4:24; *Col* 3:10), "clothing ourselves in Christ" (*Gal* 3:27; *Rom* 13:14), "imitating Christ in his death" (*Rom* 6:5), "reproducing the pattern of his death" (*Phil* 3:10), "living now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me" (*Gal* 2:20). Is it not so that we are only true Christians when we start

<sup>16</sup>Waldenfels, o.c., 138-154.

devoting ourselves to our own self-emptying and to the selflessness and self-emptying of Christ?

The pattern we followed in this last section took its departure from God emptying himself in creation to incarnation, death on the cross and the emptying of ourselves. This points to the fantastic radicality of God's emptiness and no reason is given to us why this is so; God acts indeed selflessly. And when God acts selflessly, there is only one word that we can utter: God's emptiness is love. I do not think that God's fullness and God's emptiness contradict each other. They coincide in the same reality of love; fullness turns into emptiness and emptiness turns into fullness. Can this not be compared to *emptiness with open hands*? God, Jesus and we ourselves, continually emptying ourselves, letting go ourselves, become empty because we try to imitate God and Jesus who are full of love. Our hands are open hands, letting go ourselves in order to give everything to others. The final outcome is to be full of emptiness.

I was asked to discuss the interiorization of the components of formation in an Asian perspective as seen from the angle of the formator. The Asian perspective is a measureless horizon. When one starts examining it, the depth of the Asian realities comes to the fore: the depth of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, the great world religions born from the fertile womb of Asia. I had to make a limited selection among their countless facets and I am fully aware of the shallowness of human words that are unable to express the unspeakable mystery of Ultimate Reality, whatever name we might give it. Maybe that the following lines, taken from the *Hymn to Perfect Wisdom* express better this inability:

*As the drops of dew in contact with the sun's rays disappear,  
so all theorizing vanish, once one has obtained Thee . . .  
Who is able then to praise Thee, lacking signs and featureless?  
Thou the range of speech transcending, not supported any  
where!*

# Priestly Formation: Integration and Interiorization

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*D.S. Amalorpavadass<sup>1</sup>*

In keeping with India's time-honored tradition and the still prevalent custom, let me begin my discourse by chanting a mantra: a prayer for illumination, which results from a state of integration and wholeness. It is called *Gayatri mantra*.

*Om bhur bhuvas svah  
Tat savitur varenyam  
Bhargo devasya dhimahi  
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayat*

On earth, sky and heaven  
Let us meditate on the most  
excellent splendor of the Creator  
and let him stimulate our intellect  
illuminate our inner self

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## I. Integration as Synthesis

### 1. Variety of Integration

This collection has already enabled us to identify various aspects, dimensions and means of integration - a) by relating ourselves with other priests who share in the priesthood of Christ and who serve the people all over the world, especially in Asia; b) by being united with the Triune God, with the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit; c) by integrating within a global/comprehensive world vision all the major realities of Asia: socio-economic-political and religious-cultural, and the various forms and areas of our ministry as responding to the needs of the Asian people: struggle for justice, liberation and new society; inter-religious dialogue; inculturation and evangelization; and the renewal of the Church and building up of the local Church communities.

### 2. Integration as Synthesis:

This refers to the integration of the formation as a synthesis. This synthesis can be intellectual (conceptual and verbal) or theoretical. But more important is a vital and dynamic synthesis as embodied in oneself, hence as life-style. One could proceed from theoretical knowledge to an experiential wholeness; but it is better to start with experience and proceed to knowledge.

Often, whether in the seminary or in any other institution, whether during formation or any other program, most of the components or items or elements or data can be just accumulated, or juxtaposed without being personalized and integrated into a single comprehensive whole. A single whole means that it has been put or held together as a synthesis. It calls for a *central point* around which and *framework* within which all the data are integrated. Such a synthesis can be either *static* or *dynamic*, either from outside or from inside. A static synthesis is incapable of integrating new material and new experience as e.g. a concrete building. Further, such a synthesis can be also the result of an external integration (which consists in

reaching out to everything and everybody outside, by a process of externalization or outer movement). It is a synthesis made from outside by an external agent.

### 3. Formation as a dynamic and growing, experience, interior and living synthesis

What is really needed is a dynamic synthesis which is alive and open, capable at every stage of inner growth, and integrating new elements and experiences within the existing systems, without having the need to dismantle the existing one for a new and wider framework of synthesis. What is dynamic is expansive and elastic by itself, when the synthesis is done from outside or from the core, there takes place a process of interiorization or deepening. An intellectual synthesis is done by the mind on a given topic such as philosophy, theology and even spirituality. But an experiential synthesis is what happens to persons at their core as a cumulative effect of what is lived by them day in and day out.

Such a synthesis can be done only by a living organism

Such as our human body or human person. As our body is an organism, it has integrated all the food we have eaten over the years, by a process of elimination and integration, and maintained its life and identity, in spite of growth in all the areas and dimensions of our person. If that is true for the body which is common with animals, birds and vegetation, it is all the more so for a human person with his mind and heart and with his wholeness and totality.

5. Life-style of formators as a model of interiorization and as a source of inspiration

While an intellectual and conceptual synthesis is useful and at times necessary for the sake of clarity, the experiential and living synthesis is what matters. This experiential life-style synthesis is to

be found primarily in the formators, and this will be spontaneously reflected in the life of the seminarians.

## II. Integration as Internal Movement with Wholeness, Awareness, Experience

It is also a synthesis realized by a process of *interiorization*, an inward movement towards the core of one's being, and an internal integration done from the depth of the heart.

### 1. *Inward movement and true wisdom of the ages*

The human person is in a continuous quest. In this process he was and tries to reach out to the total reality both of persons and of things. His tendency is to travel far and wide, and to explore everything including the outer space so that he may know men and matters and grow every day in practical knowledge and mastery of nature. One thinks that the more one knows the more successful one will be in life. Such a person is called "*sastri*" and his knowledge "*sastras*." However, some people achieve a lot in their field of knowledge and specialization but lack something basic, namely establish a happy relationship with others. In the same way, with all the knowledge about realities outside and everything under the sky one could be in total ignorance of himself within. The typically Indian wisdom does not consist in outreach or movement towards an external God and the outer universe, but rather in an inner movement towards a God within, at the center or the core, in a pilgrimage of interiority. It consists in going deep within oneself and discovering the inner universe of self. It is a double discovery of self and God. This is a fruit of many centuries and millennia of Asian search for reality and truth. This discovery or experience is what is called true wisdom (*gnana*), and the person who has such experience is called a sage (*gnani*).

This traditional Indian wisdom has only been confirmed recently by the discoveries and insights of human sciences or behavioral sciences: that self-knowledge and self-discovery, self-understand-



ing and self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-transcendence is an indispensable condition for understanding others and primarily for accepting others. If a person does not accept God, others and reality, then it simply means that one does not accept oneself. The dialectical connection is clear in a prayer of St. Augustine: *Noverim me et noverim te*: Lord grant that I may know myself and know you! It is a prayer for the gift of awareness of self and awareness of God as a single awareness.

## 2. Awareness

If wholeness is a state of being at which one should finally arrive though in stages, awareness is the running thread and unifying force. Awareness needs to flow like a river, like a bloodstream or a nervous system or energy current unifying everything and bringing them all into a single, coherent and integrated whole. That is why awareness can be singled out as the core of any social work (understood as integral human development, justice struggle, process of liberation, creation of new society, and community education or non-formal education). It is also the main goal of education. Where there is no awareness, one should bring people to the dawn of awareness by creating consciousness (*arunodaya*) and constantly raising their level of consciousness in various stages, and finally foster it to the degree of critical consciousness from where powerful action and people's involvement emerge. Awareness is also the core of spirituality and God-experience. It is the only active element in the mystical state of total passivity (*samadhi*) symbolized by the breath. This awareness must grow up into full awakening (*purnodaya*), extend to all persons (*viswodaya*) and to all creation (*sarvodaya*). From the beginning till the end it can and should become an awakening to the divine (*Brahmodya, Divyodaya*): interiorization and growth in freedom and awareness as both humanization and divinization, as self-realization and God-realization.

## 3. Experience

This is what is called experience of God (*Anubhava, Brahmanvidya, Atma Anubhava* or *Ishwar Anubhava*). While experience counts

much in all religions; it is almost everything for Eastern peoples and it holds primacy in their religious life. Indian sages have always been more interested in experience than in ideas and concepts. Abstract reasoning, speculative thinking and discursive meditation do not interest our people; they are not typically Asian. Only mysticism has had a great appeal to us. The wisdom taught by Indian and other Asian sages is not primarily philosophical knowledge (though there is plenty of philosophy in it) but experiential consciousness, or a knowledge experienced and lived.

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#### 4. *Through this experience one enters into the Mystery of Being*

Any experience, particularly an experience of interiority and contemplation makes one transcend the level of doing and come to the state of being. This state of being can be in oneself, in others and in God: these three levels are not three experiences but one single experience of the **Mystery of Being**, the one Reality (*Sat*) without a second, the ground and source of all realities, the all-inclusive and all-pervasive reality, the supreme, absolute and ultimate reality.

#### 5. *Pilgrimage of Interiority*

This is what is called interiority, contemplation and mysticism. Interiority has been considered as an essential element, if not the essence of Indian/Asian spiritualities. The religions originating in India are all cosmic and mystical and give priority to contemplation. The tendency to interiorize and to turn on oneself (introversion, intuition) is the characteristic of all mystics of all lands and of all ages. Indian mind is more synthetic than analytical, more intuitive than rational. Such a process of interiorization is a spirituality of Pilgrimage (*Yatra*). When experience is involved one is in a movement which is regular, continuous and non-stop. The experience of the mystery of being, the awareness of God's universal presence, viewing everything in its totality, giving centrality and priority to experience and arriving at it by intuition and interiority — all these require a long process. This is expressed by the word "pilgrimage."

### III. Integration Through Concentration

Integration is done through convergence or concentrating a centering process; and liberation is realized through a movement towards total freedom both in a process of arriving at interiority and one pointedness (*ekagrata*). Integration according to Asian spirituality traditions consists of two major components, e.g. according to *Vipassana*, a Buddhist method of meditation one speaks of self-purification (liberation) through self-introspection (concentration). Getting at the core of reality of oneself at the subconscious level, one is able to touch the core of all the realities and also in the case of theists - at the core of the reality of God. Introspection and self-purification lead to integration of all by *metabavana* which is a dynamic and spontaneous movement to reach out to all creation with vibrations of love and compassion, joy and peace; thereby the whole creation and all humanity may become nothing but a bundle of vibrations, and electromagnetic field of interior interaction causing/resulting in resonance and consonance. Another example is the philosophy of integral yoga by Aurobindo. Aurobindo is a great modern philosopher of India. He has envisaged a process of involution of the human person from below completed by the evolution of God's grace from above; both the ascent and the descent leading to supermind, a state of pure consciousness. It will be so powerful as to awaken all persons to consciousness, and eventually all material creation to become aware like human beings. Thus the whole universe and all humanity will be one single pure consciousness. This is a supreme form of cosmic reintegration which includes detachment, transcendence and liberation or a unification of all into consciousness. In psychology one speaks of self-actualization by a process of self-affirmation and self-transcendence, through the dimension intrapersonal, inter-personal and transpersonal. With these preliminary remarks, let us study more in detail the two process of concentration and liberation.

**Integration Through Concentration.** This corresponds to other concepts familiar to a Christian audience such as purification and transformation, reconciliation and unification.

### 1. *Discovery of one's true self by centering one's life*

Integration and concentration is realized through a process of centering and recentering one's life at the point of convergence of one's being. In this takes place discovery of one's true self or recovery of one's lost self.

One needs to be an authentic self so that one's relationship with others may be genuine. For any relationship is inter-subjective and inter-personal, and not subject-object. If the self does not exist as subject, as person, and as authentic self, there will be no relationship. What is worse, if the self is false, then the relationship is vitiated to the core. True communication may take place among persons, and communion or fellowship is possible only when persons relate from depth to depth and from core to core. The core-to-core relationship is precisely what is known as the peak experience. Only with such an experience can people build up vibrant communities whatever be the level, especially at the base level.

For this one must center one's life. It means one must go back to one's roots, return to one's sources and regain the ground of one's being. Thereby one realizes one's wholeness and integrity, arrives at a state of intense awareness (of the divine presence) in total freedom, rests in silence and stillness, in quietness and interiority, and experiences the mystery of being.

In this regard one needs to keep before one's eyes the picture of the circle with its two important places: the center and the periphery. The false self is on the surface level, or periphery. By moving from the outside to the inside, from the surface to the center, one enters into the process of identifying and discovering the *Atman*, our authentic self. One moves from a life of self-indulgence or egoism (*ahamkara*) to that of selflessness (*nirahamkara*), a life of the Spirit (*Atman-Brahman*) in the awareness of his presence (*cit*) and in oneness with him in identity or communion.

## *2. Brokenness, fragmentation and scatteredness to be overcome in wholeness*

While all yearn for wholeness, people in general experience brokenness: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Brokenness leads to fragmentation and dissipation. The scattered self needs to be gathered and regathered (recollection); the fragments and broken pieces to be pieced together into one integrated whole. Brokenness should be replaced by wholeness. When one is disintegrated, one's actions and projects will also get disintegrated in one form or another. This personal integrity is necessary for realizing integration at other levels and with other dimensions. Therefore, realization of integration and wholeness has many other exigencies and consequences.

## *3. Authenticity and consistency as total language and effective communication*

When one is whole or integrated, one is consistent, one speaks a total language, and one's communication is unambiguous, hence effective interpersonal communication. There is often a gulf between one's deeds and words, between one's decision and implementation, between one's seeming and being (what one appears to be and what one is), between the image one wants to project of oneself and one's inner reality, one's external behavior, between the good intention and performance, between promise and fulfillment. Hence the first form of wholeness that is called for is consistency, authenticity and transparency.

## *4. Coherence of all levels and dimensions of the total self*

Wholeness further implies that one is the same at the *unconscious and subconscious levels as one is at the conscious level*. Most of the time one speaks two or three languages, which do not tally. What one communicates at the conscious level is often denied or contradicted from the subconscious and unconscious levels. Others will register easily and quickly the other person's communications at the subconscious level and evaluate the person's conscious-level language; by automatic comparison one will conclude whether that person indulges in duplicity and hypocrisy, or communicates genu-

inety and in simplicity, whether it comes from the conscious or subconscious levels, whether the person is integrated or not.

5. **Wholeness by integration refers to three dimensions of one's well-being: physical, mental and spiritual, psychosomatic-pneumatic.** These three dimensions are interconnected and influence one another. So one needs wholeness of physical well-being (good physical health or stamina), peace of mind or equanimity (mental serenity, emotional maturity and integration to be in an equal state of mind), and spiritual well-being in terms of single focus on the Spirit (intense, sharp, deep and continuous awareness of the divine presence within and without).

6. **Our wholeness needs to be realized also at three levels:**

**a) At the personal level as integrated personality.** This refers to the unity of the self with itself (*Jiva / Atman / Jivatman*), unifying the many and different organs, senses (internal and external), all aspects, dimensions, levels and layers of one's person, and living just in a state of being at the core of one's self, at the end of a process of concentration as one single, coherent, total, authentic whole. When one goes to the very depth or the core, one touches the ground of one's being, one enjoys wholeness and peace, freedom and bliss. The third eye opens through which one experiences God, his presence, his love and light in the very experience of one's own whole being.

It is not sufficient to be one with one's self, but one should become one with the one who is One. When one reaches the ground of his being, one reaches the very ground of the Being of God himself (*Atman / Brahman*). God is being itself (*sat*) and the One who is. The ground of one's being and the ground of God's being are one and the same: no more two but one (*advaita*). The very self of God (the Spirit, *Atman*) becomes the self of the human person. Hence, St. Augustine could exclaim, "You are higher than the highest point and deeper than the deepest level of my being." (*Tu eras superior summa meo, intimior intimo meo.*) St. John of the Cross declared, "God is the

deepest center of man." This is true when we become undivided, and become one with the God who is indivisible. The one and the whole always the one and whole. Simply, we are in God, and God is in us.

b) *At the community level.* Since one has unified oneself, one need to relate oneself at the core level with others, even with all the 5,200,000,000 people on this planet. The heart, the center, the depth stands for the total person as gathered at the core. This is peak relationship. Consequently, the depth and authenticity of the relationship will be the quality of the community one builds. Community fellowship is the second level of our wholeness.

When one becomes whole and undivided, and reaches the ground of self, one finds there not only oneself and God but also all the other human beings, provided they become one, undivided, and deep in themselves. Then all people are in us and we are in all; both together we are in God and God in all of us. Then takes place the sharing of what one needs and what one has: sharing of fullness. Then we are no more many but one. Persons are sharing makes us resonant in vibrant communication. This is what is called symphony, harmony, consonance. We are in others and others are in us, and God is in both of us and in the oneness of many. It gives a sense of new and real belonging and realizes consecration to God in view of consecration to others. Whenever there is a community of this sort, God is present in their midst.

c) *At the social level:* Human persons are not only united in communities at various levels, but also live and function in society. It is a complex mechanism. In a spirit of human, social, and international solidarity (*lohasamgraha*), when one has become totally one and integral, one will work for the welfare of all (*lokakshema*). This is done by the practice of *dharma* (righteousness, justice/struggle) in socio-economic-political as well as cultural-religious spheres. While the Bible uses the image of a stream for expressing justice, Indian tradition uses the symbol of the wheel. If the wheel of justice or righteousness (*dharma cakra*), [Buddhist, Jain, Hindu] is continuously moving, then there will be justice; social order will prevail and there will be order and harmony in society.

d) *The fourth level* is to realize cosmic harmony and oneness with nature. Hence, the consciousness to maintain the eco-balance and environmental harmony, to respect and maintain the integrity of creation, without pollution and violation (land, water and air), without exploitation and depletion of nature. Like our ancestors, we should admire the harmony (*rta*) in nature on the one hand, as a reflection of the harmony in God or as divine order and, on the other hand, as a model for social order in society. Cosmic order (*rta*) which itself is a reflection of divine order, should be reflected in human community and society as social order and in each person. In a mystical gesture and contemplative attitude, one should enter into the harmony of nature, enjoy and maintain it, and contribute to its perpetuation.

An awareness of the whole of creation is also awareness of an interpenetration of nature and self, integrating both — the Spirit and material creation (*brahman & jagat*) — in the human persona as *panchakosas*. It is awareness of the whole of creation.

*7. In this we may identify five elements of integration  
and five-fold wholeness necessary  
for a total and lasting integration*

Personal integrity, community fellowship, social solidarity and cosmic harmony are levels and dimensions of the wholeness we need. It is at the depth of this multiple wholeness that we experience the mystery of being, whether in God, in oneself, in others (community) or in nature. In short, it is an experience of unity, communion and harmony. All these five constitute a single process of arriving at a state of wholeness. Where there is integration there is wholeness; where there is all-level wholeness there is the multiple and integrated consciousness; and where there is awareness, there is peace and harmony. But to arrive at it is not easy and fast. One needs to be disciplined and practice a proper *sadhana*, and keep going till one arrives at the ultimate goal.

It is a five-fold awareness of self, God, community, society and cosmos.

a) oneness of oneself (the self) — and therefore self-awareness;



b) oneness of self with God — and therefore God-awareness (within which is situated the Trinitarian and Christic experience);

c) oneness with others — and therefore awareness of others within wider community fellowship (including ecclesial experience);

d) oneness with society — and therefore in social awareness one commits oneself to bring about social change — a new society.

e) oneness with nature — and therefore in cosmic awareness and harmony in view of integrity of creation.

### 8. *Integration as all-around purification*

Integration can be understood as a five-fold experience of purification or reconciliation. Both wholeness and awareness imply that one has undergone *all-round purification* through a process of purification (*pancha shuddi*). *Jala shuddi* is the blessing of or purification with water to serve as a means of purification and as a sign of flow: bath (*snana*), washing one's garments, washing one's hands, cleansing one's lungs and nose (through *pranayama*) which will breathe in and out the sacred divine name (*nanajapa*) or *mantra*; sprinkling it on self and by sipping water inner cleansing; in community building and reconciliation by sprinkling water on them (*jamaloka shuddi*); sprinkling around objects of worship for cleansing them; and sprinkling water in the four directions of the altar and temple as a sign of integrating the whole universe (*sthala shuddi*); and finally all-round purification by review of life and contrition and conversion and prayer for the forgiveness of one's sins (*purna shuddi*). In personalistic terms, it refers to reconciliation with all, with God and with others, individually and as a group.

The act or process by which one arrives at a state of integration in awareness is called concentration (*dharna*), convergence (*samdhya*), merger (*sangam*), state of one-pointedness (*ekagrata*). The fruits are wholeness and awareness, interiority and depth, stillness and silence, being and quiet, transcendence and immanence.

#### IV. Integration as Liberation

Integration by concentration is only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin or another indispensable dimension of integration or the necessary requisite for wholeness is total, all-round and all-level liberation.

##### 1. Action — Bondage — Liberation

Liberation consists in cutting the vicious circle and breaking asunder the chain of bondage caused by action/reaction and its fruits; likewise with birth, death and rebirth (*Karma-samsara*). It includes both interior and exterior liberation. Attaining that state, one enjoys release (*mukti* and *moksha*). Most people become liberated only when they die or at the end of the world when willy nilly one has to be detached or liberated from everything; it is called *videhamukti*. But if one attains it here and now by voluntary renunciation and detachment, it is called *jeevanmukti*. Freedom here and now (*jeevanmukti*) and freedom hereafter (*videhamukti*).

##### 2. Inner Freedom

True and total liberation leads one to enjoy both internal and external freedom. Very few people are bothered about inner freedom. Most of the struggles for liberation concentrate on the external bondage of domination and oppression brought about and maintained by groups, structures, institutions, systems and mechanisms. This bondage is serious as it dehumanizes and crushes people; yet these forces cannot take away our freedom, just as they cannot give it either. Other people and structures can either recognize and respect our freedom, and so facilitate and promote its exercise; or they can deny it and so restrict and impede its exercise. But the basic source of all bondage is inner slavery which is sin or evil in the heart of the human person. He who commits sin is a slave (*Jn 8:38*). What matters ultimately is our internal freedom which is at the very core of our being, where others cannot enter and violate it, and where God is but which he also does not violate. Inner freedom can be affected and lost only by ourselves.

### 3. Causes of Bondage

Inner freedom is affected by fear, insecurity and egoism (*ahamkara*), ignorance (*avidya*), insensitivity and unconsciousness (*acit*), lack of wisdom (*agnana*), false identification (*asat*), alienation and estrangement, loneliness and individualism, anger and hatred, desire, sensuality and attachment. Freedom also means liberation from pursuit, acquisition, accumulation and hoarding of wealth (*arta*), unbridled enjoyment of pleasures and comfort (*kama*), without being regulated and guided by righteousness and justice (*dharma*), without orientation to the attainment of the Ultimate goal (*moksha*).

### 4. Means of Liberation

Freedom is fostered by *ahimsa*, which is nonviolence and respect for life and all its forms as sacred and inviolable; *karuna* which is compassion and kindness for all beings, which enables one to be free and available to all, gentle and delicate, kind and concerned; *tapas* (peace) and in-built asceticism; *jagna* (sacrifice or life of the cross); *aparigraha*, not having a gripping hold on things; *swadhyaya* (self-control), self-reliance and self-worth, self-gift and love; *santosh*, contentment or satisfaction with what one has, accepting life as it comes.

### 5. Freedom as ability for self-determination

Freedom is understood as an ability for self-determination. It is not the right to act according to one's likes and dislikes, or one's whims and fancies. Freedom is, in fact, wholeness, integrity and totality. It is for the sake of serving all, availability and universality.

### 6. Freedom as the ability to respond to all

Freedom is not only the ability for self-determination (at personal, group and national levels), but also the ability to respond dialectically to all, to God and to oneself. It enables us to respond to all realities and to be able to serve as persons and groups in a state of total availability, in view of realizing universality. To be free one must be available to all. To be available to all one must be free. Thus

people and things contribute to our freedom, just as we as free persons can contribute to others. In short, freedom is responsibility within a vision of totality and a holistic approach.

### 7. *Total renunciation and self-control*

All this can be summed up under the two following points: total renunciation (*sannyasa*) and self-control.

a) The first consists in non-attachment and detachment, which is the most striking characteristic of a religious or an integrated person renouncing all and possessing all. It is the counterpart of God-experience. Renunciation is both an indispensable condition for God-seeking, and the inevitable consequence of God-discovery. For God is everything, everything is in God, and so God alone matters and God suffices. God is the one reality without a second.

b) *Citta vritti nirodha*: control of the distortions of the mind: *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (sensuality), *dvesha* (hatred, vindictiveness) and *abhinevesha* (attachment, greed, possessiveness). It implies five-fold control: self-control, body control, senses and organs control, tongue control and mind control. In short, it is the same as living out the whole *Paschal Mystery*, consisting of both the death and resurrection of Christ (the core of the Christ mystery).

### 8. *Necessity of External Freedom*

It is equally necessary to obtain and enjoy external freedom by overcoming all external bondages and liberating ourselves from the dehumanizing forces embodied in systems, structures and institutions. As we are in a world of domination, oppression and exploitation from global to local levels, struggle is necessary to win both personal and structural freedom.

### 9. *Components of a Spirituality of Interiority*

This implies a process of dialectics. In a dialectic one calls for the other, one supposes the other, one is based on the other and leads to the other: such as immanence and transcendence, emptiness (*sunyata*)

and fullness (*purnam*), losing and finding, passivity of self (*samadhi*, *nirvana*) and of the Spirit (*Atman-Cit*) activity, being and doing, death and *moksha* or *mahasamadhi*.

All this is realized while walking on a path (*marga*) practicing a spiritual exercise (*sadhana*) under the reliable guidance of a God-realized person (*guru*). The universal *sadhana* for harmony of life, self-realization and integration of all realities is the integral spirituality system as proposed by the *ashtanga yoga*. The main thing is *dhyana*, to be observed at *tri-samdhyā* and the practice of the *dharma* proper to each one's state of life for the sake of the welfare of all based on social solidarity (*lokasamgraha* and *lokakshema*).

#### 10. The goal of Indian spirituality

The goal of liberation or all-round freedom (*moksha*) is realized by two different experiences. The first is "*Atmanubhava*." The seeker arrives at oneness with the Ultimate, Supreme and Ultimate Reality by becoming aware of one's oneness and identity with the Impersonal, Absolute, *Satcitnanda*, *Brahman*. This is *Gnana Marga* where awareness is emphasized, inner unity of self and unity with the absolute. So spirituality is a blissful awareness of the Ultimate Reality.

The other experience is "*Ishwar Anubhava*." It consists in the interpersonal communion between the devotee (*bhakta*) and the personal God (*Bhagawan*, *Ishwara*, *Ishta Devata*) in terms of devotion and exclusive love, total self-surrender and complete absorption in the beloved Lord (*Bhakti Marga*). It could also take the form of egoless (*nirahankara*) fulfillment of one's duties without attachment to its fruits (*nishkamakarma*) in the awareness of the Reality and out of devotion to the Lord, according to righteousness and justice (*oharma*), in an all-round sharing of what one is and what one has (*Karma Marga*).

#### 12. The whole spiritual life of integration depends in practice upon discernment (*viveka*)

It is, first of all, the ability to distinguish between several. It is also the capacity to identify God's presence and to recognize him in

all signs of his manifestations. It enables one to interpret his plan and will for oneself and the world. Above all, it refers to the spontaneous ability to distinguish between the transitory and the permanent: *nitya-anitya vastu viveka!* Finally, it is the work of the Spirit, and hence a grace.

## V. Expressions of a State of Integration

### 1. *Being, Silence and Stillness*

When a person reaches the core of his being, having gathered and integrated all components of his person at one point and is in a state of wholeness, one arrives at a state of being, silence and stillness. One's real nature becomes being: this is what is called quality of life. "Doing" (action without awareness in a broken state is called activism) and "having" (greed and hoard, materialism, consumerism and hedonism) cannot lead to a state of being which all yearn for but do not enjoy. For doing by itself cannot produce being; for brokenness cannot produce wholeness, the basis of being. If one is normally and habitually in a state of being, all one's doing will spring from "being", hence one will be in a state of being even while doing; and after the doing is over the "being" state will continue.

Likewise, neither can noise produce silence if one expects silence after sound, nor can movement produce stillness if one automatically expects stillness after movement, unless the sound emerges from a person who is usually in a state of silence, unless the movement emerges from a person who is habitually in a state of stillness. Thus one has the choice either for "activism, noise and restlessness" or for "being, silence and stillness." Without these latter, there cannot be any real doing, talking and moving which is worthwhile. Hence silence, stillness and being refer to wholeness and integrity, depth and interiority.

### 2. *Silence*

Integration brings one to the use of total language and unambiguous communication which is silence (*mauna*), both external and internal. A spiritual person is called *munih*; one who has reached

total silence experiences God in silence, and communicates it to others through silence. Ultimately silence is the language of God. God is ineffable and unutterable. He dwells in inaccessible light and in the unfathomable depth of silence. Where there is depth and fullness, there is silence. Where there is silence, there is God. All this should not be an evasion of reality or escapism from a commitment to the world, or lack of concern for one's sisters and brothers. It is a contemplation which incorporates and leads to struggle. It is a *sadhana* and an endeavor to reach the goal of liberation and contemplation. It is a struggle which takes in its stride all the realities and all the peoples, in a movement towards God and the center of our being, reaching the level of being in stillness.

### 3. Release of energy and harmony of self

Likewise when one reaches the core then the hidden energy, as when the atom is split, is released and flows through the entire person, harmonizing and uniting his whole self. This is *antar hsakti*, inner energy or hidden power which gives inner strength and leads one to a state of inner freedom, fearlessness and security. Such a person will not be afraid of anything or anybody including stone-throwing and mud-slinging, judgment and condemnation, calumny and blame; he will not react from the surface with evil for evil, but will respond from the depth with the gift of his integrated self: namely love, reverence and sharing. Such a person will seek the truth and speak the truth, respect the reality and go by facts, assess things according to values and principles, act on one's convictions in the light of the ultimate goal, unafraid of consequences, taking all the risks. At the level of strategy and approach, though, he will use prudence and discretion, pray for practical wisdom and go through a discernment and finally make the right decision, choosing from among several alternatives. Such a person of integrity will command moral authority. What he says and does will enjoy credibility. And he will be known as an authentic person and his life will be transparent.

### 4. Shanti (Peace and Calm) and Equanimity (Samadhana)

Where there is wholeness there is also peace; for the latter is the fruit of the former. When one is established in peace or in the depth

of self, one will not be affected by anything from the outside. For example, when there is a cyclone on the surface of the sea is one is resting on the seabed, one will enjoy peace; the storm is only on the surface whereas calm is always at the bottom. Thus one experiences peace at the heart. A person of equanimity radiates the peace outward, as an all-pervasive and all-enveloping peace in community, in society and in the universe at large.

#### 5. Ananda (*Happiness or Bliss*)

When one digs into the soil, one finds water gushing out. Similarly when one goes to the very depth of oneself in a state of integration, joy springs like a fountain, wells up, fills the self and overflows to others. Joy is within as peace is within, and as the kingdom is within. None can make others happy unless they themselves make the effort to find happiness within.

#### 6. Jyoti and Prabha! (*Total Illumination and Radiance*)

Finally, from the core emanates radiant light. At the depth of oneself is the *atman* (*mulasthanang, garbhagreha*), the real self, the Spirit. He is the light and source of all light. It is the inner illumination which causes the external one; and the external illumination is but the expression or radiance on the inner light.

#### 7. Sharing fullness, one remains full

In such a state one spontaneously shares. Since one is full and since spiritual realities and persons cannot be divided nor get diminished while sharing, one shares fully and makes others full without diminishing one's fullness. This is the content of *Purna mantra*.

#### 8. The five-fold total language by an integrated person

Such a sharing of fullness can take place in many ways, through various media of communication or languages. Here it suffices to mention five total languages which an integrated person (*yukta* or *yogi*) speaks from his relation to others!



a) *Shakti*: energy or power as electronic waves or vibrations causing resonance in others and energizing or empowering them.

b) *Mauna*: silence, as the most eloquent communication: the deep calls on the deep.

c) *Sparsham*: touch. When an integrated person is touched, his whole self communicates his integrity and God-experience and thereby his healing or liberating power.

d) *Darshan*: vision. Through a simple look the deity or *guru* touches the heart, opens the inner eye and transmits to him one's spiritual experience of vision of God.

e) *Shabdham*: sound. Through a message or *mantra* which the *guru* integrates into the breath of the seeker he transmits his experience of God.

## 9. *Guru anubhava*

In short, an integrated person, who lives a life of integrity, who living in the cave of the heart has an in-depth experience of God (*guha anubhava*) spontaneously gives expression to it and shares it with others in forms meaningful to them (*rupa-anubhava*). The one who combines both is a *guru*.

## 10. *Evangelization and Inter-religious dialogue* — a spontaneous outflow

If *accre-experience* or *interiority* is spirituality, then *rupa* (form) becomes an expression of sharing and communication of it is evangelization or dialogue. Aware of it, the FABC office for evangelization has arranged for some bishops an experience of Asian spirituality in our *ashram* to insure the quality of the evangelizer. The participating bishops pointed out at the end how the deep experience of being and God-awareness spontaneously leads to evangelization. In the same way, dialogue with peoples of other religions, the common ground of meaning and journey is either collaboration for human promotion

and a new society, or sharing and resonance of common religious experience. Likewise, there is correspondence between the process of liberation and struggle and that of personal interiorization.

## VI. Integration of the Quest for God and Search for Justice

By evolving a spirituality for social action, or a liberative spirituality for Asia, there emerge authentic and integrated forms of Asian Christian spiritualities.

### 1. *Quest for God and search for justice, a single concern in the same movement*

The relentless quest for the Ultimate Reality deep within through a process of interiorization and the non-stop movement towards all-round liberation and release (*moksha*) takes in its stride the exigencies of practice of social justice (*dharma*). It considers it as an indispensable and inseparable condition for the attainment of *moksha*. Efforts made for integral human development of all people, solidarity with the poor and the oppressed, the voiceless and powerless, involvement in the struggle for justice and creation of a new society (human, egalitarian, fraternal and just, participatory), through a process of all-round sharing with all and an all-level participation of all, is integral to the process, as both quest for God in view of realization (*siddhi*) and search for justice (*dharma*) in view of a new society make a single concern in the same movement.

One of the important schemes of Indian cultural and religious traditions is the four-fold goal in life of which the first three are proximate and the fourth and last one is ultimate: *dharma*, *arta* and *karma* — acquisition of wealth, enjoyment of life and practice of justice as proximate goals should be so lived so as to lead us to the attainment of the last goal: liberation. Even the economic and aesthetic and emotional goals are sandwiched between justice on the one hand so as to regulate them, and on the other by *moksha* (release) so that the three may be well oriented. That is why for example our *ashram* spontaneously and as a matter of fact welcomes both seekers of spiritual enlightenment and social activists committed to the

prevalence of social justice: both spiritual seekers and social changers, the two being complementary dimensions of a totality. .

2. *Justice and liberation struggle,  
a sign of the times,  
in this unique period of history (kairos)*

While integrating the best traditions of Asia's spiritual ideal and spiritualities in a living synthesis any formation program must inculcate a new social awareness, and enable the people to respond to its exigencies. The clamor for justice is characteristic of our period, a sign of the times through which the Lord reveals to us his plan for humankind in this unique period of history (*kairos*). So this concern and task, formulated as one of the objectives of our *ashram*, is valid here.

3. *Justice-liberation thrust and community education*

It wants to work greater social justice to enable people to reach full humanization and integral liberation and to facilitate the emergence of a new society through non-formal education (or conscientization) especially at the grassroots level. It offers spiritual inspiration, theological thrust and moral support to those dedicated to this cause of justice. Thereby it effectively contributes to and participates in nation-building. In particular it wants to facilitate the growth and spread of action groups and basic communities in which there will be real experience of equality and freedom, sharing and fellowship, in the process of concern, outreach and service to others. Above all, it offers groups of social workers facilities and opportunities to evaluate not only their own social action programs but also the spirituality of the people whom they serve and their own spirituality.

4. *Evolving a relevant spirituality  
for this ministry*

Finally we lead them to evolve a relevant spirituality for their ministry, by identifying its constitutive elements and integrating them into a single comprehensive whole. In view of it and within this

over-all perspective, our *ashram* has been sharing with them spirituality which can inspire all those engaged in the justice-liberation struggle and in the ministry of human development. On the one hand, some of the social workers find the existing spiritualities most pietistic and ritualistic, and not at all prophetic and challenging, hence irrelevant to the goals and concerns of creating a new society. On the other, the social activists are not considered spiritual enough and their work apostolate, as they may not perform some of the traditional exercises of piety. It is at this juncture that our *ashram* has been evolving and offering a week-long experience of Indian Christian spirituality. Properly understood and lived, it can constitute a spirituality of social action. It is a spirituality which far from being and appearing as an evasive and escapist one due to its interiorization and contemplative dimension can become a liberative one or as a spirituality for liberation. Some elements of such a spirituality can be identified as already existing in the lives of poor people and the social workers. Our *ashram* has rendered this service to various groups including a group of Indian bishops, an FABC group of bishops, to BISA VII and many other groups on justice.

### 5. Pastoral Cycle or Spiral

To do this spiritual animation of those engaged in human development work, and to ensure interiorization in the justice-liberation struggle, we have been following an approach which has recently come to be called "pastoral cycle" or "spiral." It is a process of four stages and elements.

a) an actually lived experience of reality while being involved in development projects, community education (or conscientization) struggle for justice and liberation. For those who do not have such an experience, an exposure/immersion program of a few days is arranged, to visit and/or live with the poor of various categories.

b) This experience is guided with the tools of social analysis and is everyday reflected upon and evaluated by using the same tool.

c) This is followed by a program of five to seven days of Indian Christian Spirituality experience: this is an experience of intense God-seeking or God-experience, in stillness and silence, to arrive at

a state of wholeness, awareness and freedom. This experience is daily shared after supper in groups (*satsangh*) and evaluated fully in a two-day free-wheeling session. It serves both as a theological reflection in that stage and as a spiritual experience to serve as the hub of the wheel.

d) Thereby one arrives at identifying elements and trends of spirituality:

i. discernible in the life of the poor people as well as in the lives of the social workers.

ii. one also analyses and takes stock of the values and elements of Indian Spirituality and Gospel especially as lived in the *ashram* for the cause of the Kingdom.

iii. Out of these elements, Asian spiritualities for liberation or social action are evolved, articulated and composed through group process. Thus, one's own spiritual life and the spiritual animation of others will permeate the entire development work and liberation struggle. This spirituality and social work will get integrated and become part and parcel of a single thrust and common concern. Likewise, a synthesis is made of both experience of social reality and experience of Indian Christian Spirituality.

## VII. Integration of Priestly Ministry in Terms of Relationships and Various Ministries

Given the place and role of the priests in the life and mission of the Church at any level, especially in parishes and institutions it is important/crucial to have a correct idea/image of priestly identity in terms of both his relationships and his various ministries to be coordinated. This will have to be ensured by the initial integrated formation in the seminary followed by in-service training, both to be animated by a relevant priestly spirituality fully Asian and authentically Christian.

Life and person mean relationships, all the more so in the case of priests, whatever be their ministry, especially in the parish ministry. We may indicate here four bases, areas and reference points of relationship.

*1. A two-fold base which gives him his priestly identity;*

a. **CHRISTIAN:** like the people, he is a Christian based on his faith commitment, common to all Christians: common identity.

b. **MINISTRY:** he is a Christian with a ministry of spiritual leadership specific to priests: specific identity

*2. A triple reference of identification*

a. to **JESUS CHRIST** the head: as he shares in his headship to fulfill his leadership function, filled with the Spirit of Christ living his values and geared towards the final universal reign of God.

b. to the **PEOPLE:** as a person of incarnation, as people's man he identifies with them and lives among them to build them into a community and leads them towards the final and universal reign of God.

c. to his **MINISTRY:** as a person entrusted officially with a service of spiritual leadership with animation and inspiration, as facilitator, coordinator and guidance, with a prophetic discernment, critique and challenge.

*3. A triple communion*

Within the wider framework of his relationship with society and people at large, he needs to deepen his relationship and enjoy fellowship or communion with the people, the Bishop and brother priests.

a. with the **PEOPLE:** in identification and solidarity, being one with them, sharing everything in their life, journeying with them, interpreting and celebrating their life.

b. with the BISHOP: in loyal cooperation in the one ministry of the local Church, having shared in the same priesthood and sacrifice, in the same mission and ministry, in collegiality and co-responsibility.

c. with BROTHER PRIESTS: in the awareness of common vocation, sharing in the same sacrifice, mission and ministry, developing brotherly feelings and sharing, constituting a single brotherhood, an *unum presbyterium*.

#### 4. A four-fold dimensional character of a priest

The four following should be integrated into a single unified identity.

a. secular whether "regular" or "religious" or diocesan, all priests should be secular in the good sense of the word as in *Gaudium et Spes*, love the world, take the temporal order seriously and help people live in the world and love their secularity.

b. diocesan: whether diocesan or otherwise, every priest belongs primarily to the human community of the area, and the local Christian community of the diocese, and hence live both an unconditional commitment and total fidelity to the local Church; and in between work as a builder of the local Church.

c. human: they should remain human, as from, among, for and with the people.

d. Divine: himself being human and becoming humanized and divinized, helping the divinization of others, habitually united with God, aware of his presence, praying with the people, in communion with God everywhere and always.

### VIII. Samdhya: Celebrating Integration at the Peak Moments of Experience

*Samdhya* means holding together, synthesis or convergence. First of all, it refers to time:

There are four *samdhyas* or four-fold auspicious time for prayer and meditation and experience of God. Of these, two are primary: sunrise and sunset; and two are secondary : midday and midnight. It is a tradition coming from time immemorial, originating from *rishis* and *munis*, holy men and women, to pray thrice a day: *tri-samdhya prarthana* or *tri-samdhya vandana*.

Secondly, it refers to the religious actions: the rituals performed, the *mantras* uttered and the chants recited. These *mantras* are mostly:

a) to realize all-round purification, physical or external: by bath and rinsing of the mouth and sprinkling of water on all sides. It is also interior: sipping of water three times; calming the mind, cleansing the lungs and the nose through *pranayama*, to be worthy to integrate the divine name with the breath praying for forgiveness of sins.

b) to become aware of God's presence in the whole world and within oneself;

c) there is then the invocation of the divine names, imploring God's protection on all, and sanctification of everybody and everything.

d) It culminates in a prayer for enlightenment, contemplation, and complete self-surrender to God.

Thirdly, it refers to an experience: an experience of togetherness and convergence, of concentration or one-pointedness, leading to consciousness, a state of union and communion, and all-round wholeness and harmony. It is the total reality experience as one in the depth of one's being. It is an integration of all the space, time, parts of the day, lights and experiences.

a) *Samdhya* is an auspicious time during which we hold together or join the three worlds (*lokas*): heaven or the celestial world, the cosmos or the terrestrial and intermediary world, the world of the human person, his whole self. The human person is not only an intermediary but also one who does the foundation of



mediation. He experiences in his own world of self a combined experience of heaven and earth.

b) *Samdhya* is the holding together of the three periods/dimensions of history: past, present and future, therefore a synthesis of time.

c) It is also a convergence of the three parts of the day: morning, noon and evening. It is the meeting point between darkness and light, light and darkness and — when the sun is above — a full experience of light.

d) It is the merger of three lights: theo-anthropo-cosmic twilight.

e) It is the synthesis of all experiences including ambiguous, contrary and contradictory ones.

At *Samdhya* one contemplates and unifies one's own world and from there all other worlds. The INNER SHRINE which is at the core of the human person is the place where is lived the life of the Spirit, where takes place prayer, meditation, contemplation and personal awareness, from where the mantra is uttered, where the silence of plentitude and communion is experienced, and from where every sound, meaningful and creative resounds and emerges.

The focal point within or the internal point of concentration of convergence is the cave of the heart, the core of one's being, the inner shrine where the indwelling Spirit (*antaryamin*) abides, illuminates and unifies. It is also the spot between the two eyes, the inner eye, the eye of faith by which one sees God.

There is also an external focal point, the sun which symbolizes the harmony in nature and creation (*ṛta*), the regularity and order in society (*dharma*), and the wholeness of the human person (*atman*) by *karma* and *dhyana*.

If peak moments of God-experience and sources of consciousness are the four *samdhya*s, if one wants to be always in a contemplative attitude and mystical state, one should release this source and

flow of awareness at *tri-samdhya*. But between these *samdhyas*, awareness or consciousness should flow through these various actions of our life. One should maintain awareness in all that one does. It should serve as a running thread and connecting bond. It should flow like a river (Ganga from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal), through different regions and across various terrains: mountain tops, ridges and slopes, hills and dales, plains and plateaus, narrow and broad, zigzag, up and down, finally it reaches the sea. In the same way awareness like the flow of water should run through various activities of the our day, and the different periods and stages of our life in an uninterrupted and continuous flow. This flow will make our whole life a continuous prayer and state of contemplation.

If the above state of complete integration is realized, there can be no dichotomy between action and contemplation. Action and contemplation are always two totalities which can go together interpenetrating each other. The dichotomy between action and contemplation is false, meaningless and baseless. The contrast is only between wholeness and brokenness, concentration and distraction. In this perspective and experience, action and contemplation become one. When an action is permeated with awareness, every action becomes contemplation. Or, experiences of God can take place in every action. Thus our life becomes "an integral whole."

## **IX. Life-Style: Most Effective Means of Formation and the Evident Expression of Integration**

The greatest challenge to religion and spirituality and formation and religious life, is life-style. Spirituality is best summed up in life-style, poor and simple.

1. The way of life of the formators is the most acid test of the formation that they provide. Their way of life is most contagious and self-effacing form of forming others. It is a powerful transforming force as it elicits unconscious imitation on the part of others. One cannot integrate others, one cannot have integrated pastoral without being integrated oneself, and without having an integrating ability. For the person at his core is the integrating source and force. Hence

the formators, rectors and spiritual directors are called to be integrating persons.

People are sensitive to life-style and judge us by that standard. It is the guarantee of our authenticity, sign of our sincerity and the basis of our credibility. Life-style commands the greatest moral authority and insures a genuine spiritual leadership.

2. Life-style is a mode of life in keeping with what we profess, proclaim and teach. It calls for consistency and coherence between our thoughts and words, words and deeds, decisions and implementation and wishes and efforts. Everything must tally. Life-style is a living and organic synthesis of everything. It is only when we live that one can note how much has been assimilated and integrated into our system and how much has become a part of ourselves.

3. Spirituality as a life-style has not to be taught but caught. Likewise religious life has not to be professed but witnessed to. It is not an object of study but something that is lived. It is not something merely intellectual and cerebral to be discussed at the theoretical and academic levels of ideas and words in seminars and chapters, but something that is concrete and practical that spontaneously flows out of us in every form of life. It requires a thousand details to make a simple life-style.

4. It is not enough to make tall statements, use radical language, indulge in leftist jargon and make hollow profession of poverty and simplicity, nor put on the mystical image of a religious person. Instead one should spell out and live in practical terms a concrete life-style on the basis of firm determination, courage of conviction, spontaneous expression of one's attitude and commitment to values, and readiness for risks and sacrifices.

5. Life-style becomes prophetic. For it makes a critique and denunciation of the present and announces — as a precursor of a new society and state of life. Thereby it offers hope and orientation for the future. It is the staunch and living profession of what is absolute, ultimate, supreme and unchanging in a world where everything is relative, immediate, compromised and passing away. One proclaims both in the silence of words and in the eloquence of life-style that God

is everything, God suffices, God alone matters, God is above all and in all.

6. The life-style of an integrated person of Indian Christian spirituality and Indian vision of religious life is embodied among others, in and through *Ashram*. It is a state of intense, sustained and relentless quest for the absolute in a non-stop movement pursued by a group of persons under the guidance of a guru. It is more a state of life than a place. This quest as a movement is embodied in persons and their life-style. It is open to all who are in search of peace, enlightenment and true joy. It is dedicated to contemplative prayer and service of others, facilitated by continuous God-awareness and total renunciation. There should reign in an *ashram* an atmosphere of silence and an osmosis of peace and joy. It provides facilities for self-realization and God realization such as *marga* and *sadhana*, guidance and initiation. Its life-style is simple and poor.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude the vocation of the human person in the state of integration is to remain in the inner shrine of his being, the sanctuary of the Spirit (*Atman*), and indweller and Lord of the inner world (*antaryamin*) in a state of continuous meditation (*upasana*) engaged in a single act of consciousness (*cit*) and expressed through silence or praise (*mauna-kirtana*)

The *sadhana* which will cause an experience of integration at an emotional level, which will spring up from our depth and permeate our whole person, this entire assembly, and the whole universe is the chanting of the *shanti mantra*. Thereby we shall send vibrations of peace to all and everything, and in him we shall also receive the peace of everything and everybody.

*On Dyaun Santi*  
*Antharishan Santi*  
*Prithvi Santi*

Let there be peace of heaven  
Peace of mid-regions (sky)  
Peace of the earth

*Apah Santi*  
*Aushadhayah Santi*  
*Vishve deva Santi*  
*Vishve nara Santi*  
*Brahma Santi, servan Santi*  
*Santireva Santi*  
*Sama Santiradhi*  
Om Santi, Santi, Santi

Peace of the water,  
Peace of plants  
Peace of all the celestial powers  
Peace of all human persons  
Peace of God and peace of all  
May this peace be with me  
and with you  
Om peace, peace, peace

# Integral Formation of a Person

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*Venancio S. Calpotura, S.J.*

Creating an integral formation program is an exciting, though frustrating, and ultimately impossible task. Integral formative work is an exciting endeavor because it demands delving into the very processes of life in order to create something new. Looking at the various dimensions of life — social, political, religious and cultural — invites the formator to get in touch with the very flow of life. To flow with life eventually opens up new possibilities of creation.

Formation work is also frustrating. For a while the formator is in control of his creative venture until it begins to elude him and go beyond his grasp. The created form starts to breathe life and moves towards its uniqueness and own direction. The formative task takes on a different perspective. The formator is no longer co-creator with God, he becomes cultivator. He must know the basic movements of growth and factors that impinge on the process in order to be of help. His task calls upon different resources from within depending upon what the situation of growth calls for. He can cajole, encourage, reprimand, defend, even push the seminarian at times in order to keep him moving faithful only to that essential person within and his call. It is a frustrating job because the formator has to let go of his biases, expectations, and attachments as the seminarian goes on his fumbling way. Both formator and formand are at the service now of that God speaking and giving directions.

Ultimately, integral formation is an impossible task. The end goal and product is totally beyond the formator's ken. Any good

formation program eventually has to accept its limitations. The end is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and usually results in something unexpected — the very characteristics of our God. For the end of any human integrated program of formation is to fail. It is God who takes over and leads the person wherever he wills.

As I present a theory of the basic processes of integral formation, I hope that you en flesh the concepts with your own experience of the formative journey as I described it above. For, what is of greater importance than the theoretical integration is the “praxical integration.”

## Patterns of Formation

A review of formation programs for the past forty years show differences in emphasis and orientation depending on how the Church viewed itself, its idea of the priesthood, and the historical situation.

### *Pre-Vatican Formation*

Formation in the fifties and early sixties largely focused on the intellect. Seminarians had a heavy load of classes and conferences with little time for reflection. The good seminarian was one who excelled in his grades. It was hoped that what he learned in the classroom would have a direct effect on his behavior. Good behavior meant that he followed all rules and regulations which governed his life. Intellectual competence, external compliance together with a pietistic spirituality were the basis of priestly success.

The formative process was still following a monastic model. The seminary, very much like the Church at that period, saw itself as a self-enclosed structure with its own superior life and culture with very little contact with the outside world. The priests who came out of such seminaries saw themselves at the center of a hostile world, so that they had to build enclaves of safety in their parishes conscious of the fact that they were a different breed. In order to maintain such

a style of life, strict schedules had to be set, mandated organizations organized, pietistic spirituality practiced. Intellectually, they felt superior.

The basic processes used in formation were reward-punishment and identification. The system of rewards emphasized good academic rating, compliance and good behavior, regular attendance at Mass, prayers and devotions. Deviations from these expectations were noted. Punishment came with the yearly evaluations. Also, the role of formators was crucial. It is their role to set the good example so that the seminarians can follow and identify with them. Thus, it was important that the formators not only be learned but also known for his piety and asceticism. It is to be noted that such formative processes are properly used to encourage the development of children and adolescents. Perhaps that is why with the advent of Vatican II demanding a more mature response of faith, many left the seminary and the priesthood. Pope John XXIII's gesture of opening a window of the Church proved to be an unlocking of the door.

### *Vatican II Formation*

There was a shift in formation orientation in the late sixties to the end of the seventies. From a heavy emphasis on the intellect, the affective human dimension of the individual began to assert itself. The strongly rational structure of Thomistic philosophy and theology was being questioned by Existentialism with its very human values of person, uniqueness, freedom and love. Initial reactions to traditional formation was a cry for personal recognition, affirmation, and self-fulfillment. Later on such demands evolved into more academic relevance to the present situation, deeper community relationships, more pastoral activities, and a personal affective prayer.

Formation programs became more conscious of the aspect of personality development. Psychological testing became part of the process of application to a seminary. Motivation for the priesthood was looked at more carefully. T-groups and group dynamics were used to form communities. Seminarians were taught how to relate to one another, to authority, and how to lead others. Priests had to undergo renewal programs or go to affirmation houses in order to learn how to handle their new found affectivity.



The Church was looking for its place in the modern world; the seminarian was searching for the essence of his priesthood. As Carl Jung so aptly put it: modern man in search of the soul. Theology did not offer too much solace. All it had were numerous opinions. The human sciences became more attractive. Individual and eastern philosophies were alluring. Various forms of praying were in vogue. Where does a seminarian find one's soul in this state of influx? Where is Christ to be found? Many found him in the revitalized liturgy and in the depths of Scriptures.

Our fumbblings during those years taught us another basic principle of formation: internalization. It is a process which necessitates that the seminarian take prime responsibility for his own formation with the help of others and other formative structures. Whatever dimension of training the seminarian engages in - academic, communitarian, personal, apostolic, spiritual - the process is the same. Formation has to be internalized.

Any formative event starts with awareness. One has to open one's eyes to what is. One needs to see the reality beyond his expectations, distortions and illusions. A clear view allows the person to see himself and his basic contradictions, not so much to condemn but to accept himself as such. Only then can he face and encounter the Ultimate Reality — to stand straight before the immanent/transcendent God. Such an encounter brings about a dialogue which may lead to an experienced intellectual/affective conversion. When one continues to gaze upon the other, there is a danger that one becomes the other — he gains the perspective, the desires, and the loves of the other. He is invited into the life and mission of the Totally Other. In this process of formation what is important is not so much the answer, what is crucial is to enter one's own mystery in God accompanied by Christ through the process of awareness, contradiction, encounter, new understanding, mission.

### *Post-Vatican Formation*

The past decade of our history has greatly expanded our consciousness. Our conscious awareness has leapt from the narrow confines of the self to wide expanse of community, country, and the

world. In the Philippines, there is now the need to organize communities and bind them into bigger organizations in order to empower and give voice to the poor. On the national scale, coup de etats, autonomous regions, disaster areas, emergency measures of government make us aware of our proximity and brotherhood. Events in Germany, Poland, Romania, Panama, the Soviet Union do affect us and make us realize common aspirations. Formation, therefore, has to respond to this new breakthrough in our consciousness and life itself. It can no longer be isolated in institutions or the self. Formation has to take into account these different historical pulsations which form the basic context of the world that the seminarians will have to serve when they become priests.

The initial response of different formation groups is analysis. From social analysis and the Church's call of "option for the poor," comes the response of exposure programs, factory trials, and immersion. Some formation communities are now living with the poor. From political analysis comes the response of demonstrations, peace organizations and advocacy work. From cultural analysis comes the response of more facility with the language, work with cultural minorities, and questions regarding missions. All of these analyses and responses ultimately put into a new context the reality and expression of faith commitment and ultimately the priesthood. What is the role of the priest today?

The opening up of the social, political, and cultural dimensions is not a movement of integration, rather it can bring us to another moment of conversion. Beyond the intellectual and affective foci of formation is a challenge to instinctual conversion. Our instincts have been covered up by slanted data, advertisement of the good life, language and way of life foreign to us. By a deeper awareness of these various dimensions of life, our basic instincts become awakened. The social perspective puts us in touch with our need for honor, riches and status. The political arena awakens our need for power and influence. The cultural dimension makes us recognize our basic feeling instincts and tendencies towards action. The religious instinct is so intertwined with these various dimensions since all of them deal with life itself. By clarifying the religious attitudes they can begin to challenge present social, political, and cultural instincts according to Christian values.

The formative process used for instinctual conversion is osmosis, or in spiritual terms, active contemplation. By constant exposure and presence to the influence of another reality, one initially recognizes his own uniqueness and slowly imbibes what is good in the other. What eventually is expressed is something new and creative.

Having presented these different patterns of formation flowing through the decades, perhaps we could come up at this point with some tentative observations:

1. A good formation program will have to put together the various good points of the above described orientations. To delete one will make the program biased and lopsided;

2. In order for the program to be effective, the seminarian has to experience what is at the core of each of these orientations, i.e. intellectual, affective, and instinctual conversions.

Yet, the question still remains: What is the point of integration of any program of formation? So far, we have just mentioned the various elements which may lead to such an integration. We go on with the task.

## Towards an Integrated Formation

In order to move towards a more integrated formation of the seminarian, several more elements, over and above what have already been stated, are necessary.

### *An Ecclesiology of the Kingdom*

In order to give credence and lend support to the opening of the socio, political, and cultural dimensions of life, a new ecclesiology of the Church needs to be developed. An understanding of the Church that is "from above" centered on its survival and enhancement is not enough. The notion of the Kingdom is much larger than the traditional understanding of the Church. A Kingdom that is rooted in the faith and aspirations touching the totality of a life of a people is what is needed. This view of the Kingdom must include not only the practice of faith but also the human well-being of people in the world.

Thus, it will include not only a spiritual conversion but also a socio-political-cultural transformation.

Although this theological perspective has at times been expounded, at this point in time, it is merely grudgingly accepted. The difficulty lies in its implications especially for the priest. It is clear that the spiritual is his primary concern, but it is not the only one. The living out of the spiritual touches the other aspects of life - justice, human rights, freedom, equality. Therefore, how far can the priest involve himself in economic projects, in political activities, in cultural change? This is the basic question that has to be clarified in such an ecclesiology.

### *A Theology of Christ-in-the-World*

Although we have a notion of an immanent God, our theology has always tended towards the eschatology and other worldly. The reality of Christ in the world today does not come second-nature to us. We have to stop, mull over the reality of the statement, and make a leap of faith in order to see Christ in others. The Christ of history is more real to us than the Christ of faith who is with us now. If this be so, then it would be impossible to come to an integration in this world. We will have to wait till we reach heaven.

The God of the Christian is basically a transcendent Being. He has a reality totally different from us. Although Christ came into the world and lived with us, he went back to heaven. The priest is the bridge of this God. People come to him to pray for them since he has a special connection to their God. He offers sacrifice for them. How can this God become more immanent, a God-with-us. Our people in the Philippines are used to having spirits live, eat, play with them. Spirits are all around. They are in the mountains, the sky, the trees, the water, the earth. they even come inside to possess us. This is not a matter of faith, it is something that our people experience. Who then is this alien God who cannot live with us, but judges us whimsically? Despite our rational scientific Christian beliefs, are there not ghosts as we walk in the dark? Much of the energy of the priest is spent in trying to convince people about a God who cares and dwells among us. He needs the medium of the sacraments in order to call down his God to enter the lives of his people. Unless we come up with a better

theology of Christ-in-the-world, our lived faith remains schizophrenic. Integral formation is an illusion.

### *A Real Apostolic Spirituality*

Much of our spirituality adheres to the ideal of the friar *contemplata aliis tradere*. We contemplate in order to give to others the fruits of our prayer. So we have to safeguard our enclosure because it is here that we withdraw everyday to commune with our God in order to gain the energy to serve others. Our institutions and way of life support this spirituality. The actual large physical church at the center of the plaza is the symbol of this rule of life.

True apostolic spirituality demands a change from this way of life. The ideal is *contemplativus in actione*. The priest gains his spiritual nourishment from the very activities he engages in. This does not deny the necessity of daily formal prayer, but its implications can be staggering. Such a spirituality demands everyday familiarity with God - a sensitivity to interior movements and a responsiveness to discerned exterior promotions. To live such a life requires constant detachment from people, things, events which may hinder a ready response to an active present God. It requires a deep spiritual life. The Church is no longer the focal point but the Kingdom. To take the challenge of apostolic spirituality in the seminary will change the spiritual formation orientation in the seminary. The spiritual-pastoral year will have to be taken more seriously.

### *Implications of Secular Priesthood*

It has been said that the measure of maturity, and therefore of integration, is not so much in what he has achieved nor in self-possession but in that he has a clear direction in life to which all the elements of his personality and life adhere. The life direction of the seminarian is the secular priesthood. Therefore, what is needed is a clarity of that direction and its implications.

The theology of the secular priesthood states that his priesthood is a participation in the priesthood of his bishop. That same priesthood is shared with his fellow priests who belong to the presbyterum.

That priesthood is taken up for the service of the people. Since the priesthood is a further elaboration of the grace of Baptism, it is expressed in preaching the Word (prophet), administering the sacraments (priest), and in shepherding the flock (king).

If this be the direction of the formation of the seminarian, the implications for formation must be well thought through. A number of factors have to be looked into: the frequency and quality of contact with the bishop, the relationship between fellow priests and the support he gains from them, the extent and depth of contact with lay people during seminary training. Is the seminary set-up as we know it today the best structure to insure greater clarity both in his direction and role as a future secular priest?

### The Final Ingredient for Integral Formation

When the best of formative programs have been put together and clarity has come to priestly ecclesiology, christology, spirituality and charism, what is the final ingredient necessary for integral formation?

A similar situation comes to mind. The three-year training of the apostles had ended. They had experienced the death-resurrection of Christ and had understood the mystery that had been handed to them. He now sends them to preach the New News. One thing was still lacking:

*You are witnesses of these things. And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you. (Lk 24: 48-49)*

The apostles had to wait for Pentecost. When the Spirit descends upon them, their formation is complete. The apostles were not only transformed, they were men with a mission.

It is the Holy Spirit, therefore, who integrates the whole formative experience. It is the Spirit from the beginning who is the formator. At the end, he himself sets his seal upon them. The priest is once again baptized not with water but the fire who is Spirit.

# **Final Statement of the Joint Colloquium of Rectors and Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries**

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We, the rectors and spiritual directors of Asian seminaries, met from February 9-15, 1990, at the Canossa House of Spirituality, Tagaytay City, Philippines. Fully aware of our responsibilities in the formation of future leaders of the local Churches in Asia, we have deliberated in depth on the problems and preoccupations faced by the formators of this continent. We express the following concerns to the Asian bishops, our fellow formators and seminarians, hoping that, with the sincere collaboration of all, our efforts to form the future priests of Asia will truly meet the needs of the Churches of future generations.

## **I. To the FABC:**

To the FABC we express our gratitude for having sponsored this colloquium. It has proven profitable to all of us who have participated, and we trust that its results will be of help to all who read the proceedings.

We request that the FABC organize such meeting regularly at the regional level to ensure a greater participation and to facilitate treatment of question specific to the regions. In particular, we suggest that special regional meetings like the recent ones in Africa be held.

Finally, we feel that it would be helpful if the FABC established a special office for seminaries.

## **II. To our Bishops:**

We express our gratitude to you, our bishops, for the importance you give to priestly formation. We recognize in the bishop, the chief formator of future priests. We would welcome more personal contact with you. It would be a support to us if we could count on the following:

- a) specific criteria for the appointment of formators and professors;
- b) a definite term of service;
- c) opportunities for ongoing formation, particularly for those of us involved in spiritual direction;
- d) a budget for the work of spiritual formation such as the other seminary departments have.

We feel it important that the formation of support groups among priests be encouraged, especially for the newly ordained.

We also express our conviction regarding the importance of an integral ongoing formation program for the whole presbyterium, who are really co-formators with us.

## **III. To our Fellow Formators:**

We draw courage from the fact that as formators we are instruments of the Holy Spirit; we know that the Church attaches great importance to our work.

While we see the value of contact with the life situation of parishes and dioceses, we believe that our formation work must take priority over any outside apostolate.

We recognize the centrality of the God-experience in seminary formation. We feel that the formation should emphasize interioriza-



tion rather than external conformity, and achieve a proper balance between freedom and discipline and accountability.

We are convinced that formators need a common vision of the priesthood and of formation and that they should live a community life and should work together as a team.

We also see the importance of having, as formators, the same standard of living as the seminarians, since we are, in fact, role models for them. We acknowledge, too, the importance of forming one community with the seminarians.

We are convinced of the importance of a contextualized formation, one anchored in the social, religious and cultural reality of our various countries.

Finally, we believe that our work would be more effective if there were periodic evaluations of seminary formation and a better coordination of the different levels of formation.

#### **IV. To All of You:**

We express our concern to all about special areas of formation that need to be considered seriously; we hope that they will be dealt thoroughly in future colloquia:

- a) relationships between bishops and priests;
- b) financial accountability;
- c) sexuality and celibacy;
- d) diocesan spirituality.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

As we close this fruitful meeting of rectors and spiritual directors, we thank God for his guidance and entrust the efforts and results to Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, model of formators in listening to the Word and in acting upon it.

# **Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests**

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*Congregation for Catholic Education*

## **III. PERMANENT PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

29. In this chapter, the "permanent principles" and fundamental values will be briefly mentioned which must not be omitted in teaching the social doctrine of the Church. In an appendix, an outline programme of courses is offered which can be adapted to the concrete needs of the individual local Churches.

### **I. Permanent principles of reflection**

#### *Introduction*

30. These principles have not been formulated by the Church organically in one single document, but throughout the entire span of the historical evolution of her social doctrine. They are drawn from the whole series of various documents which the Magisterium of the Church, with the collaboration of enlightened bishops,<sup>70</sup> priests and lay persons, has drawn up in tackling the various social problems as they gradually emerged.

<sup>70</sup>JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), page 453.

It is obvious that the present document is not, and does not intend to be, either a new synthesis or a manual of these principles, but it is rather a body of simple guidelines considered useful for teaching.

It does not constitute a complete presentation of these principles, but simply an indication of those which are to be considered the more important ones and therefore worthy of special attention in the formation of future priests.

Among these, the principles regarding persons, the common good, solidarity and participation are to be considered fundamental. The others are intimately connected and are derived from them.

### *The human person*

31. The dignity of the person is based on the fact that he or she is created in the image and likeness of God and elevated to a supernatural destiny transcending earthly life. Man, therefore, as an intelligent and free being, a subject of rights and of duties, is the primary principle and, one can say, the heart and soul of the social teaching of the Church.<sup>71</sup> "According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike all things on earth should be related to man as their centre and crown."<sup>72</sup> It is a principle that in its anthropological import constitutes the source of other principles which are part of the corpus of social doctrine, which in its structures, organization and function serves the creation and continuous adjustment of conditions both economic and cultural which allow the greatest possible number of people the development of the capabilities of perfection and happiness. For this reason the Church will tirelessly insist on the dignity of person, against all slavery, exploitation and manipulation perpetrated to the harm of people, not only in the field of politics and economics, but also in the cultural, ideological and medical field.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup>VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 17.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, n. 12. This affirmation of *Gaudium et Spes* includes, for Christian faith, that the ordering of the world to the needs of man is valid only on the presupposition of the subordination of man to God, and thus man builds the world in obedience to the norms of God, not destroying it in the name of his egoism.

<sup>73</sup>CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on the Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986): AAS 79 (1987), page 586.

32. Human rights derive by an intrinsic logic from the same dignity of the human person. The Church has become aware of the urgent need to protect and defend these rights and considers it as part of her own saving mission following the example of Christ, who showed that he was always attentive to the needs of people, especially the poorest.

The assertion of human rights arose in the Church more as a concrete service to humanity, than as a theoretical, organic and complete system. By reflecting on them, however, the Church recognized their philosophical and theological foundations and their juridical, social, political and ethical implications, as can be seen in the documents of her social teaching. She did so, though, not in the context of a revolutionary opposition of the rights of the person against traditional authority, but on the basis of the law written into human nature by the Creator.

The insistence, especially in our times, with which the Church has made herself the promoter of the respect for and defense of human rights, whether personal or social, is explained not only by the fact that her intervention both now and in the past is dictated by the Gospel,<sup>74</sup> but also because from the reflection on human rights a new theological and moral wisdom has developed for tackling the problems of the contemporary world.<sup>75</sup> In particular the right to religious freedom inasmuch as it touches the intimate sphere of the spirit, "reveals a point of reference and, in a certain sense, becomes the measure of the other fundamental rights."<sup>76</sup> Today, it is affirmed and defended by various public and private, national and international Organizations.

For her part, the Catholic Church shows herself to be in support in a special way of the many who are discriminated against or

<sup>74</sup>VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 41.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, nn. 26, 73, 76.

<sup>76</sup>JOHN PAUL II, Message for the XXI World Day of Prayer for Peace (8 December 1987), n. 1: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3, p. 1334.

persecuted for their faith, and she is tenaciously committed so that such unjust situations may be overcome.

*Contributions of the  
Papal Magisterium to human rights*

33. Together with the conciliar Magisterium, the papal Magisterium has widely dealt with and developed the topic of the rights of the human person. Pius XII had already enunciated the principles based on the natural law of a social order in conformity with human dignity and made concrete in a sound democracy capable of best respecting the right to freedom, peace and material goods. Subsequently the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* by John XXIII was the first official papal text explicitly dedicated to human rights. In fact, in reading the "signs of the times," the Church perceived the need to proclaim the "universal, inviolable and inalienable" rights of all men, against any discrimination and particularist conception. For this reason, in addition to basing human rights on the natural law inherent in creation and ordained towards the Redemption, *Pacem in Terris* corrects a certain individualistic aspect of the traditional concept of reciprocal rights and duties by placing rights in a context of solidarity and stressing the requirements of a community nature which solidarity implies.

In turn, in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, without separating human rights from the field of reason and continuing in the perspective followed especially by Vatican Council II, Paul VI highlights the Christian foundation of human rights and shows how faith transforms their very inner dynamics. Furthermore, it must be observed that if *Pacem in Terris* is the charter of human rights, *Populorum Progressio* constitutes the charter of the poor peoples' rights to development. Later, in deepening this reflection, John Paul II bases human rights simultaneously on the three dimensions of the complete truth about man: on the dignity of man as such; on man created in the image and likeness of God; on man inserted into the mystery of Christ. The saving mission of the Church is based on this dignity of man seen in the light of Christ's redeeming task. For this reason, she cannot be silent when the inviolable rights of men and peoples are offended or endangered. From the Christian point of view, in fact, nations and native lands are a human reality with a

positive and irreplaceable value at the basis of the inviolable rights within the different peoples and, in particular, the right of peoples to their own identity and development.<sup>77</sup>

### *The person-society relationship*

34. The human person is a social being by his nature — that is, by his innate need and his connatural inclination to communicate with others. This human sociality is the basis of all forms of society and of the ethical requirements which are inscribed in it. Man is not sufficient in himself to attain his full development; he needs others and society.

This principle of interdependence between the person and society, joined essentially to that of the dignity of the human person, relates to the complex fibre of human social life which is governed by its own appropriate laws and perfected through Christian reflection.<sup>78</sup> Understanding the different aspects of social life today is not always easy, given the rapid and profound changes which are taking place in all fields due to man's intelligence and creative activity. The changes, on their part, cause crises which are reflected both in man's inner imbalances, which increase his power all the more without always succeeding in channeling it to proper ends, and in social relations in the sense that a correct application of the laws governing social life is not always achieved.<sup>79</sup>

35. Human society is therefore the object of the social teaching of the Church since she is neither outside nor over and above socially united men, but exists exclusively in them and, therefore, for them. The Church insists on the "intrinsically social nature" of human

<sup>77</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), n. 17: AAS 71 (1979), pages 295 ff.; Message *L'Eglise catholique* to the civil authorities who signed the Helsinki Agreement (1975), on freedom of conscience and religion (1 September 1980): AAS 72 (1980), pages 1252 ff.; JOHN PAUL II, Allocution *I desire* to U.N. Representatives (2 October 1979), n. 6: AAS 71 (1979), pages 1146-7; Allocution *Uma cordialissima saudação* to the Indios of Amazona (10 July 1980); AAS 72 (1980), pages 960 ff.

<sup>78</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 25.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 4.

beings.<sup>80</sup> It must be noted, however, that here "social" does not mean "collective" whereby the person is only a mere product. The strength and dynamism of this social condition is developed fully in society which thus sees relations in living together grow both on the national and international level.<sup>81</sup>

36. From the dignity, rights and sociality of the human person, the other permanent principles for reflection which guide and govern social life are derived. Among those which have been studied in depth by the Magisterium, the following are mentioned: the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, the organic concept of social life and the universal destination of goods.

#### *The common good*

37. In speaking about the laws or principles governing social life, in the first place the "common good" must be kept in mind. Although in its essential and most profound aspects it cannot be conceived in doctrinal content,<sup>82</sup> it can still be described as "all those social conditions which favour the full development of human personality."<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, although the common good is higher than private interests, it is inseparable from the good of the human person and commits public authorities to recognize, respect, regulate, protect and promote human rights and facilitate the fulfillment of the respective duties. Consequently, implementation of the common good can be considered the very *raison d'être* of public authorities who are held to attain it to the advantage of all the citizens and of the whole man — considered in his earthly-temporal and transcendent dimension —

<sup>80</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), page 453.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, AAS 53 (1961), pages 415 f.

<sup>82</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1961): AAS 55 (1963), page 272.

<sup>83</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), page 417; cf. PIUS XII, Christmas Radio message *Con sempre nuova* (24 December 1942): AAS 35 (1943), page 13.

while respecting a correct hierarchy of values and the postulates of historical circumstances.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, since the Church considers the common good as a value in the service and organization of social life and of the new order of human coexistence, she stresses its human meaning and ability to animate social structures in their globality and in their particular sectors, by encouraging in-depth transformations, according to the criterion of social justice.

### *Solidarity and subsidiarity*

38. Solidarity and subsidiarity are two other important principles governing social life. According to the principle of solidarity, each person, as a member of society, is indissolubly linked to the destiny of society itself and, by dint of the Gospel, to the destiny of all men's salvation. In his recent Encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the Pope has particularly underlined the importance of this principle, identifying it as a human and Christian virtue.<sup>85</sup>

The ethical demands of this principle require all men, groups and local communities, associations and organizations, nations and continents, to participate in the management of all the activities of economic, political and cultural life while overcoming any purely individualistic conception.<sup>86</sup>

Subsidiarity is to be considered as the complement of solidarity. It protects the human person, local communities and "intermediary bodies" from the danger of losing their legitimate autonomy. The Church is attentive to the application of this principle by reason of the very dignity of the person, respect for what is most human in the

<sup>84</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), page 272.

<sup>85</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), nn. 39-40: AAS 80 (1988), pp. 566-569.

<sup>86</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 30-32; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), n. 73: AAS 79 (1987), page 586; JOHN PAUL II, Discourse *Je desire* to the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference (15 June 1982): AAS 74 (1982), pages 992 ff.



organization of social life,<sup>87</sup> and the safeguarding of the rights of peoples in relations between individual societies and universal society.

### *Organic concept of social life*

39. As appears from what has been said, an ordered society is not adequately understood without an organic concept of social life. This principle requires that the society be founded, on the one hand, on the inner dynamism of its members — which originates in the intelligence and free will of the persons who seek the common good in solidarity. On the other hand, it is founded on the structure and organization of society comprised not only of individual free persons, but also of intermediate societies which are integrated into higher units, beginning with the family and arriving — through local communities, professional associations, regions and national states — at supernational bodies and the universal society of all peoples and nations.<sup>88</sup>

### *Participation*

40. Participation occupies a predominant place in recent developments of the social teaching of the Church. Its strength lies in the fact that it ensures fulfillment of the ethical requirements of social justice. The just, proportionate and responsible participation of all members and sectors of society in the development of socio-economic, political and cultural life, is the sure path for attaining a new human

<sup>87</sup>PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931): AAS 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), page 294; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981): AAS 73 (1981), page 616; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), n. 73; AAS 79 (1987), page 586.

<sup>88</sup>PIUS XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931): AAS 23 (1931), page 203; JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), pages 409-410, 413; PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), n. 33: AAS 59 (1967), pages 273-274; Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971), nn. 46-47: AAS 63 (1971), pages 433-437; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 30-31.

coexistence. Not only does the Church not overlook this principle,<sup>89</sup> but she finds in it a constant motivation for promoting the advancement of the quality of life of individuals and of society as such. It is a deep human aspiration which expresses man's dignity and freedom in scientific and technical progress in the world of work and public life.<sup>90</sup>

*Human structures and  
communities of persons*

41. The Church has repeatedly sought to prevent the real danger threatening the dignity of the person, individual freedom and social liberties which derives from the technical and mechanistic concept of life and from the social structures that does not leave sufficient room for the development of a true humanism. In many nations the State is transformed into a huge, administrative machine which invades all areas of life and drags man into a state of fear and anxiety causing his depersonalization.<sup>91</sup>

The Church, thus feels that bodies and many private associations are necessary which reserve the proper space for the person and encourage the growth of collaboration in subordination to the common good. However, in order that these organizations be real communities, their members must be considered and respected as persons, and called upon to participate in common tasks.<sup>92</sup> According to the

<sup>89</sup>JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1961): AAS 55 (1963), page 278; VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 9, 68; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), n. 44: AAS 80 (1988), pages 576-577.

<sup>90</sup>JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), pages 423; PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971), n. 22: AAS 73 (1981), page 617; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), n. 86: AAS 79 (1987), page 593.

<sup>91</sup>PIUS XII, Christmas Radio Message *Levate capita vestra* (24 December 1952): AAS 45 (1953), page 37.

<sup>92</sup>JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961): AAS 53 (1961), page 416.

Church, therefore, a sure path for attaining this goal is found in associating labour and capital, and in creating intermediate bodies.<sup>93</sup>

Implementation of these principles governing social life at the different levels of social organization and in the various sectors of human activity makes it possible to overcome all tensions between socialization and personalization. The present day phenomenon of the multiplication of relations and social structures on all levels, deriving from free decisions and aimed at improving the quality of human life, can only be welcomed in a positive way since they manifest the attainment of human solidarity and favour the expansion of the person's material and spiritual activity.

### *The universal purpose of goods*

42. With this "characteristic principle of Christian social concern"<sup>94</sup> it is affirmed that the goods of the earth are for the use of everyone in order to satisfy their right to a life consonant with the dignity of the person and the needs of the family. In fact, "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis."<sup>95</sup> It follows that the right to private property, valid and necessary in itself, must be restricted within the limits imposed by its social function. As the Pope explains in his Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, "Christian tradition has never upheld this right as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation; the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone."<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), n. 14: AAS 73 (1981), page 612 ff.

<sup>94</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), n. 42: AAS 80 (1988), page 573.

<sup>95</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 69.

<sup>96</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), n. 14: AAS 73 (1981), page 613.

## 2. The formation of students

### *The sure path*

43. The principles of reflection on the Church's social doctrine, as laws governing social life, are not independent of real recognition on the fundamental values inherent in the dignity of the human person. These values are principally: truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, peace and charity or Christian love. Living these values is the sure path not only to personal perfection, but also for putting a true humanism and a new social coexistence into practice. Reference must therefore be made to them in order to bring about substantial reforms of economic, political, cultural and technological structures and the necessary changes in institutions.

### *Towards a renewal of society*

44. The vital importance of these values explains why the Church has always proposed them so insistently as true foundations of a new society more worthy of man. While recognizing the autonomy of earthly realities,<sup>97</sup> the Church knows, however, that the laws discovered and employed by man in social life do not in themselves guarantee, almost mechanically, the good of all. They in fact must be applied under the guidance of virtues derived from the concept of the dignity of the person.<sup>98</sup> All these values demonstrate the priority of ethics over techniques, the primacy of the person over things, the superiority of the spirit over matter.<sup>99</sup>

### *"Wisdom" in social commitment*

45. Values, however, often enter into conflict with the situations in which they are openly or indirectly negated. In such cases, man finds himself in the difficulty of having to honour them all consis-

<sup>97</sup>VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 36.

<sup>98</sup>JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), page 259.

<sup>99</sup>JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), n. 16: AAS 71 (1979), pages 290 ff.

tently and simultaneously. For this reason Christian discernment becomes even more necessary in the choices to be made in the different circumstances, in the light of the fundamental values of Christianity. This is the way to practise real "wisdom" which the Church requires in social commitment by Christians and all men of good will.<sup>100</sup>

### *Values for development*

46. Considering the great complexity of contemporary human society and the need to promote certain values as the basis of a new society the Church is called upon to intensify the process of education for the purpose of making not only individuals, but also public opinion understand — at least in the countries where her presence is admitted and her action permitted — the vital need to defend and promote the fundamental values of the human person without which there can be no real human and integral development of each society.

For this reason, it will not be possible to lay the bases of true human development, called for by the Church in her most recent social Magisterium, without a continuous reassertion of human dignity and its ethical and transcendent requirements; without an ethics of responsibility and solidarity among peoples<sup>101</sup> and social justice; without a revision of the meaning of work<sup>102</sup> which includes its more equal redistribution.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE)

<sup>100</sup> JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963): AAS 55 (1963), pages 265 f.; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in Misericordia* (30 November 1980), n. 12: AAS 72 (1980), page 1215; CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), nn. 3, 4, 26, 57: AAS 79 (1987), pages 556 f., 564 f., 578.

<sup>101</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), nn. 89-91: AAS 79 (1987), pages 594-595; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION "JUSTITIA ET PAX," Document *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (17 December 1986): *L'Osservatore Romano* (28 January 1987).

<sup>102</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), nn. 3, 6, 12, 14: AAS 73 (1981), pages 583, 589 f., 605 f., 612 f., CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation (22 March 1986), nn. 81-87: AAS 79 (1987), pages 591-593.

# Celebration of Masses in Private Houses

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*Arzobispado de Manila*

*Circular No. 5  
Series of 1990  
25 January 1990*

**TO: All Diocesan, Religious, and Guest Priests in the Archdiocese of Manila**

Recent events constrain me to remind all the priests who are either incardinated in, or guests of, the Archdiocese of Manila, including those who find themselves within its jurisdiction. Aside from the provisions of the Code of Canon Law (cf. cc. 931-933), there is an Archdiocesan Statute promulgated in the Manila Synod of 1979 prohibiting the celebration of Masses in private homes without the permission of the local ordinary (St. 71, #3). There are certain exceptions to this rule which I do not intend to bring out at this point, because my main concern is to put emphasis on the prohibition - a prohibition which, unfortunately, has been taken lightly and which has resulted in considerable damage to the Christian community in general.

It has come to our attention that some priests, in particular those who are not from the Archdiocese of Manila, have been celebrating Masses in private homes without permission, in complete disregard of the synodal statutes. Still worse, there are priests who have been doing this in a, more or less, stable manner in such a way that they have practically become personal chaplains of the families concerned. Such utter disregard for diocesan policies is deplorable, and, for those who do not belong to the Archdiocese of Manila, is an

abuse of its hospitality. This becomes doubly so, especially if financial considerations are involved.

The damage that this anomalous practice causes to the Christian community is considerable. First of all, it undermines the harmonious relationship which would exist between the priest and the faithful. If there are priests who are easily swayed by monetary considerations to cater to every whim and caprice of those who think that they can "buy" the Mass anytime and anywhere they want, then those priests who are conscious of their duty to hold the Eucharistic Sacrifice in great esteem, by strictly adhering to the rules of its celebration, will be put on the defensive. Furthermore, such a practice tends to divide the parish. Those who can afford to have Masses celebrated in their houses will no longer see the need to go to the parish church. After all, they can hear Mass in the comfort of their homes. A third adverse effect is the fact that there is a strong possibility that priests who engage in this sort of practice are held in low regard. They are reduced to the status of mere employees under the payroll of their employers, who can tell or order them what to do.

Because of this, I would like to remind all the priests, diocesan as well as religious, guests as well as visitors, that this synodal prohibition of saying Mass in private houses should be strictly observed. I also enjoin the parish priests to be more conscious of their duty in this regard and to see to it that, within their jurisdiction, there are no violations of this prohibition. Should they discover or become aware of such a violation they should report it immediately to the Chancery Office for appropriate action. I would also like to encourage our faithful to cooperate with us in this regard in order to avoid abuses and to prevent unnecessary complications that may result from the violation of this prohibition.

I hope that this reminder will be understood for what it really is — a sign of my paternal concern and solicitude for the welfare of the People in Manila.

Devotedly yours in Christ,  
+ JAIME CARDINAL L. SIN  
Archbishop of Manila

# Documents Concerning the Philippine Church

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## 1. Erection of the Prelature of Libmanan

JOANNES PAULUS  
Episcopus Servorum Dei  
ad Perpetuam rei memoriam

Philippinis in Inulis ob missionariorum sollertiam eorumque apostolicum opus longinquitate temporis usque catholicum nomen increbruit, quod quidem etiam nunc ministrorum hodiernorum propter industriam florere feliciter conspiciamus. Idcirco prosperitas haec nequid cessationis patiat, convenientes commodare institutiones properamus. Quapropter cum Venerabilis frater Leonardus Legaspi Archiepiscopus Cacerensis, idem, illius Nationis sentinente Episcoporum coetu, ab hac Apostolica Sede efflaquitaverit ut nonnulla ab eadem Sede distracta territoria novam constituerent ecclesiasticam circumscriptionem, admotis precibus concedendum omnino existimavimus. Itaque, suffragante Venerabile fratre Bruno Torpigliani Archiepiscopo titulo Mallianensi atque in Insulis Philippinis Apostolico Nuntio, de consilio Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium necnon Episcoporum qui Congregationis pro Episcopis negotiis praesunt, potestate Nostra Apostolica, suppleto eorum quorum interest consensu quive sua interesse arbitrantur, statuimus haec et iubemus. Talia separamus ab archidioecesi Cacerensi territo-



ria, quae inibi incolae vocitant Saints Philip and James Saint James the Apostle, Saint Peter Baptist, the Most holy Trinity, Saint John the Baptist. Sipocot; Saint John the Baptist, San Fernando; Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Rose of Lima, Saint Bernardine of Siena, Saint Pascal Baylon, Saint Rita of Cascia, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint Pius X, Our Lady of Antipolo, Our Lady of the Pillar, San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila, Saint Joseph in Milaor, exiisque novam condimus Praelaturam Libmananam appellandam, quas quidem iisdem terminatur finibus. Novae communitatis episcopalem sedem in urbe ponimus quam Libmanan appellant, sacramque ibidem aedem S. Jacobo dicatam ad gradum statumque cathedralis ecclesiae evehimus, iuribus similiter ac privilegiis congruentibus concessis. Praelaturam deinde hanc archidioecesi Cacerensi suffraganeam facimus eiusque Episcopum metropolitico iuri Archiepiscopi illius Sedis pro tempore subicimus. Consultores ipsum Episcopum adiuturi quam primum eligantur. Re sacrorum Antistitem sustinebunt novae Praelaturae Curiae emolumenta, fidelium stipes, bonorum pars quae ex divisione ad canonis normam 122 C.I.C. facienda ad eandem posthac transibunt. Ad sacrorum alumnorum institutionem quod spectat, iuris communis servantur pascripta, minime Congregationes pro Institutione Catholica neglectis praeceptis. Selecti autem seminarii alumni itemque sacerdotes ad altiores doctrinas assequendas Roman scilicet ad pontificium Collegium Philippinum mittantur. Quod autem ad novae Praelaturae pertinet regimen, bonorum ecclesiasticorum administrationem, administratoris dioecesani, sede vacante, electionem, fidelium iura horumque similia, quae sacri canones praescribunt servantur. Simul ac novae praelaturae constitutio ad effectum deducta erit, eo ipso sacerdotes Ecclesiae illi censeantur adscripti in cuius territorio officium ecclesiasticum habent, ceteri vero sacerdotes seminarii que tirones et quilibet clerici illi sedi in cuius territorio legitimum detinent domicilium. Documenta autem et acta quae conditam Praelaturam respiciunt, ad eiusdem Curiam mittantur atque ibidem in tabulario servantur. Ad ea novissime explenda quae has per Litteras Nostras iussimus, Venerabilem fratrem Brunonem Torpigiani, in Philippinis Insulis Apostolicum Nuntium legamus, factis nempe facultatibus necessariis et convenientibus etiam subdelegandi quembis virum in dignitate ecclesiastica constitutum. Re tandem ad exitum perducta, documenta exarcentur eorumdemque sincera exempla ad Congregationem pro Episcopis sedulo mittantur. Contrariis rebus minime obstantibus. Datum

Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo undenonagesimo, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

## 2. Appointment of Msgr. Prospero Arellano

JOANNES PAULUS  
Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Dilecto Filio Prospero Arellano, hactenus in Seminario archidioecesis Cacerensis magistro, electo Episcopo Praelato Libmanano, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Adsidia, qua afficimur, universatis Patris ac Pastoris sollicitudo ad id quoque Nos hodie inducit ut Libmananas Praelaturae, hoc ipso die per Apostolicas sub plumbo Litteras — Philippinis in Insulis — erectae ac suffraganeae metropolitanae Cacerensi sedi constitutas, apte quidem consulamus, eiusdem diligentes ac nominantes antistitem sacrorum. De sententia igitur Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.C. Cardinalium atque Venerabilium Fratrum archiepiscoporum qui Congregationis pro Episcopis praesunt negotiis, Apostolica Nostra protestate usi te, dilecte fili, egregiis animi ingeniique dotibus praeditum necnon rerum pastoralium abunde peritum, Ecclesiae Libmananae Episcopum praelatum nominamus, omnibus factis iuribus congruisque pariter impositis obligationibus, cum sacra dignitate tua munereque conexis. Permittimus vero ut episcopalem ordinationem extra urbem Roman accipias a quolibet catholico Episcopo, ad legum liturgicarum normam. Antea autem tuum erit, teste quovis rectae fidei Episcopi, et catholicae fidei professionem facere et iusiurandum dare fidelitatis erga Nos et Nostros Successores formulasque adhibitas ad Congregationem pro Episcopis mittere cito, sueto more signatas sigilloque impressas. Mandamus insuper ut has Litterae Nostrae in notitiam veniat cleri et populi Praelaturae tuae; quos dilectos filios hortamur ut te libentes accipiant tecumque coniuncti ingiter maneant studentes omnia facere secundum Deum — cfr. S. Ignatius Antiochenus, Epist. ad Philadelphenses 4: PG 5,700 — Tibi denique dilecte fili, episcopale gravissimum officium in ista Libmanana Praelatura inituro, sacris psalmistas verbis suademus ut in lege Domini voluntas sit tua inque eadem lege die ac nocte mediteris — cfr. Ps 1, 2 — ita, ut, sicut Maria

omnipotentis Dei innixus virtute, valeas fieri: — tamquam liqum plantatum secus decursus aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo; et folium eius non defluet, et omnia, quaecumque faciet, properabuntur — Ibid., 3. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die nono mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo octogesimo nono, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

### 3. Appointment of Msgr. Deogracias Iniguez

JOANNES PAULUS

Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei

Venerabili Fratri Deogracias Iniguez, hactenus Episcopo titulari Claternensi et Auxiliari Episcopi Mololosini, electo Episcopo Ibanas Dioecesis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Contingit frequenter ut Ecclesiarum locorum utilitas, quae quidem multis ex fontibus oriri potest, Nobis suadeat ut sacrorum antistites sedibus mutemus, hoc autem curantes, ut in eorum locum alios sufficiamus, qui idem expleant munus. Cum igitur Cathedralis Ecclesia Ibana suo indigeat Praesule ex quo tempore ultimum eius Episcopum Pacianum Aniceto ad regendam misimus archidioecesim Sancti Fernandi, maturavimus illi per successorem consulere. Id autem officium tibi concedere statuimus, Venerabilis frater, qui virtutibus donisque episcopalibus iam confirmatus, pastorale expertus ministerium et dotibus humanis ornatus egregiis, spem Nobis facis te esse digne hoc sacerrimo munere functurum. Quapropter, in consilium adhibitis Venerabilibus Fratribus Nostris S.R.C. Cardinalibus atque Venerabilibus Fratribus Archiepiscopis, qui Congregationis pro Episcopis negotia gerunt, ex Nostra Apostolica potestate his Litteris te dioecesis.

Ibanae episcopum nominamus et constituimus, solum nimirum vinculis titularis Ecclesiae Claternensis et Episcopi Auxiliaris Mololosini. Liberatus etiam obligatione fidei professionem iterandi, ius iurandum tamen dabis fidelitatis erga Nos et Nostros in hac Apostolica Sede successores: cuius formulam ex more signatam et sigillo impressam, ad Congregationem pro Episcopi primo quoque tempore mittes. Facies praeterea ut haec tua nominatio in notitiam

veniat cleri et populi dioecesis Ibanæ; etenim tum solum poterunt te ducem sequi in viis salutis æternæ, te magistrum audire docentem res ad Deum pertinentes, te custodem suum colere et diligere, cum te legitimum suum Episcopum esse cognoverint. Iam, Venerabilis Frater, omnia nostri quas sunt Episcopo gregem Domini pascenti facienda: non putantes igitur ea esse denuo memoranda, tantum te fraterna hortamur caritate, ut constanter, prompte, prudenter et firmiter quæ scis ad effectum adducas. Datum Romæ, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo septimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo undenonagesimo, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo

## CONSULTATIVE WORDS

### Uniformity During the Mass

*Members of a certain religious community make the sign of the cross while saying the absolution after reciting the Confiteor in the Mass. This is not done in other places.*

*What is the proper thing to do? Has there been any change while reciting the Penitential Rites?*

*A Religious Priest*

The answer is very short and simple. As far as we know, there is nothing prescribed on the matter. Neither the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* nor the *Order of the Mass* say anything about making the sign of the cross while saying the absolution after the *Confiteor* (I Confess).

We have also received several letters questioning the fact that some members of the congregation extend their hands during the Lord's Prayer, as the celebrating priest does. This is not allowed in the liturgical laws. Only the celebrating priest extends his hands. In concelebrated Masses all the concelebrating priests extend their hands, but not the congregation.

For the sake of uniformity, therefore, the norm given in canon 846, § 1 of the new Codex should be faithfully followed.

"The liturgical books approved by the competent authority should be faithfully followed in the celebration of the sacraments; for this reason *no one on his own initiative may add, delete, or change anything whatsoever in them.*" "And this is more true with regards to laws ruling the most holy of all liturgical actions" (Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II).

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

## **Canonical Effects of Illegitimacy**

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*May I inquire what is the law in the present Church legislation on illegitimacy with regard to sacred ordination and entering a religious institute. I have not a clear idea of the canonical effects of illegitimacy.*

*A Seminary Rector*

The 1983 Codex has totally changed the norms concerning illegitimacy with regards to its canonical effects. Both the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law have the same principle, namely that "the illegitimate offspring is legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents." Moreover, both codes state that "legitimated children partake to all the effects granted by law to legitimate children, unless the law makes special exception." The difference, however, exists with regards to the last clause: "unless the law makes special exception." The 1983 Codex does not have, as far as we know, any exception. This means that the legitimation of the illegitimate children equates entirely the illegitimate offspring to the legitimate ones.

The following exceptions contained in 1917 Codex concerning this matter are not mentioned in the 1983 Codex. Canon 232, § 2, 1o of the 1917 Codex stated that "illegitimate children, although legitimated through the subsequent marriage of the parents, could not be promoted to the Cardinalatial dignity." Canon 331, § 1, 1o had the

same norm regarding episcopal candidates. Moreover, canon 504 of 1917 Codex required for the office of major superior in a religious institute the fact of having been born of lawful wedlock.

Concerning admission to seminary, canon 1363, § 1-2 of the 1917 Codex stated that only legitimate boys could be admitted to the seminary. However, the *Pastorale Munus* of Paul VI, n. 31, gave the bishops faculty to admit illegitimate boys if they possessed the other qualities required for priesthood, unless they were the fruit of sacrilegious or adulterine unions. Moreover, canon 984, n. 1 stated expressly that legitimated children were not irregular, hence they could be ordained. Finally, the Commission for the Interpretation of Canon Law declared on July 13, 1930 that "legitimated children by the subsequent marriage of their parents should be considered as legitimate as regards to their admission to the seminary" (AAS, 22, 1930, p. 365).

The 1983 Codex states clearly that "legitimated children are equated, with regards to canonical effects, to legitimate children, unless the law states expressly otherwise" (can. 1140). All prohibitions or irregularities attached by the 1917 Codex to illegitimacy have been eliminated in the new Codex. In other words, "all canonical effects of illegitimacy have been suppressed in the 1983 Codex. The distinction, however, between legitimate and illegitimate children still subsists, without any canonical effects in the universal law" (*Communicationes*, 1978, 106).

As a legal consequence, the new Codex no longer requires legitimacy in those to be promoted to the cardinalate or episcopal dignity nor does it require legitimacy in those who are elected major superiors in religious institutes, nor in those to be ordained or admitted to the seminary.

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.



## Acquired Rights and Canons 9 and 4

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*In your answer to the case concerning religious parishes (Bol. Eccles., March-April, 1990), you say: "Hence, if the rights and privileges enjoyed by the religious community, to which a parish was committed pleno iure by virtue of a papal indult, are not expressly revoked by the new Code, they subsist and shall continue to be enjoyed by the religious community." Your reasoning is based on canons 4 and 9 of the new Codex. My question is: Does not the fact that the present legislation on the matter differs from what the 1917 Codex prescribed constitute an express revocation of those rights and privileges acquired according to the 1917 Codex? Will you kindly elaborate on this. Thanks in advance.*

*A Religious Superior*

We will try our best to please our consultant. Canons 4 and 9 are intimately connected. Canon 9 gives the principle according to which acquired rights and papal privileges dealt with in canon 4, should be evaluated and judged. The non-retroactivity of laws, proclaimed in canon 9, is the best logical and natural guarantee of legally acquired rights and privileges.

*Non-retroactivity of the Law.* Canon 9 reads as follows: "Law concern matters of the future, not those of the past, unless express mention of the past is made." Obviously this norm states that past events should be evaluated and judged according to the laws

existing at the time when those events took place. In other words, they should not be judged according to laws that did not exist when such events occurred. Public order requires that juridical situations of the past created legally should not be modified nor changed by future laws to the consequent detriment of the persons involved in those situations. This principle was already admitted and formulated in the Roman Law as follows: "*Quod peractum est, tamquam semel terminatum, veteribus relinquimus legibus.*" On this basis the non-retroactivity of laws is here clearly asserted, as a rule.

An application of the principle of non-retroactivity of the law took place, for instance, in the well known case of a deacon, who, before being priest, could obtain a parish according to the Church's old legislation, which allowed him to obtain a parish if within the year from his taking possession of the office he had received ordination to priesthood. The 1917 Codex changed this law. Thus, its canon 154 prohibited giving an office with care of souls to persons who were not yet priests. Likewise, canon 453 stated that "nobody can be appointed parish priest without first being ordained priest." Obviously these two canons looked to the future and did not contain any *express mention* of the past. Hence, deacons who had lawfully obtained a parish before the 1917 Codex promulgation were not deprived of the parochial office already obtained. Their right was respected.

*Acquired Rights.* The norm contained in canon 4 of the new Code is another application of the non-retroactivity of law, established in canon 9. Canon 4 reads as follows: "Acquired rights, and likewise privileges granted by the Apostolic See to either physical or juridical person, which are still in use and have not been revoked, remain intact, unless they are expressly revoked by the canons of this Code."

The canonical principle contained in canon 4 sustains the permanence and continuity of the rights legitimately acquired before the promulgation of the new Codex, even if such rights be contrary to the norms contained in the Codex now in vigor. The reason behind this principle is the safety and security of subjective rights: the subject person, physical or juridical, of these rights should have a guarantee that rights legally acquired will be respected in the future. Acquired rights cease to exist only when the new laws on the matter involved contain an *express revoking clause*, as we will explain.

Acquired right is a subjective right created or produced by a juridical act executed in accordance with a positive law. Two external elements are found in any acquired right, namely: the existing law and the act executed in conformity with such law. The law is the efficient cause of the right, the act executed according to the law is the motive or reason why the subject or agent acquires the right.

Rights are, as a rule, radically attained and enjoyed when the juridical act is executed. Sometimes, however, the benefits flowing upon the right are not fully attained at once, since they are not yet produced, as it were, simultaneously. They come into existence progressively with the passing of time. If a new law replaces the law which is the efficient cause of the right, the benefits still to be produced during the effectivity of the new law should be evaluated and ruled according to the old law which was their original efficient cause, not according to the new law which replaces it. All benefits already produced and those to be produced in the future, flow from the same right, the immediate effect of the juridical act performed according to the old law.

However, the new law can, in view of the common good make some provisions concerning the acquired rights as regards the benefits to be produced during its effectivity. However, in such a case the new law has to declare in a *precise and express manner* that such benefits will be governed by the new norm. If this *express provision* is not made, the existing acquired right with all its benefits is not revoked and consequently continues to be enjoyed by the subject concerned, as if the old law were not changed or abolished. Mere change of laws on the matter is not enough to revoke legitimately acquired rights and their benefits. As far as the undersigned knows, there is not a single *express revoking clause* in the 1983 Codex on the matter of acquired rights. The same thing happened in 1917 Code.

*Apostolic Privileges.* Canon 4 deals also with *privileges* granted by the Holy See before the new Codex. *Privilege* is generally defined as a "favorable concession, against or outside the law, granted by the competent authority." A privilege is ordinarily perpetual; when temporal it is called an *indult*.

A privilege, not contrary to the Codex, continues to be enjoyed by the beneficiary indefinitely. If it is contrary to the law, three

conditions should be fulfilled in the privilege in order for it to continue being enjoyed by the beneficiary after the promulgation of the new Codex to which it is contrary, namely:

1) the privilege should have been granted by the Holy See, "*sive directe et immediate, sive ab aliquo quocumque Superiore ex pontificia potestate indirecte, ante Codicem per actum specialem concessum*";

2) the privilege has to have been used by the beneficiary before the promulgation of the new Codex;

3) the privilege was not revoked by the Holy See when the new Codex took effectivity.

The three foregoing conditions being fulfilled, the old privileges, although contrary to the new Codex, continue to exist in full vigor, "unless they are *expressly revoked* by the canons of the new Codex."

We have said before that as regards *acquired rights*, no revoking clause is found in the new Code. However, with regards to privileges there are several. Canon 396, § 2 says: "The Bishop has a right to select any clerics he wishes as his companions and helpers in a visitation, *any contrary privilege or custom reprobated*." Likewise canon 526 § 2 reads: "In any one parish there is to be only one parish priest, or one moderator in accordance with canon 517, 1; any contrary custom is reprobated *and any privilege revoked*."

If the law has no such revoking clause, privileges contrary to the Codex should continue to be enjoyed by the beneficiaries concerned along with acquired rights.

Summing up, our answer to the consultant Religious Superior is: the fact that the new Codex differs from the 1917 Codex *does not constitute an express revocation of the acquired rights and privileges* granted by the Holy See.

EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

## Homilies for July and August 1990

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

### **Thirteenth Sunday of the Year, July 1, 1990**

*(2 K 4:8-11, 14-16; Rm 6:3-4, 8-11; Mt 10:37-42)*

In the Gospel reading for this Sunday we find our Lord Jesus Christ telling us how it is to be a true disciple, that is, one must dedicate oneself wholly to him. He also points out that whoever is charitable, hospitable and helpful to his disciples or any of his true followers will have his reward from the Father.

Nowhere can we find the frankness of Jesus more explicitly stated than it is here in this particular passage. He lays out what is demanded of one who is to come after him, and, indeed, it is most demanding and most uncompromising. He bluntly tells us what we must expect if we accept the commission to be his disciples. Jesus is aware that there are those who for sure will give heed to his call, and he is also most certain that there will be those who will refuse to accept his challenge. We should be aware that whoever wishes to follow him is first and foremost confronted with the choice of whether to accept or reject him.

He says, "He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he who loves son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Our Lord, however, does not in any way mean to abolish the fourth commandment, that is to honor father and mother, nor the natural love of children for their parents. He, however, tells

us that there is a love higher and much nobler than this, which has a greater claim than the natural love of the family. And this is none other than the love of God and the love of him whom the Father has sent. Oftentimes, we are not aware, or, if aware, neglect and deny this because we are overly attached to wife or husband, or the family as a whole. Then we refuse some avenue of service, some call to sacrifice, because we wish not to leave them or to accept what would put us in less comfortable situation. Sad, but true . . . man refuses God's call to service because he has allowed personal attachments to render him immobile.

Jesus then offers the cross to those who would wish to follow him. This is indicative that his true disciple or follower must be willing to suffer for his sake. We might wonder . . . what is it really to suffer in the name of Jesus? What does it mean to bear the weight of his cross? What is it to die for him? Jesus says, "... he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it but he loses his life for my sake will find it."

He who refuses to die for Christ's sake, and thus prolongs his earthly life for a few years, will lose his eternal life, and vice-versa, he who accepts death for his cause, will gain eternal life. Our Lord is simply making it crystal clear to us that to follow him loyally and devotedly is no easy thing. He tells us that to be his follower, one must be ready to face death itself, if the situation calls for it, for his sake.

Well, Jesus indeed is demanding this from us but we can carry out his command in many ways. We may have to sacrifice our ambitions, the ease and the comfort that we might derive and enjoy from them or the career that we want to achieve. We may also have to lay aside our dreams to realize that certain shining things of which we might catch a glimpse of are not for him. We certainly have to sacrifice our will, for no true follower can ever again do merely what he likes. The man who seeks first ease and comfort and security and the fulfillment of personal ambition may well achieve these things - but will he be a truly happy man? We are sent into this world to serve God and our fellowmen. We can do whatever we want to if we wish to do so. But we should always bear in mind that that way we may lose all that makes life valuable to others and worth living for ourselves. The way to serve others, the way to fulfill God's purpose for us, the way

to true happiness is to spend life selflessly, for only in this way will we ever find life, here and hereafter.

Along this line Jesus tells us something about how to treat his disciples. These are the men who are dedicated to the Father, to him, and the salvation of all men. They are the ones whom Jesus calls the "little ones" for they have no social standing here on earth, for their power comes only from on high. Jesus says, "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he himself is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

The gospel reading has the same theme as the first reading. In the first reading, we find the lady of Shumeh rewarded by God because she was charitable and hospitable to one whom she recognized as a man of God. Those who cooperate, even in a little way, with the representatives of Christ, will also be rewarded. This reward however may not come in this life, but may be all the greater, in the next life. (*Sem. Roel Albert Villaluz*)

#### Fourteenth Sunday of the Year, July 8, 1990

(Zc 9:9-10; Rm 8:9.11-13; Mt 11:25-30)

The famous novelist, E. M. Forster once said, "How can I tell what I think until I see what I say." To an educated and wise person there is always a sense of finality whenever they say things, ideas or opinions. Hence, whatever he says, he is convinced of it. But before he is convinced of it, he must have understood it. In other words, he would not somehow say about things of which he has no knowledge and no understanding. And what is interesting is that, nobody can ever convince such a man of things he does not understand — things beyond man's understanding.

Christianity is the exact opposite of this. We Christians should be able to tell and say, proclaim in fact, the truth which we cannot

somehow totally understand. And what is this truth? — it is the message of Christ — the message of love.

In the gospel of today, we hear Jesus thanking his Father for revealing his message to “the little ones” — his disciples — and not to the wise and prudent — the Scribes and Pharisees. The tone of thanksgiving of Jesus, however, is mixed with resignation precisely because he did not reach the learned, the wise and the prudent. But it does not mean that Jesus did not reach out to them. He did. Unfortunately, they did not accept him. Was this a failure on the part of Jesus? Or was it one on the part of the leading Jews? His message has been grasped rather by the lowly ones, who were drawn from the peasant and working classes. He was accepted by certain Gentiles, who were despised in Jewish society. We may ask, why?

You see, when a cup is full of water, it is impossible to pour more water into it.

There was a university professor who went searching for the meaning of life. After spending several years and travelling miles, he came to the small hut of a holy hermit and asked to be enlightened. The holy man invited his visitor into his humble dwelling and began to serve him tea. He filled the pilgrim's cup and then kept on pouring so that the tea was soon dripping onto the floor. The professor watched the overflow in astonishment until he could no longer restrain himself. “Stop! It is full. No more will go in.” “Like this cup,” said the hermit, “you are full of your own opinions, preoccupations and ideas. How can I teach you unless you first empty your cup.”

The message of Christ is not grasped by mere worldly wisdom and understanding, but only by receiving revelation. In the middle part of the gospel-narration, Christ says, “Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father.” “Everything” here means revelation. So, Jesus is in full position to pour this revelation to anyone's cup, because he alone knows the Father. Christ is the only way, therefore, for us to grasp this revelation. And his ways are simple. The ways of the lowly and little ones. The way of the manger. The way of service and love he rendered to his disciples by washing and kissing their feet.



His yoke is easy and his burden, light. It is we ourselves, who make our yoke difficult and our burden heavy. Now, the only way to take his way is to empty our cups, getting rid of those opinions, preoccupations and ideas of ours which burden us. Christ is always there and constantly inviting us for tea. Which is to say that the secret of Christianity does not consist on other things but on giving of one's heart — one's whole heart in fact — to Christ.

To end this, I would like to tell you a story.

Once upon a time there was an old man from Crete. He loved his land with deep intensity, so much so that when he perceived he was about to die, he had his sons bring him outside and lay him on his beloved earth. As he was about to expire, he reached down by his side and clutched some earth in his hands.

He now appeared before heaven's gate. God, as an old white-bearded man, came out to greet him: "Welcome! You've been a good man. Please, come into the joys of heaven." But as the old man started to enter the pearly gates, God said, "Please, you must let go of the soil." "Never!" said the old man, stepping back. "Never!" And God departed sadly, leaving the old man outside the gates.

A few eons went by. God came out again, this time as a friend, an old drinking crony. They had a few drinks, told some stories, and then God said, "All right, now it's time to enter heaven, let's go." And they started for the pearly gates. And once more God requested that the old man let go of the soil and once more he refused.

More eons rolled by. God came out again, this time as a delightful granddaughter. "Oh, granddaddy," she said, "You're so wonderful and we all miss you. Please come inside with me." The old man nodded and she helped him up for, by this time, he had indeed grown very old and arthritic. In fact, so arthritic was he that he had to prop up his right hand holding Crete's soil with his left hand. They move toward the pearly gates and at this point his strength quite gave out. His gnarled fingers would no longer stay clenched in a fist with the result that the soil sifted out between them until his hand was empty. He then entered heaven. The first thing he saw was his beloved island. (*Sem. Antonino Amano*)

## Fifteenth Sunday of the Year, July 15, 1990

(Is 55:10-11; Rm 8:18-23; Mt 13:1-23)

Truly *agricultural* notions, such as sowing seed, rainfall, soil analysis and first fruits, lead up to considerations of harvest and food and, then finally, to all creation longing for liberty in today's readings. Let us look therefore, at the first reading, the gospel and the second reading for this Sunday's Mass in more detail.

Taken as it is from "Deutero-Isaiah" the first reading is at the very end of the "Book of Consolation" which runs from Chapter 40 to Chapter 55 of the great Isaian scroll. Thus it is part of a fresh invitation on God's part to see how his word is related to the events of daily which illustrate it while it itself transcends them. For God's word to soak into our lives the way the God-sent rain drenches the earth it has to take on definitely human aspects of language and relevance suited to its audience. If I have never seen or felt rain I do not have a chance of understanding the metaphors of this passage. If on a deeper level I cannot hear God's word because I am deafened by obscurity of phrase or the misdirected piety of its presentation I shall miss out in an even worse way.

What you and I need is a presentation of God's word that rings true to our ears and says something to our lives. This cannot return empty. Mere quotations from scripture unfortunately can. For the Word of God is not magic. It is a personal, human message. But this word can only give its products of spiritual "seed" and "bread" if our "soil" is good. And just to show what this means we must turn to today's Gospel.

The passage involved is a lengthy, complex parable in the Discourse Section of what scholars call Book Three of Matthew, that is the central section of the Gospel comprising Chapters 11 to 13. Placed as the first of eight "Parable of the Reign of Heaven" it is the longest and most subject of these parables to elaborate, allegorical explanation. However, the Lord's intention is probably simpler than even the text itself would make it appear. The whole point, abstracting from the graphic details of how sowing took place in rural Palestine in the first century, is that God gives a harvest: a hundred fold, sixty fold or thirty fold.

Our question when we hear this Gospel should not, therefore, be: "What sort of soil am I?" but, rather, "what sort of harvest will the Lord let me give?" For only the good soil counts for crops, but even it gives variable yields. In the explanation of the parable what matters is "hearing and understanding" God's word. Could it be that I hear it all but only respond to thirty percent of it? If so, may God give me a better hearing for a greater harvest!

In the second reading St. Paul tells the Romans that God's dealing with men has a more than individual, interior or even just human implication. For God is the Lord of *all* creation. His processes are *cosmic*. Certainly the eighth Chapter of Romans is one of the most difficult in all of scripture to interpret. Monsignor Ronald A. Knox used to call it "Heresy Chapter" for he claimed that nearly every major error in the history of the Church could be based on a misinterpretation of Romans 8. So we must handle it with care. What St. Paul is evidently trying to show us is that as Christian life involves a deeper and deeper "walk in the Spirit" for the individual, it also involves deeper and deeper insights onto the universality of its end, God's eternal glory.

The final revelation of God's glory must involve everything and everyone he has made. Redeemed man as aligned with Christ his Redeemer and in cooperation with the Spirit has a creative role of channeling and "freeing" creation because of his being set right by glory inasmuch as he is among the adopted "Children of God". What was created for man fell with man. But if man is restored it will be born anew to its rightful fully created finality and no longer subject to chaos. Moreover, the "hope" of material creation will only be realized when we who share the first fruits of the Spirit have undergone the pangs of new birth with it. There can be no Christian "ecology" without a real sense of redemption firmly planted in our hearts first.

All three of these readings show that God has a great plan and that you and I are part of it. Here at Mass on Sunday we are trying to focus more clearly on this plan and ask how it can be fulfilled in us. Part of the fulfillment is the Mass itself. The Mass is "word" and "water", and we are "soil" for God's "seed". But we are more. We become at Mass the empowered agents of God, and we receive the

finished "bread" the Eucharistic "produce" of this sacramental grace operative in our midst. Each Sunday we have an opportunity for more growth, more nourishment and closer unity with God.

However, we should ask ourselves what all this is for. Do you and I change the world when we leave this church building? Can we offer growth and nourishment of the type we have received to anyone else? Do we have any real impact on the *cosmos*, the "whole of creation"? Of course the answer should be: "Yes!" Too often it is, admittedly: "No." As we continue to pray at this Mass let us ask the Lord to make us "divinely productive," to give the earth an increased "harvest" through us and, most of all, to make us his sharers in the Great Plan which will restore all persons and all things to their rightful place in Christ. (*Fr. Roman Carter, O.P.*)

### Sixteenth Sunday of the Year, July 22, 1990

(*Ws 12:13,16-19; Rm 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43*)

On this Sixteenth Sunday of the year our Holy Mother the Church poses for us one of the greatest and most baffling problems in human history. This is the problem of evil. It seems to have no solution. At any rate in the possible million years of human existence, though many philosophers and theologians have posed this problem, no rational, adequate or credible attempt at a solution has gained universal human acceptance. Why is this? Because evil is a mystery. Evil is of course never absolute. But it can be intense and prolonged, very painful to bear and highly destructive. Why does a good God allow even a relative evil? Why is Being Himself plagued even by a small measure of this "nothingness"? Why, worst of all, must the innocent suffer while the malicious seem to thrive?

In a short homily I cannot begin to give even a tentative response to these questions. However, let us look at today's three readings to see what light they can throw on the problem of evil and on God's revealed (if very partial) solution to a few of its multiple aspects.

In the first reading, a digression in the Book of Wisdom's comments on Egypt in Salvation History, God himself is seen as both

strong and kindly. Godliness consists for us in being Godlike. We can only be like God if we put up with the sins of others in hope that their repentance will be great. If we try, in other words, to solve the problem of evil by hurriedly crushing evil doers we shall surely fail. And we can even be accused of having perpetrated great evils in the name of good. Thus, the first clue to solving the problem is a firm but patient stance whether God's or man's.

Today's Gospel, from the great Reign Parable Section of Matthew 13, is the parable of the darnel (sometimes translated as "tares" or "cockle") which is a wheat-like plant in appearance, in reality a hardy but worthless weed. If it is sown in a wheat field it will be more of a nuisance than a destructive force. So the primitive community regarded unrepentant sinners in its midst. Instead of fostering pharisaical scandal the Church down through the ages has patiently allowed a certain intrusion of almost inevitable human evil in places high, low and in between. At the end of time, when harvest comes, the separation will take place. The weeds will be burnt. The crop will be saved. It is, curiously, up to us to choose if we are to be "darnel" or "wheat". Thus, the second clue to a solution of the problem of evil involves in long, patient process of waiting with a real belief that things will be put right in the end.

More than either the first reading or the Gospel the short passage from St. Paul's letter to the Romans which makes up our second reading gives the strongest lead in the direction of a final solution to the problem and coping with the mystery of evil. In our prayer about things which go wrong we are often so baffled that we are left speechless. Then it is that God the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and "takes over," giving us words which transcend our thoughts and turning us into real intercessors. Then our pleas before God are not hampered by our limited understanding. Then we *pray* according to this very mind. Then, in our prayer, we rise above evil and are given the divine honor of acting as brakes and curbs to all that goes wrong.

Here at Mass this morning we are asked to unburden ourselves of all evil, within and without, and to cast aside all earthly cares. Here we are bidden to worship the Lord our God with all our being. Here Christ the great deliverer from evil becomes present to us through the

power of the Holy Spirit and we eat his Body and drink his Blood. This is our school of patience, and this is our source of grace. What a powerful antidote is the Mass itself to all the evils of the world and mankind — what a help to the living and the dead!

However, our Sunday Mass will be over in less than an hour. We then have to live our lives for seven more days, days in which evil will often seem to have the upper hand. How can we who have received Christ here at the Mass take his redemptive power into the world? By being Godlike and godly, by being patient and enduring in whatever trials beset us, but (and this most of all) by allowing the Holy Spirit, who elevates our minds and hearts to God, to continue praying in and through us. None of us will completely solve the problem of evil. The mystery of wrong doing and wrong doers will remain with us and annoy us 'till our last breath. Nonetheless, we can by God's grace see that he has a solution. In the end the Victorious Christ will share this full victory with us if in the meantime we have slowly learned the ways of the Lord, ways of a goodness so divine that no one and nothing can wrest it from us. (*Fr. Roman Carter, O.P.*)

### **Seventeenth Sunday of the Year, July 29, 1990**

(1 K 3:5, 7-12; Ro 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52)

An old lady in a far flung barrio was so poor that she had to go begging from house to house for her daily needs, even though her son, Juan, had gone to the city and eventually had become very wealthy and famous. One day a kindly person asked the old lady, "Why don't you tell Juan what you need? He will surely help you." The old lady, mother-like, covered up her son by saying, "Oh, he has a lot of things in his mind, and besides he often writes to me and sends me cards with beautiful pictures. They are, however, the same cards and pictures, week after week." "Do you keep all of them?" "Oh, sure, they came from Juan, and even though I get bored looking at them, I surely won't throw them away. I place all of them in the Bible the Padre gave to me," reaching for the Bible and giving it to the visitor. Between the pages of the Bible, the visitor found hundreds of cheques, a fortune more than enough to see her daily needs. She had a treasure but she did not know it.

My dear brother and sisters, this morning, we've heard from the Gospel of Matthew the parables of the treasure, the pearl and the dragnet. The man working in the field, chances upon a treasure. What does he do? He sells all he has to buy the field. The same was true for the merchant who sold all he had just to buy the fine pearls of his discovery. The dragnet, on the other hand, was used to gather fish of every kind, later to pick out the good from the bad ones. All three parables are given to us in the light of the Kingdom of Heaven. "The Kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure." The Kingdom stands for all the possible means of salvation God gives to us in order to attain that union — eternal life with him. What are these means, one may ask? We have the Scripture, the Sacraments, God's grace and in concrete, we call it Faith — our calling, our vocation to manifest and witness to one another God's infinite rule of love and justice among us. Faith is a treasure. Our faith in Christ, our belief in him as the one true God and Man who promised to take us all to heaven if we remain faithful to him is our "treasure in the field."

And yet, sometimes it may happen as with the old lady in our story, many of us do not realize the treasure within our reach. For many of us, faith was given to us with little or no effort on our part. But to keep that faith, to nourish it, and let it grow surely demands a lot of effort on our part.

When you woke up this morning and realized it was Sunday, I suppose many of you really "sold" that extra sleep just to attend Mass this morning. Some would have preferred the movies, but no, you chose to be here. Some of us could have chosen to spend a quiet weekend at home, but no. Why do we find people willing to give the "treasure of their time" to the parish apostolate, to community service, or to charity?

All of us are called to be like the wise men in the parables we've heard. We can surely sacrifice something for the growth of our faith. We can "sell" a lot of things in our lives for the great treasure who is Christ.

In this very Mass, we are offering concretely ourselves to be his followers. When the priest says, "Let us proclaim our faith," and we respond, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

... this is a positive expression of our belief in the mystery of our redemption which will be completed when Christ comes again.

But we cannot be bystanders, doing nothing. Christ himself offers to us the means to nourish ourselves in Holy Communion. Christ who gives us the strength to move forward, to walk the path of faith at all cost.

In this Mass, let us renew our Faith in him. Jesus has shown us the way. He gave us the means to reach our goal. They say big things come from small things. Our daily effort may seem small in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God nothing could be more wanting for he sees through the heart. We may sometimes fail along the way. But we can always stand up and start again. God bless you all! (*Sem. Moises Alexis Javier*)

### **Eighteenth Sunday of the Year, August 5, 1990**

(*Is 55:1-3; Rm 8:35,37-39; Mt 14:13-21*)

Galilee was a place where it was difficult to be alone. It was a small country, only 50 miles long from north to south and 25 miles wide from east to west, but is said to have embraced 204 towns and villages, none with a population of less than 15,000 people. It was therefore a thickly populated area in which it was not easy to get away from people for any length of time. But it was quiet on the lake side. Most of Jesus' friends were fishermen; and it was not difficult to embark on one of their boats and seek retirement on the east side of the lake. That is what Jesus did when he heard of the death of John the Baptist.

There are three basic reasons why Jesus wanted to be alone: first, he was human and he needed rest; secondly, having heard of John's death he wanted to avoid mingling with people recklessly; thirdly, with his cross coming nearer and nearer, Jesus knew that he must meet with God before he met with men.

But the crowd would not just let Jesus and his apostles escape as easily as they might attempt. With the smallness of the place (the



lake was only 8 miles wide), the crowd could easily keep track of them. So, once again Jesus and his apostles would miss their much needed holiday, or, rather, that day was meant to be a working holiday for them.

What happened in that place was truly and indeed unforgettable. Jesus cured their sick and most important of all, he fed the whole crowd of people (Matthew mentions 5,000 of them not counting women and children) with just five loaves and two fish. Some theologians have argued against this incident saying that it was not a miracle of multiplication. A modern Palestinian peasant could not be so improvident as not to bring any provision with him. Hence, they interpret this event as a miracle of sharing rather than a miracle of multiplication — a miracle of selfish people turned into generous people. They may be right or they may be wrong for we must not undermine the power of God. But still, the unquestionable fact remains: the event was made possible because of the love and compassion of Jesus towards the people. Jesus was not only God; he was also human like them. He knew and felt what and how it means to be hungry. And the answer to the people's need was to give them food by performing a miracle.

But Jesus was already tired after days and weeks of strenuous work. Like his apostles he, too, needed rest and vacation. However, the call to love and service ruled out other priorities. For a person whose values are far more noble, rest was not hard to put aside. In our streets we often see the sign which reads: "*Bayan muna bago ang sarili*" (Country first before self). Jesus was such in person!

The multiplication of loaves and fish is also said to be a figure of the sacred banquet, the Holy Eucharist. Jesus could not just let the crowd return home with empty stomachs. He knew they were hungry and that's why he invited them to a banquet. In our first reading, the Lord through second-Isaiah (so called because his prophecies were joined on to Isaiah by a later editor) said to the Jewish exiles in Babylon: "Every one who thirsts come to the water, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price!" (Is 55:1). But the food this time was more than that which nourishes the body; this was a food that gives life to the soul. And we are able to partake of this life-giving food, the very body

of our Lord Jesus Christ, for one simple reason: Jesus' great love for us. "No greater love a man has than to lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

Today, as we are about to partake in this life-giving banquet, to this sacred Body of Christ, the Holy Communion, let us consider asking ourselves: "As a Christian have I considered spending some moments with a neighbor or friend who has a need or a problem? Have I made a little sacrifice of my personal priorities for the sake of my neighbor? Have I shared the food of my talents and capabilities to a friend or neighbor who has little or nothing at all? In other words, have I shown that same love and compassion Christ has shown before me in the readings of today? If and when we are ready to let Christ enter into our hearts, then we can truly say: "Lord, you know that I am not worthy to receive you, but you say you want to come into my poor and untidy home, please make me less unworthy, forgive all my past sins and offenses, and give me the grace and strength to be better in the future." God bless you! (*Sem. William Ella, Jr.*)

**Nineteenth Sunday of the Year, August 12, 1990**  
(I K 19:9,11-13; Rm 9:1-5; Mt 14:22-33)

One of the saddest experiences that can ever happen to a person is the experience of being misunderstood by people who are close to him; people who are supposed to know him well and to understand him quite easily. Although one may say that misunderstanding is a part of human experience yet, it produces a negative impact on the persons involved as well as on their relationship, but more so on the person who seem to be misunderstood by the very people who should appreciate him most. Eventually, it results in the rejection of one by the other. So many relationships among persons have been destroyed because of misunderstanding. We see marriages break up, we see friendships destroyed, we see family ties severed, all because of the inability of one to understand the other.

Christ too, was a victim of this painful experience. He experienced this not only once but often, throughout his public life and by people who are supposed to know and appreciate him most such as the *Pharisees*, those people so faithful to the law; his own family and

hometown; his own people (fellow Jews); even his own disciples. Throughout the first year of his public ministry Christ wanted the people who have been following him to believe and trust him as the one sent by God for their redemption. With great patience he tried to raise their minds to understand who he really was and the purpose of his coming; that he was both their Messiah and their God. And so he went about teaching them. He also healed their sick. In the Sermon on the Mount he showed where real happiness lay, in the conquest of self and sinful tendencies not in worldly ambition and wealth. By his parables he showed them that his kingdom was useless to them unless they were willing to enter it. All the time he kept in mind the false, material, nationalistic picture and emphasized the spiritual, universal nature of his kingdom. He tried to convince them that the real enemy was sin, not Rome.

And the sad climax came when he performed his most significant miracle. He multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed five thousand men. But did they understand? No, they did not. Instead of changing their outlook, they took this as a sign that he was really the political Messiah who can liberate them from Rome. Thus, for now, they were willing to accept Christ. So they tried to come and make him a king by force. But in the future, they will eventually reject him and order him to be crucified. Christ has foreseen this danger, thus, in today's gospel we see him ordering his disciples to embark on a boat and to go on ahead of him. He realized that the disciples might well have complicated the situation, for they too were still thinking of Jesus in terms of earthly power.

If we try to analyze the reaction of the crowd, we can observe that their failure to understand Christ stems from their own mistaken notion of who Christ really is, and their own selfish intentions. In our own human situations, we experience so many failures, so many disappointments in life and in our relationship with others because of our mistaken ideas of a person and our own expectations from him which are motivated by selfish interests. We accept somebody because he conforms with our expectations of him or he can be of benefit to us. But later on when the same person does not measure to our expectations or when his actions do not conform to our selfish interests we subsequently reject him.

And sad to say, this does not only happen in our relationship with other people but also in our relationship with God. It is true that we are completely dependent on God, that we can do nothing without him. That is why we pray to him and we turn to him in our need. When we want comfort in sorrow, when we want strength in difficulty, when we want peace in turmoil, when we want help in the face of depression we turn to God and we pray to him. We even offer several masses and several novenas. And when our prayers are answered we are happy.

But when he comes to us with some stern demand for sacrifice, with some challenge to effort, with the offer of some cross, we will have nothing to do with him. When he did not react in the manner we expect from him, we get desperate and discouraged just like Elijah in our first reading. He got discouraged and wanted to die because Yahweh doesn't seem to help him in his effort to turn Israel back to God. But God gave the prophet a lesson when he manifested himself to Elijah in a gentle breeze and not in fire or earthquake. This goes to show that God in his own ways without great fanfare will work his will for Israel.

Let us therefore, examine ourselves and try to ask ourselves: Do we accept Jesus for what we can get out of him? When we appeal to Christ, is it for strength to go on with our own schemes and ideas, or is it for humility and obedience to accept his plans and wishes? Is our prayer: "Lord let your will be done" or is it in reality "Lord let my will be done?"

My dear friends, God loves us and understands our needs and he never abandons us. When we ask something from him he grants it. But there are times when seemingly he does not give us what we ask from him. There are times when we wish for happiness and peace but difficulties and trials come instead. But God, who is all good never wanted these things to happen to us. Such things happen to us sometimes due to our own doings. But in spite of all these God is working among us. When it seems that he doesn't grant our prayers, it is not because he does not care for us but because he has something better in store for us. When trials and difficulties come our way, it is not because he wants us to suffer or because he does not love us. He uses these experiences in order that he may show us his saving love

and consequently we may grow closer to him. Let us learn from the experience of Peter and the apostles at the Lake. It was unfortunate that they encountered a storm in the middle of the lake, but still something good came out of that experience — Christ came to them and they experienced Christ's saving love and thus they began to know him more and grow much closer to him. So this is what the Christians' attitude ought to be — that is, a believing and trusting Christian. One who empties himself of all mistaken notions and selfish expectations about God and accepts God completely without any conditions. One who discerns the will of God in every event of his life. This is what a true Christian should be. With these attitudes we can be able to understand God better and how he works in our lives. With these attitudes we become closer to him and experience the peace he brings. May God bless you all! (*Sem. Romwel Fabregas*)

**Twentieth Sunday of the Year, August 19, 1990**  
(*Is 56:1, 6-7; Rm 11:13, 29-32; Mt 15:21-28*)

The readings for this Sunday tell us about the universality of God's salvation for those who have faith and acknowledge him as the only sovereign King, merciful and loving. In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah exultantly announces the admission of all peoples into the Messianic kingdom regardless of origin or social condition. Everyone who unites himself to the Lord in faith and does what is just will attain salvation. In the second reading, St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explains to the Gentiles (now converted to Christianity) how they were able to obtain justification through Jesus by comparing them to the Jews who rejected the Faith and did not believe the Gospel. Because Israel refused to accept the Gospel, the Apostle Paul addressed himself to the Gentiles who welcomed the message with open hearts and God in turn showed his mercy to them.

However, it is in the gospel according to St. Matthew where the message is brought to full light. If we have paid attention to the first and second readings, we can easily point out what they are telling us: salvation of Gentiles. In the story of the Canaanite woman (a Gentile, non-Jew, an outsider), Jesus seemed to be too sarcastic in his response to the woman for he identified her with dogs. We have to consider though that Jesus used this manner of speaking during his

time. But what Jesus really meant was the priority of the Jews, the chosen people, to attain salvation over and above any other notion or people. However, Jesus did not dismiss the woman immediately. Instead he granted her request and even commended her. Because of her faith Jesus was in a way "forced" to perform a miracle just to show how he appreciated her. At this point, we can somehow visualize the interrelation of the three readings. We find the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled in Jesus and later on St. Paul continued to do what Jesus began: preached the Gospel to the Gentile world.

Today we rarely hear of stories about individuals who put their faith totally in the Lord. What we often hear are stories of visions, apparitions, miracles and I don't know what. Although we seldom hear of individual cases, we cannot just neglect or ignore the thousands of faithful who flock to church every Sunday. That's why we are here today to celebrate the meaning of our faith as we enter into the great mystery of our redemption. We are here not only to express our faith but to replenish it because the Holy Eucharist is, as it were, the powerhouse of the Church. Yes, indeed, we have to recharge perhaps after being shaken by our worldly cares, after being carried away by our materialistic inclinations, by our habitual curiosity to experience everything, even things contrary to good morals and things which lead us to doubt.

Here we profess our faith just as the Canaanite woman acknowledged Jesus as the one who saves, who listens and above all the one who answers. It is our one faith to the one Lord which binds us together today setting aside our differences and with one voice we express our aspiration. Thus in all our activity faith becomes the motivating and energizing factor. Our effort now is directed towards a certain goal namely, to praise and thank God for giving us faith and sustaining this faith every now and then.

In addition to what I have said, our faith does not remain in the four corners of this church or end after the Mass. What God has given us is a living faith, something that grows, even if it grows slowly. Through faith we are united to Jesus, this we accomplish in Holy Communion, and it is only in this kind of union that we are able to perceive others as brothers and sisters. This union impels us to practice our faith in this world where man seems to master every-

thing, and to create things, and oftentimes this lead us to the question: Do we still need God? Our answer, obviously, is still yes. Because faith excludes any kind of self sufficiency for man explicitly attests his radical insufficiency and utter dependence.

It is in this context that the Canaanite woman was compelled to approach Jesus. Her faith was not just a mere profession of belief but rather showed a firm conviction that her request would be granted. Her faith evinced a deep concern for her daughter, who was possessed. She persistently entreated the Lord, on account of her daughter, despite the apostles' repugnance. Why, we may ask, was Jesus convinced by the woman? It was because Jesus knew the authenticity of her faith magnified in her action. This is actually what the Gospel would like to tell us: faith, in order to be genuine, should lead us to action, to love as St. Paul teaches the Galatians, to translate what we believe into what we do in concrete situations.

What are we to do now? Is it enough to be a follower of Christ on Sundays? How about on other days, are we to live like atheists who knew no God? Can we identify ourselves with the Canaanite woman in the spiry who manifested great faith to the Lord in spite of the fact that she was not yet one of the People of God? Certainly it will be difficult to answer these questions if we have not given a thought about our faith. If we are contented with going to Mass every Sunday and we forget everything during the rest of the week. Who cares? No, we can't afford to do that. Our faith must bear fruit not just a single fruit but an abundant harvest. We must, therefore, bear in mind that faith involves our capacity to act upon it in given circumstances. Because true faith is informed by charity, it never remains within us but seeks its way out. This is the kind of faith which "can do" miracles, can even "persuade" the Lord. Yet inasmuch as gold is tested in fire, in the same fashion, our faith must be tested too. Since faith is inestimably precious than gold, we need to discern whether it's genuine or not. This is a lifetime task and we need not hurry. Nevertheless honesty and sincerity would be of great help. The story asserts that Jesus does not refuse faith wherever he finds it. (*Sem. Lyndon A. Jong*)

## Twenty-First Sunday of the Year, August 26, 1990

(Is 22:19-23; Rom 11:33-36; Mt 16:13-20)

In the first reading, we heard that God has granted Eliakim authority over and made "a father" to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Eliakim was given the key as a symbol of the authority that God has given to him. Later on, we will hear of the same event in the gospel in which the Lord gave Peter the key to and made him the leader of his Church.

In the second reading, we heard St. Paul telling the Romans of his time, and us, today, about the wisdom of God, a wisdom that surpasses human understanding. Again, in the gospel we heard Jesus telling Peter of the revelation made by the Father, of who Jesus is, for Peter by himself would not have been able to give Jesus a very *satisfactory answer. It was aided by God's grace.*

My dear parishioners, after giving a short reflection on each of the three readings, let me now focus on the gospel on which I will base my homily.

We know that due to the confession made by St. Peter of who Jesus is and was, he was given the authority (key) over the Church and somehow this made him its leader.

If Jesus were present here, today and were to ask us the same question, "Who do you say I am?", I am pretty sure many of us would really find it hard to give him a straight-forward personal answer. We might even find it easier to tell him who he is according to what other people think of him or what writers of spiritual books tell us about him. Maybe this is because we are afraid to give him our frank answer, because we fear that other people would just laugh at us and make fun of us.

Like the people during the time of Jesus, we, too, might have different conceptions of who he is. Some of you might conceive him as a policeman, a person who is always watching us and ready to punish us each time we commit mistakes; he is more concerned with punishing than with forgiving. Others might conceive of him as a juke-box, knowing that if we drop coins, the songs we have chosen will



be played. They think that just by making a good number of novenas, all we have asked for will be granted. For those who are sick, they might conceive of him as a faith healer who can cure them of their suffering and sickness. For the poor, they might conceive of him as a humanitarian, a person who is interested in human beings and able to help them. And for the social reformers, communists and the oppressed, they might see and conceive of Christ as their model, a perfect leader who could lead them and liberate them from all the existing unjust structures of our society today.

If we try to analyze all the conceptions we have of Christ and what others think of him, we can say that all of them fall short of admitting that Jesus is a loving and merciful God, our Messiah. So if we think that we do not have the proper concept of who Jesus is, or if it falls short of the real Jesus, then we should try our best to change it. We should re-orient our belief and knowledge of Christ. And like St. Peter, we must confess and proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

A famous writer once wrote, "The way we relate with God (Jesus) depends upon the way we conceive of him." What the writer meant is happening in our lives today. We may observe in our lives, many times we feel hopeless while praying, because we conceive of God as somebody who is very far, and dwells in the highest heavens. We sometimes fear to relate with him because instead of listening to us, we think that he might all the more give us problems. There are many other instances, and these are simple things that really happen.

My dear parishioners, let us try to examine ourselves and try to answer the question that Jesus once asked the apostles, "Who do you say I am?" Let us all ask whether Christ is really the Messiah for us. Is he the Son of God, or is he just an ordinary person?

As we continue with the celebration of the Mass, let us once again re-affirm our belief that Jesus is our Messiah, the Son of the living God. Later as we receive him in the Eucharist, let us ask him the strength we need, that we may bear witness to the whole world, through our own words and deeds, that he (Jesus) is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. (*Sem. Arnold Felix A. Manalo*)

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