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MESSAGE

To the People of God in Asia

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference

"I will turn their mourning into joy" (Jer. 31-13).

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord:

Called to respond to the emerging challenges to the Church in Asia in the 1990's, we, the Bishops from the Conferences of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia-Singapore and Brunei, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of China, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and from the associate members Hongkong, Macau and Nepal, assembled joyfully and hopefully in Bandung, Indonesia, from the 17th to the 27th of July, 1990.

With the participation of Cardinal Jozef Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, of the Apostolic Pro-Nuncios in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Korea, Pakistan and Thailand, of the Fraternal Delegates from the Episcopal Conferences of Australia, Canada, the Pacific, and the United States as well as from the Council of European Episcopal Conferences, we reflected on the diversity of cultures, the major religions, and the socio-political realities in Asia.

In an atmosphere of common prayer, and after a series of dialogue and discernment among ourselves and with some priests, religious and lay people, we have prepared a Final Statement of our pastoral responses, which we now share with you in this "Message."

Conscious of the Asian realities which are critical and challenging indeed, and convinced of our mission of evangelization, we pledge our commitment to renew our sense of mission, its meaning for us and our motivations for it.

We dedicate more efforts to serve God in you, with you, and through you, and to know, show, and go the Way of Christ in our attempts to become a "communion of communities" that is open to the Divine and sensitive to the human.

Even as we humbly accept our vulnerability, we are happy and hopeful to aim at healing our wounds and strengthening our weaknesses in order to be ourselves authentic persons, credible and prophetic.

Excessive fear, oppressive force, and pervasive fraud in Asian societies are what we struggle to be free from, and peace, "an enterprise of justice . . . and the fruit of love," is what we strive to be free for to make.

Let that peace which only Christ can give begin at the hearth of the home, in the heart of every husband and wife, and of each parent and child.

Together with you, our beloved clergy, religious, and laity, we shall decide to develop "formation processes" and to encourage initiatives towards "integral development" that are Christ-centered, Scripture-directed, and culture-based.

Let us explore more pastoral approaches to the formation, spirituality, and apostolate of our youth, which forms sixty percent of the Asian population. In spite of the hopes pinned on the young through systems of education that help them mature, some may now face a future of unemployment, and possibly, of frustration.

With the negative side of tourism offsetting the positive, it has become a phenomenon that, among other things, raises the price of houses and lots but lowers the value of human lives. Victims of commercialization, exploitation and degradation, some of our Asian

women and children now cry for help from our living faith and an enlightened social conscience.

In the complex arena of politics as well as in the vast area of trade and industry, lay men and women play a vital role in the protection and promotion of the human rights of all people, be they the vocal minority or the silent majority.

Even as we abhor violence and counter-violence in any form, let active non-violence be our way of live, especially in the defense of the "right to life" of the yet unborn child as well as of the already born.

With the prevailing type of modernization that tends to de-humanize and im-personalize our Asian world of work, our migrant workers long for a treatment that respects the dignity of every child of God at work.

Together, let us endeavour as sincerely as we know how to give the refugees, the slum dwellers, and the evacuees, among others, a better chance to live as well as the chance to live better.

In the pluralistic societies we live in, let us learn to pastorally and spiritually form ourselves, clergy and laity alike, so as to become genuine and generous persons of dialogue, discernment, and deeds, even and especially at the grassroots level.

More and more inter-faith dialogues have now been established to build bridges, and not walls, of openness to listen to, and learn from religious groups other than our own. Let us rejoice at such "signs of hope" for harmony, if not for unity.

In Asia there is nature, too, and there are cultures which are different from, and yet inter-dependent with, each other. Together let us encourage the needed exploration of the resources of nature, but always for the benefit of all.

Almighty God, after all, is the author of nature and of its bounty, and the whole of creation is absolutely his. We are only his stewards at this time and in this place.

With mass media, both print and broadcast, now being engaged in by more and more of our people, let us begin to formulate a pastoral spiritual formation program to evangelize such media people enough to become evangelizers in their "apostolate of the word."

Aware and assertive of our respective "gifts of the Holy Spirit," let us share in, and contribute to, the building up of the Church in Asia that is one People of God, whose joy is serene, and whose hope springs eternal.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus our Lord, directed the servants at Cana of Galilee, to "Do whatever He tells you" (*Jn* 2:5). Ever ready to accompany us in our "journey of faith," she, too, will give us direction in the sense of goal and direction in the sense of guidance. Let us entrust ourselves to her.

In the absence of our brother Bishops from Laos, Cambodia, South and North Vietnams, and Mainland China, the participation of whom we greatly missed, we extend our special greetings to the People of God in those lands, sharing with them our hopes and our joys.

With brotherly love,

The 5th FABC Plenary Assembly
Bandung, Indonesia
July 27, 1990

To My Brother Bishops Delegates to the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC

It is with great joy that I address you who have gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, for the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC. Through you I cordially greet all the bishops, clergy, religious and laity of the Church in Asia. In the words of the First Letter of Peter, I pray: "May grace and peace be multiplied in you" (1:2).

As Pastors who are called to read "the signs of the times," you intend during your Meeting to discuss the subject *"The Emerging Challenges to the Church in Asia in the 1990s: A Call to Respond."* After a preliminary study conducted with pastoral sensitivity, you now wish to give a joint response to common problems. As the Church's Universal Pastor, I, too, wish to open my heart in a spirit of collegial affection and concern in order to reflect with you on the Church's earthly pilgrimage in Asia. I offer you my fraternal encouragement and support, and I do so in the confident hope that your Assembly will offer clear and concrete leadership from which your local Churches will derive inspiration and strength for the future.

What are the *challenges* faced by God's people in Asia as they seek to follow Christ in the world today? A principal challenge is found in *secularization and materialism*, two distinct but interrelated phenomena which increasingly permeate the thinking of ordinary people in their quest for a better life, as well as programmes introduced by governments and cultural institutions. I share your

concern that a growing number of young Asians, especially in the more developed countries, tend to measure happiness and success by material possessions. Given the rich and ancient spiritual traditions of Asia, it would indeed be tragic if in our day the people of the Continent failed to achieve their full and authentic realization as human persons as a result of increasing disregard for the transcendent and religious dimensions of life.

Another serious challenge is posed by the fact that many countries of Asia are still under the oppressive sway of *Communism*, with a consequent loss of human freedom. In lands traditionally known as places of harmony, Communism has introduced a shocking disharmony. It hinders integral human development by demanding a break with traditions, often violently imposed, and subjects large numbers of people to great suffering, including hunger, through unrealistic economic plans and misguided priorities such as costly armaments.

A further cause of grave concern is the *violation of human rights* in certain parts of Asia. Within this context we find the tendency on the part of some to dismiss as foreign to local cultures the aspirations of those who seek recognition of the inalienable rights of persons.

The question of human rights prompts us to note the signs of *religious intolerance* manifested in some Asian countries. Under the pressure of particular groups, for example, certain governments in nations where there are many followers of Islam have assumed postures which seem not in keeping with that tolerance which is a part of the venerable Islamic tradition. Attempts are sometimes made to change legislation, introducing policies which effectively deny the rights of religious minorities. The intransigent attitudes of some, which leave no room for other religions, recognize as authentically Asian only that which can be expressed within their own religious categories. The regrettable phenomenon of intolerance is not however restricted to any single religious tradition.

Finally, as especially alarming problem which the Church cannot ignore is *widespread poverty*. While some Asians are experiencing the benefits of technological development, others are being forced into modern forms of slavery. I am thinking of the exploitation

of workers, the exclusion of vast numbers of people from the benefits of an advanced society, the lack of social assistance, illiteracy, the use of drugs and other "artificial paradises," the spread of gambling and violence, the corruption to be found in the great cities and the inhuman living conditions which millions of people are forced to endure in the teeming outskirts of urban centres. To these many social ills we have to add the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and the pollution of the environment at the behest of influential economic interests, to the detriment of the people which are technologically least advanced.

Dear Brothers, your deep pastoral concern for the difficult social and economic conditions in which so many of your people must live — conditions which defy easy solutions and which are often reinforced by evils and injustices which in some cases have become permanent "structures" of society — is already a stimulus for you to renew your commitment to the task of evangelization. As Bishops you know that your principal task is not only to denounce evil, but also to *proclaim a message of conversion and hope*.

As men of faith, you firmly believe that the Gospel's power to overcome evil is rooted in a living person who is the Saviour of the world. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, "only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22). Christ is that "perfect man" (*ibid.*) who in a certain sense united himself with every human person and restored in all of Adam's children — regardless of nation or culture — that likeness to God which had been disfigured by sin. Accordingly, it is the *light of Christ* which enables you to proclaim boldly the dignity and fundamental rights of each and every person in the face of great injustices. It is the *love of God revealed in Christ* which leads you courageously to apply the Church's social teaching to the real-life situation of the peoples of Asia and to foster social progress and a wider material and cultural development. It is *service of Christ* which sustains your educational and charitable institutions, and which summons even more of your faith to follow the example of people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta in ministering to the needy and downtrodden.

At the same time you know that the search for meaning and well-being must also be a *quest for salvation*. The salvation with

which you are concerned as Bishops is the salvation achieved and offered by Christ: the *salvation of the whole person*, a salvation that is complete and universal, unique and absolute, full and all-embracing. The Christian apostle is not just a social worker; nor is the Christian faith merely an ideology or a humanistic programme. The Church must always and everywhere strive to lead people to the realization of their eternal vocation in Christ, a call to personal communion with the Living God. Even when engaged in the work of human development, Christians should be ever mindful of the words of Saint Paul: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 8:16).

On the eve of the Third Christian Millennium, an ever *greater commitment to evangelization is imperative* for all the local Churches in Asia which, though small, have shown themselves to be dynamic and strong in their witness to the Gospel. Their special challenge is to proclaim the Good News where different religions and cultures meet, at the very crossroads of social, political and economic forces in today's world. In the light of this fundamental duty, your Meeting is an opportunity to seek new ways of strengthening awareness in the local Churches of the need for first evangelization.

Although the Church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religious traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as a reflection of that truth which enlightens all men, this does not lessen her duty and resolve to proclaim without fail Jesus Christ who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6; cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 2). We should not forget Pope Paul VI's teaching on the matter: "Neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 53). The fact that the followers of other religions can receive God's grace and be saved by Christ apart from the ordinary means which he has established does not thereby cancel the call to faith and baptism which God wills for all people (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 7). It is a contradiction of the Gospel and of the Church's very nature to assert, as some do, that the Church is only one way of salvation among many, and that her mission towards the followers of other religions should be nothing more than to help them be better followers of those religions.

The mission of God's people, dear Brothers, is twofold: to bear witness to Christ and "the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1), and to be a leaven of love and goodness in the affairs of this world until Christ returns in glory. Today, *Christian lay people* in ever greater numbers wish to share in this mission and to do so with ever greater commitment. We welcome this sign of the times and recognize the indispensable role of lay men and women in spreading the Good News.

As pastors and leaders of the faithful of Asia, you will find it necessary to respond to the desires of the laity, expanding their participation in accordance with that distinction of roles which has its foundation in a decision made in Apostolic times when, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles said that "it would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food . . . we shall continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word" (Acts 6:4). Thus the clergy, freed from many administrative tasks undertaken to meet supplementary needs, can be models of a deep spirituality, witnesses to transcendent values expressed in prayer and contemplation, and ever attentive to the presence of God in the lives of those whom they serve.

In conformity with their specific ministry, priests should be particularly active in the *Christian formation of lay people*, whose irreplaceable vocation is the sanctification of the world in all of its temporal realities. Lay men and women are called to be courageous in expressing their Christian convictions in the public forum at the service of the common good. Yet educated Christians often suffer from the dichotomy of being experts in their professional fields but having an inadequate religious formation. Nevertheless, the history of evangelization, in Korea and Vietnam for example, as in ancient Rome itself, testifies to the excellent work of evangelization carried out by members of the laity. The Church in Asia today is increasingly blessed with the deep faith and infectious enthusiasm of lay people from all walks of life who serve the Church's mission successfully and convincingly, yet often in a discreet and unobtrusive manner.

The relationship between clergy and laity is above all one of complementarity. The Church in Asia owes an immense debt of gratitude to those courageous and dedicated missionaries, both men and women, who implanted and have sustained the Church on your

Continent out of love for Christ and his Gospel. As the number of priests in particular decreases, there is a temptation to think of the growing participation of the laity as a replacement for priestly ministry, especially where vocations are few. But this way of thinking both hampers the work of evangelization and impoverishes the Church from within. Priests are absolutely essential for the continuation and fruitfulness of her life and mission. I therefore urge you to make every effort to continue to promote vocations to the priesthood among your people, with trust that God will shower his blessing on so important an endeavour. As the experience of some of your local Churches has shown, the participation of a dynamic and active laity, far from diminishing priestly vocations, serves rather to increase them.

Dear Brothers, I deeply share your conviction that this is a *significant hour for the Church in Asia*. Your hopes and aspirations for the growth of your local Churches are my own, and I present them daily to the Lord of the harvest in constant prayer for you all. May your Meeting in Bandung resemble the scene in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Apostles were gathered before the day of Pentecost, "continuing with one mind in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). May she who is Mother of the Church obtain a further outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon you all.

Accept this expression of my spiritual union with you, and my encouragement in your pastoral responsibilities. With my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, on the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 23 June 1990.

JOANNES PAULUS VII

Report of the Secretary General

*Fifth Plenary Assembly
Bandung, Indonesia
July 17-27, 1990*

1. Introduction

When the bishops of the Preparatory Committee has settled on the theme of this plenary assembly, (one bishop called it more like a "scenario" than one of our usual themes), they began to set down the challenges to the Church in mission in Asia. Within a few minutes they had over thirty such challenges which, thankfully, another bishop later synthesized into some general categories: the challenge of poverty, underdevelopment and injustice, the challenge to value by secularism and materialism, the challenge to creation and environment, and the challenge of pluralism. Compound these with the turmoil and upheaval — of every kind — affecting so many of our countries, and we here at this Assembly could be excused if we feel a little overwhelmed.

In a "crisis atmosphere" we come together to find a common vision and to discern the orderly and integrated responses which the Church in Asia, as a "Servant Church," can try to make in each of our countries and to decide what service FABC can render to the bishops of Asia.

And yet we are convinced that we are about the work of the Holy Spirit. What could be for us overwhelming occasions for gloom can also be God's loving challenges to us, to lead us to new levels of joyful

maturity in his service. This joy is what the Preparatory Committee also had in mind.

— As in all the reports of the Secretary General, I wish to limit myself to describing the operations of the Central Secretariat, or making note here and there of some aspects of the work of the Offices which I think have special significance or opportunity for the whole of FABC.

2. As I was reviewing the activities of the Central Secretariat and the Offices of FABC these past four years, I asked myself how could I put everything together in a short presentation of thirty minutes and make some sense of everything that has been happening. I hit upon a simple scheme, which gives some picture of the maturity that is taking place.

The Church in Asia has "come of age." It has made its own the vision of Vatican II and what has become part of the life of the Church in the years since the Council. The attitudes of mind and heart called for by the Council are now shared, more or less, by the leadership of the Church. We need not debate about the past any longer, but only continue to grow in the present for the future.

The structures that serve the Church are also in place. Now we must let them work to form the community of life the Church wants.

What FABC has been doing is to help this leadership recognize and respond to the challenges of this new age of the Church.

I choose to describe the activities of FABC as happenings of identification, integration and intensification.

a) What struck me in the more recent meetings of the Presidents in the Central Committee and the Joint Planning meetings of all the office-holders and staff of our Offices is the clarity that is forming of the single thrust of all the apostolates of the Church, and the inclusion of all our efforts within that thrust. In the Joint Planning Meeting, held in Korea in 1989, for the first time it came through after days of discussion, and even argument, that it is *evangelization* which holds this centrality, and that it is evangeliza-

tion which animates and provides direction for all the activities of the Church, and those of FABC.

This insight we came to share may seem a commonplace to you — “doesn’t everyone know that?” — but we also know that there does exist a confusion among many of our co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, who shy away from placing their work within the scope of “preaching the Gospel,” out of some strange fear that they would be involved in “convert making,” and would rather place evangelization within the scope of their particular work. This is what I mean by *identification of purpose*. We see the bishop’s work, the Conference’s work, and the Church work, and the work of all the FABC Offices within this single vision of witness to Jesus, the Paschal Mystery, and his Gospel.

FABC’s activity now is revolving around some few objectives: the more effective presentation of the Gospel through a witness through social action in every sphere of human life; value formation and transformation, in liturgy and catechesis; a spirituality which is Christian and Asian, with shared prayer experiences in environments; formation programmes for seminarians, religious and laity.

b) By understanding better the Church’s mission within a context of Asian religious traditions, and so FABC’s too, our Offices recognize the many activities they are engaged in as interrelated and *integrated* one with the other by reason of the controlling influence of evangelization itself. It has not always been easy to see how one activity or project FABC has undertaken is related to all or any of the other activities. The apostolates in the Church in Asia are at different stages of development, with people of varying degrees of formation. Each Office brings its own perspective and emphasis to a problem, and it is no easy matter to remind the Office that there are other parts of the pastoral problem as well, or to meld all of these activities into one simple thrust of activity. How often, for example, do people who are involved in dialogue — ecumenical or inter-religious — feel they are put on the margins of the Church’s work, or maybe not even accepted as doing the Church’s work? As someone once said to one of our staff: “You work for the Kingdom; I work for the Church.”

With a clear understanding of the primacy and presence of evangelization in all the Church's work, this integration of objectives becomes easier to understand and cooperation among the Offices easier to do. And so we have had significant improvement in intra-FABC consultation and collaboration, with better Joint Planning Meetings (some of the most stimulating meetings I attend!), with some jointly-sponsored bishops' institutes and workshop, and meetings of the executive secretaries, and other such occasions of discussion for joint activities.

c) The third development in FABC is *intensification* of its activities. As I said before, the basic structures and attitudes envisioned by Vatican II are in place and "in possession" — no one questions today the wisdom of the Council — at least none of the bishops, I think. Now we are trying to build upon these foundations to help the leadership of the Church in Asia to recognize and respond to the challenges of this new age of the Church — which is the theme and purpose of this very Plenary Assembly.

So in FABC we hear as descriptions of the Church's work such expressions as: "going to the deepest levels of individuals and societies," for "more significant" formation and participation; entering into a "second level of life," with a formation or activity which is "at once holistic, liberating, integrated and experiential;" of being on a "new plateau" of consultation and collaboration. All of these terms suggest that the preliminaries have taken place, and something more is now wanted.

One item that may escape the attention of the bishops, because it works so quietly, is the introduction of the "think-tank" into the working of the Offices, where the Office periodically gathers together experts in its field of endeavour to examine its operations and recommend new horizons. This has been particularly effective in our Office of Laity. I think it evidences a concern to "dig deeper and go higher."

Several recent FABC projects also indicate this same desire, e.g., the Office of Evangelization's prayer workshops in an Indian ashram and a Japanese monastery. (In the Japanese experience they survived on water and a little salt for almost three days, and sat on the floor for five hours a day. Now that is intensification!) The Office

of Human Development's Asian Institutes for Social Action in the Philippines, Macau and Korea brought the bishops into a "live-in" contact with industrial workers, migrants and displaced people. The Office of Laity spread the bishops into distant parts of the Philippines to see the basic communities in action. (Some had a longer "exposure-immersion" than others when they were grounded during the attempted *coup*.) The Office of Social Communication's "live-in" workshops for bishops, with their TV performances, and their simulated interviews led the bishops to ask for more "in-service training." The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs' joint meetings with leaders of Christian Churches and other faiths led enough bishops to speak of these experiences as "moments of grace." And finally, the Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy's three meetings in Manila of Asian seminary rectors and spiritual directors, with a depth of preparation and input, indicate a new level of collaboration.

One last illustration of this "coming of age" of FABC. I know all of us are grateful for the work of the Theological Advisory Committee. The members of the Committee, who are appointed from every Conference, have shared their work with us on several serious theological concerns. Their "Theses on Interreligious Dialogue" (FABC Paper No. 48) do serve us as guidelines in a very important and very difficult part of our pastoral concern. The "Theses" have been published in several countries. Now we can expect soon the results of their deliberations on the "Local Church." The Theological Commission has proposed that members be systematically invited to all FABC meetings so that the theological perspective influence all of our enterprises. (At this writing I count five members of the Commission in this Plenary Assembly).

As another evidence of this thrust for depth, the Theological Commission has included in its planning institutes for our Asian bishops in current theological concerns.

3. The activities and meetings of the past four years, and an eye to the future

(The Central Secretariat has sponsored some meetings, or has been involved directly or indirectly with many of the meetings of the

Offices, but I shall limit myself to those which touch the general concerns of FABC, or which we had to take under our wing because they did not fall under the purview at the time of an Office.)

a) *The Central Committee has encouraged regional consultation and collaboration.* This kind of association has been facilitated by an experiment of naming three members of the Standing Committee as "regional convenors," with responsibility of being alert to regional situations and needs, and of helping along regional meetings.

The East Asian Region has met periodically through the years. The South Asian Region has had four regional meetings, with the last being in May 1988 in Kathmandu, Nepal, with Archbishop Leobard D'Souza as convenor. Bishop Bunluen Mansap of Thailand has been able to organize a meeting of the Southeast Conferences in November 1987 in Thailand, and in the summer of 1989 in Indonesia. There appears to be on the part of the bishops a greater interest to meet at the regional level on problems which perhaps are more deeply felt because closer to home. This trend will continue to develop, I think.

b) *The China and Catholic Church Seminar.* This seminar was held in January 1989, in Hong Kong, with thirty-five participants (of whom twenty-nine were bishops). The principal objective was simply to help the bishops know what was happening in the Catholic Church in China, and to appreciate the tensions and complexities there. Afterwards, nine bishops were able to go into China to the original grave of St. Francis Xavier. In the course of the three-day tour the participants met a bishop (China-appointed), priests, nuns and laity. This seminar was a follow-up on the presentation about China in the Tokyo Assembly. There will be an up-dated report and discussion later in this Assembly.

c) *Science, High Technology and Faith Seminar.* Another example of a new outreach was our seminar on the role of the Catholic scientist in Asia. While I was in Rome for the last Synod, Cardinal Paul Poupard asked FABC's help in holding this workshop, which was held in Hong Kong in December 1988. FABC provided logistical assistance (and raised the funds), while the Council for Dialogue with Non-Believers decided on the membership and arranged the pro-

gramme. Principally, it opened our eyes to the need of new particular types of apostolate (cf. FABC Paper No. 51).

d) *Seminary Formation.* FABC has been able to be a catalyst in developing a group interest in formation for the priesthood. There were three Asian congresses held in Manila: in March 1988 for seminary rectors, in February 1989 for spiritual directors, and in early 1990 for rectors and spiritual directors jointly. (They say that sometimes they do not see eye-to-eye!) The Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy, with its emphasis now on "faith-formation," has taken over this part of FABC's work. All of this has been providential as an Asian preparation for the World Synod of Bishops. A full report and discussion are scheduled for the last day of this Assembly.

e) The Central Secretariat is working with the Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy to organize three training sessions for our bishops on *student chaplains* (or "campus ministry" as it is called in the Philippines). We have been in contact with clergy and staff who are experts in this field to conduct these sessions. We have taken as our immediate objective to help provide competent, trained Catholic chaplains in every tertiary educational institutions in Asia.

f) Your Conference received recently the invitation for the training workshops: "Effective Leadership and Management for Bishops." These sessions will be for bishops only, long in episcopal service or new. They will be held in November 1990 (Hong Kong), December (Singapore) and February 1991 (Pattaya, Thailand). The conviction underlying this project is that many of the difficulties in implementing the vision of Vatican II and later Church policy — and much of the conflict — have been primarily not the result of doctrine differences but due to leadership practice and management, e.g., consultation, delegation of responsibilities, process of change, etc. The workshops will be conducted by the staff of the Bombay Xavier Institute of Management. I ask your help in securing a good response to this project.

g) We have been asked to help begin consultation in the area of *liturgy*, with particular emphasis on inculturation. FABC would only lend a hand to Asian liturgists to get started. We sent a

letter to the Conferences and received a surprisingly good response, which indicates a felt need. Meanwhile a liturgical institute is getting started in the Philippines.

h) *Summary.* From this short description of the plans of the Central Secretariat you will note that I have limited myself to areas of concern which did not, at the beginning, fall under the charge of any other Offices. As the lines of responsibility of the Offices become clearer, so all the projects pass over to their supervision, where possible.

From the discussions in the Central Committee and the Joint Planning sessions, I see other areas of concern which will be treated in the near future. These come immediately to mind:

- (i) the apostolic service for workers, youth and women;
- (ii) the diocesan priest;
- (iii) Catholics in universities and technical colleges;
- (iv) ministry to professional people;
- (v) the whole area of catechetics, as well as liturgical formation.

4. The Ecumenical Thrust

The Holy See's Council for Christian Unity had suggested to me, during one of my trips to Rome, that FABC should be doing much more in promoting Christian unity, along with our very visible work for interreligious dialogue in Asia. New efforts have taken place which the Office of Ecumenical and Religious Affairs will describe. I report here only the joint meeting of Catholic and Protestant leadership which we had, July 1987, in Singapore, and FABC participation in the World Congress of the YMCA, May 1989, in Hong Kong, and the European Ecumenical Assembly in Switzerland in May 1989. The Central Secretariat requested and obtained a place for Father Sebastian Karotemprel of the Office of Evangelization in the official delegation of the Holy See to the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, July 1989, in San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A.

The Central Committee approved a process of regular annual consultation between FABC and CCA leadership, at a more formal

level. There have been several informal meetings with CCA to discuss how to do this, most recently in August 1989. The CCA in its general assembly this June has proposed that our two organizations seek out a means of an institutional unity. Bishop John Samuel, the new general secretary of CCA, has been asked to describe the proposal later this week.

5. Our cooperation with the *Vatican dicasteries* is a very important part of the work of the Central Secretariat. Our FABC Offices have also developed warm friendships — and a spirit of mutual acceptance — with their counterparts in Rome. The uncomfortable tensions that existed in some instances a few years ago have, in my opinion, disappeared. Cardinal Tomko has told me several times that he appreciates very much the lines of communication we have set up with him and the Congregation.

My appointment to the Synod of Bishops and my membership in the committee for the universal catechism are signs, I am sure, of the Holy See's regard for FABC.

The Secretariat and OEIA also met with Cardinal Francis Arinze and the consultants and staff of the Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, September 1988, in Hua Hin, Thailand, on many aspects of the dialogue. Father Albert Poulet-Mathis is a consultant of this Commission. What I also find particularly interesting is their desire to see established in Asia an institute to train people in interreligious dialogue. We are presently in correspondence on this subject with an institute in India.

6. The Synod Desk

FABC will again maintain a "desk" at the Synod in Rome in October. As at the previous Synods, and through the good graces of the bishops of the Philippines, our headquarters will be at the Chancery of the Philippine Embassy to the Holy See, which is directly across the street from the Synod Hall. We have arranged with Father J. Dupuis, who is now teaching at the Gregorian, to set up a two-day programme before the Synod for our delegates, and to have meetings every Saturday to review together the happenings of the week.

7. Finances

I have appended to this report the financial statement of the Central Secretariat. The reports of the Offices and Committee will contain their respective financial reports.

Following the FABC policy of decentralization, each Office seeks financial support for its work. FABC gives \$3,000.00 per annum to each Office and Committee by way of subsidy.

The Central Secretariat depends mostly on the dues of each Conference, which have remained unchanged at \$50.00 for each jurisdiction. I can report that the dues are regularly paid by our Conferences, with the exception of one or two Conferences, because of local situations.

Each year we request and receive from Propaganda a subsidy, which last year amounted to US\$15,000.00.

The Central Secretariat has undertaken to find other sources of support.

We approach other funding agencies, for the general support of the work of the Offices, and, in this year, for the Plenary Assembly, the Theological Advisory Committee, and other projects.

We should all raise many prayers in thanksgiving to the Giver of all gifts for the generosity of so many agencies and persons to the work of FABC. I must advise you, however, that it has become increasingly difficult to raise enough money for some projects. This year we are told by some agencies that the events in Central Europe had put great strain on their resources.

8. FABC Publications

I am happy to report that our publications are being well received.

— The *FABC Newsletter*, with added material, is being sent directly to every bishop in Asia and several Roman dicasteries, every

Asian major seminary, pastoral center, associations of major superiors, and upon request (and small payment), to other groups and persons. Our circulation is about one thousand. Several of the Offices also have their special-interest newsletters.

— The *FABC Papers* seem to have met a real need. We can publish quickly and cheaply items of pastoral interest for Asia.

— *FABC Reprints* have usually focused on material of pastoral interest for the guidance of our bishops. Again, letters and requests for additional copies have been encouraging.

I mention in passing that the major expenditure of the Central Secretariat has been for printing and mailing, as I think you would wish it to be.

9. The Importance of follow-up

I would like to comment on a point of continuing concern, that of follow-up on our meetings.

This is perhaps the most difficult problem we face, in order to maintain interest and to bring about some results from our discussions. How can what happened in these meetings get to the grass-roots, which in this case is the individual bishop. This depends, of course, upon the Conference itself, but I suggest that all our meetings have as an essential element answers to the questions: "What do we do when we get back home?"

The Central Committee approved in its meeting of 1988 a recommendation to the Conferences that the conclusions of the FABC meetings be placed on the agenda of the Conference meetings, with a report submitted by their bishops who attended the FABC meeting. Also, it would be helpful if the pertinent Conference Commission also be given the conclusions of our meetings for their consideration and action. Is it possible that a similar resolution could come from this Plenary Assembly?

10. My Personal thanks

I wish to thank all the bishops who have given so generously of their time and talent for the work of the Offices. I wish to thank, in a way that only words cannot express, all those on the staffs of the Offices and Commission who have worked so hard and with great personal sacrifice. I wish to quote again a letter that came into the Hong Kong Secretariat from one of our Asian bishops. He said: "FABC helps make being a Catholic in Asia something exciting." I pray it will always be so — and even more!

11. Conclusion

A while ago I was asked by one of our cardinals, "What should FABC be doing in the future?" I thought that the answer depends entirely on what the Church of Asia would be in the future, since FABC exists to serve the real needs of the Church.

That future is the whole theme of this Plenary Assembly.

I see an exciting time ahead for FABC, because the times are exciting for all of us called to serve the Lord in joy.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd.) Most Rev. HENRY S. D'SOUZA
Secretary General

A Spiritual Journey through the Asia of the 1990s*

Adolfo Nicolas, S.J.

1. Introduction

The events of the last few months have given enough matter of reflection for years to come. They have also turned a few tables, embarrassed a few "prophets," and reopened a whole series of questions touching almost every area of communal and individual life. The shallow have rushed out to joined the cheap preachers of the moment to peddle look-alike gems of instant wisdom. The wise have folded up the old maps and returned to corners of reflection in an effort to re-understand and reintegrate a page of history that needs revision. The Christian, like Mary, keeps all these things in her or his heart. In its depths the new events merge with the old, and with the living God, who speaks through both . . . if we only knew how to listen.

Together with the dramatic events of the recent past we are experiencing other changes and developments that are affecting the life of Asia in very radical ways. The Christian reception and integration of such phenomena are slow, often invisible, and done in

*This discussion guide has been prepared for the workshops of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), convening at Bandung, Indonesia, July 17-27, 1990. The theme of the Plenary Assembly is: "The Emerging Challenges to the Church in Asia in the 1990s: A Call to Respond."

a great variety of ways, that we can never claim to know or even understand. Discovering these ways might be one of the fruits of the present reflections, whose only aim is that of being of help. The spiritual, religious, cultural, social variety of situations in Asia has always been a challenging occasion for both wonder at their extraordinary wealth, and humility before any attempt to reflect for the whole region. As a discussion guide, these pages will dissolve into the sessions and drown happily in their new wisdom.

2. A World of Extraordinary Change

At the risk of a certain amount of repetition and overlapping with other papers, we can briefly indicate some of the changes affecting Asia, its life and its spiritual landscape. Something new has been happening to our continent for quite a long time. The changes we are going through seem to have a power well beyond our previous experiences. In spite of the extraordinary differences in culture and religion, in social and political systems, there are trends and transformations that seem as unavoidable as the seasons. The "Global Village" is more and more a living reality and the new developments in the world market seem to find always a way through the thickest of cultural or religious walls, into the life of the people, be they affluent, or less so. Even the poor, who might never enjoy the promises of the "New World," are already suffering the frustration of not having access to it.

We cannot deny that in the face of the new realities of our world (described in other papers of this Assembly), we experience a definite sense of wonder and enthusiasm. The advances are often healing us, empowering, educating, opening for us dream worlds. The prayerful heart is often moved to gratitude and awe in a movement of spontaneous welcome of what appears like a blessing, and of grateful praise of the Lord of all gifts.

And yet the past decades have given us also a sense of caution and suspicion vis-a-vis these unexpected and surprising gifts. In our century we have accumulated repeated experiences of disappointment and self-delusion regarding the fascinating promises of the new. We have grown to a sense of transitoriness and lack of trust in so-called breakthroughs. We have slowly and humbly learned how

narrow mere rational reflection can be in any one generation. The optimism of a decade has turned repeatedly into disaster for the next. And thus we have modernity followed by post-modernity, while the sense of isolation in people grows. Secularization has contributed to a human and spiritual "homelessness" and an inability to integrate dimension of humanity that used to be together. Technology has moved into human spaces of the heart and made out of them copies of the "machine-god" or the "plastic-god." Progress has come and gone to come again in this century and has allured all of us until someone made us think about the high price it demands from the human community, its dreams and Mother Earth. The spirit of our people in the last decades has been tried very harshly. It is only natural therefore that the "spiritual market" has been in disarray and, as we approach the end of the century, we find so many familiar products with a foreign label. The Christian paths to the "Mountain of the Lord" have grown weeds and wild berries. It has become harder to find the Way.

3. The Asian Scene

In spite of the extraordinary differences among countries, peoples and beliefs in Asia, we are always awed by the dynamic presence of long-standing, great traditions and cultures that have directed and energized the continent for millennia. These traditions and cultures have affected and continue to affect very deeply the identity, values, behaviour and relationships of the different peoples. In one way or another their influence has reached and enriched every corner of the continent. It is from this fact that we have to reflect and look ahead to the future. We can sum up the situation in the following four points.

A. The spiritual inheritance of Asia is one of *accumulated wisdom*, a wisdom that has been discovered, gathered, deepened, communicated through millennia and has entered the life ethos of the continent. It is a wisdom of life in the midst of an extraordinary variety of countries, climates and histories. A wisdom that has produced ideas, world-views, values that manifest an extraordinary depth of experience, reflection, insight and committed judgment. A wisdom, on the other hand, that has often come filled with a religious sense of "Presence" of the mysterious in the whole of reality. And at

the same time has kept a powerful tradition of the transcendent, the apophatic and unreachable. Silence is as important to Asia as celebration and festival; transcendence as total as immanence; the right side of the brain as cultivated as the left side.

B. But wisdom is never safe and free. It is *always threatened* by bias, nonsense and the infinite varieties of selfish or group interests. This assault against wisdom is particularly fierce in the latter part of our century. We see it now endangered by the overwhelming pressure from present trends:

— Threatened by modernity and the unbalanced claims of on-sided rationality.

— Challenged by technology and a whole new set of scientific myths that promise certitudes, where people have always before respected mysteries. By the time the promises prove false it is too late to recover lost myths.

— Disturbed by the irruption of an avalanche of new inputs coming from outside, without the means or the necessary rhythm for a constructive integration. This puts entire populations in the face of a "pluralism" that is not the creative result of life and its riches, but an artificial imposition that is patterned on the laws of the market.

— The Western ideological wars have also reached Asian shores and taken over the imagination and good will of young and old. The global and closed character of these ideologies has greatly damaged the wisdom of centuries and contributed to uproot both the "converted" and the disillusioned.

— Underdevelopment, injustice and the new poverty of colonial, post-colonial and technological-industrial times continue to be a deadly threat to a wisdom that used to be a source of inspiration and light for harmony, conviviality and hope.

[N.B. We are not denying in any way the presence of sin or injustice, war, oppression in the history of Asia. When we focus on its wisdom we do it aware of its fragility and of the fact that wisdom is never a possession but an invitation. Its healing role makes sense

precisely in the context of human weakness and tendency to lose the Way.]

C. These threats have not been theoretical or only looming in the horizon. They have entered Asian life and changed the human heart of many. The *damages* are considerable and have produced the loss of very important conditions for a meaningful spiritual journey through the decades ahead. Let us point out just a few of them:

— *The loss of old loyalties* might be the most radical one. We do not have to consider here historical loyalties tied up with feudalism and oppressive periods of our past. These occupy only a small fraction of our existence. More important loyalties are those we have had for millennia to our Mother Earth, the land and its well-being, the cycles and needs of nature to remain alive and creative. We think also of loyalty to the family of peoples, to the extended family that has sustained us through famines, floods, poverty and sickness. Other loyalties include relationships with neighboring peoples, races, villages; they include fairness and trust among groups and communities, etc.

— *The loss of a living and shared common sense.* Modernity and pluralism have contributed to the effective and rapid disappearance of old daily and common values and expectations of the ordinary citizens. The generation gap is taking critical dimensions. Communication among people of the same country has become a task that has to be learnt anew.

— *The loss of sense of belonging* has been particularly visible in the mushrooming of new movements and groups that have come to the rescue of a homeless population everywhere.

— A very important *loss* is that of *old traditional therapies* for ailments of body and heart. Rituals that had healing capabilities in the widest sense of the word have been lost or transformed into promotion opportunities for politicians or enterprises. Healing group relationships, and activities are also changing and becoming "left-side-of-the-brain" rational interest groups. Religious references and practices have been discredited and deprived of their ability to cure and soothe sufferings of the soul and of the whole person.

— We can sum up the losses in an *extended inability to integrate self, life, relationships, social responsibility, and the threatening realities of the future*. Cultures and theologies have greatly lost their previous power to help.

D. All of which indicates that we have a whole array of *emerging needs* for a healthy spiritual life in the Asia of the 1990s. These needs are global and we cannot ignore them if we want to contribute "spiritually" to the future. Basically these are needs for:

— A recovery of root loyalties that will reintegrate the coming generations into the most fundamental flow of life, the earth, the wider humanity, basic values that will enhance life, trust, hope, healing, joy, peace.

— A new sense of belonging to culture, to community, to immanence-transcendence.

— A vigorous and consistent system of values that will help us discern through the coming age and contribute to it with creative social responsibility.

— A new justice for all humans regardless of age, race, gender, physical, financial or social capabilities. But also a new justice for the earth and all its living creatures and their habitats. This, in other words, translates into a new justice for the coming generations of Asian peoples who will want to encounter the living God and his marvelous creation in the glorious beauty he so laboriously elaborated through billions of years; and not to be abandoned to a boring search for him through the devastated and exploited wastelands we are multiplying at present.

— We will need more and more depth in order to contribute to new possibilities of healing, of integration, of harmony based on mutual respect and support. Depth also to overcome superficial myths and the approaching flood of "millennial prophecies and promises," and offer again in all its original freshness and vitality the living word of God.

— We will, finally, need to offer our people a renewed sense of their own worth and the mission they have to contribute to a better future for Asia and from Asia to the rest of the world.

4. Resisting an Unhealthy Imbalance

Spiritual life has always developed at the intersecting point between the heart and its movements, on the one hand, and the history of people and its important events (positive or negative), on the other. This relationship has been a source of tension and of creative dialogue. The Biblical God of our Judaeo-Christian tradition is a God who speaks to people in the recesses of the heart, in silence and solitude, and at the same time addresses us through the events and vicissitudes of human history. Spirituality is not limited to the professionals of contemplation and mysticism. Kings, beggars, founders, nurses, scholars have lived their Christian vocation to the full in the midst of their busy existence. The prophet is the figure that expresses best both the tension and the integration: fully immersed in reality, while fully immersed in the life of the Divinity. Mary, in the name of the Church offers a new synthesis "keeping all these things (visits, words, events, promises . . .) in her heart."

We can state it differently, saying that spiritual life as well as spiritual interaction with reality has always been a movement *from inside*, from the *wisdom within*. Spiritual discernment has therefore been the Christian method to "be moved and directed from within, in obedience to the Spirit of God working in the heart and life of the person or community." It is a life based on the awareness of the gift and presence of the Spirit of God. It springs from an interior wealth of communion with God. This inner wealth is constantly enriched by the *wisdom around*, the wisdom of the earth and of culture or community that is progressively interiorized and made one's own. It is further enriched by the *religious wisdom* that has been expressed and handed down inside the old religious traditions of Asia.

At the same time, Churches and communities have always been very keen to hear the voice of the Lord in the joys and aspirations as well as in the pains and fears of humanity. What happens in the world

is the arena where our communion with God is put to the test. The problem is that the outside circumstances of our world might become too much of a challenge for our spiritual capacities and we run the risk of losing the direction from within. We become then people moved by the first wind, always *reacting*, but seldom in touch with the life and the gift inside.

We have known this tension from the beginning of human life. We have struggled with it from the moment we found ourselves called to live for the Gospel. And yet, this tension becomes particularly critical in our age. The historical developments of the present happen at such speed, the discoveries are so many, the challenges so radical, the possibilities so exciting, that even the most contemplative of persons can find herself or himself out of breath, losing touch with the reality within. That is why in the coming years we are going back to *risk being directed from outside and lose the spiritual core, where true wisdom burns.*

We are therefore threatened by a shift from "inside direction" to "outside direction"; from being cocreators of new life with the Spirit, to being reactors to whatever happens about us. The tension should be there as a healthy reminder that God is greater than our hearts. The problem is that the tension might lose sharpness and we might become numb with information, movement and noise, and end up giving up on the task of joining the Lord in the building of his Kingdom.

This unbalanced shift to the "outside" is particularly critical today because the voices and events to which we are continually exposed are not often the spontaneous, creative, wise voices or events that build human persons or communities through pain or joy. Most of the voices we hear today are controlled, provoked, planned and produced by the world of money, (Mammon can be very noisy, indeed. It will keep proclaiming the gospel of the global market,) or of the media or of the ideologies battling for the control of the modern mind. We are being challenged continually by new technological and human possibilities demanding our approval and support. But they hide the real problems they carry with them. Under which model of human or earth life are these possibilities being developed and enjoyed? Is the model one of global sharing in respect for and simplicity

of life? Or one of selfish and ruthless use and abuse of resources? Are we building a human world for the next generations? Or loading our grandchildren with debts that will pay for our careless consumption? Such voices, by the way, can also be religious voices promising instant "spiritual fulfillment" and thus stealing from true conversion the long way of discipleship.

We need to give more space to the heart and to life, to the right side of the brain and to the peaceful but painful emergence of compassion from within. There are other voices that have to be heard, that God is always listening to, that only from the depth of the heart can be properly perceived. A Christian spirituality for our age has to open again for us the numbed ears that can hear what God does, (Ephatha, *Mk 7:34*), and see what he sees. Spirituality is awareness, listening, being moved and energized, being led by the Spirit to Gospel commitments. But we have to start *listening* to the silent voices of those whose very existence is a word from the Lord.

— The *Poor*, in the multiple variety of forms we encounter in our modern world that is more like a race than a global village: — The weak, the sick, the have-nots . . . those who cannot even enter the race, because their financial or physico-psychological weakness excludes them from the start. The "*losers*" in the race. Of those we have more and more all the time, and it looks as if they are going to continue growing in numbers. — The "oppressed wage-earners": most of them never win and are never declared losers. They have to keep fit enough to continue running in the never-ending race.

— The *Aged*, the *Children*, the *Young*, that is, those who have lost the intergenerational lifeline that used to keep the whole community sane, fed, cared for, mutually belonging and in a process of reciprocal building up to maturity, responsibility and participation. Today they are the new marginal groups at large and deprived of the chance to grow as individuals in an organic way together with the rest. The aged are diminished by being denied a meaningful contribution to society. The children are boxed into a prefabricated system that will force them to adjust to certain patterns and expectations. The young are fighting their last and only battle to express their frustrated dream of becoming original centers of life and creativity, before they give up and join the labor force or chronic unemployment.

— Women are being finally heard in different parts of the world. We can ask ourselves why they do not feel as if they are being heard in the Church. They are not clearly asking for *more integral wisdom*. Listening to women is a spiritual activity, a process of learning about God and his kingdom. In this listening we are asked to free ourselves from reductive and oppressing images of both woman and "man." We are asked to move from spiritual and administrative structures of dependency to living out the new person that has become Christ in all of us; from lack of the deep respect and appreciation women deserve, and which constitutes a form of denial of their person, their capacity to serve and symbolize, to the true family of God where each person contributes out of the gifts of the Spirit. And this needs from all of us a spiritual conversion to "deep listening," "contemplative perception" and "generous Christ-like affirmation."

The *Earth* also has a voice that we have not heard for a long time. We are beginning to hear "the cry of the environment," the suffering of Mother Earth at the destruction of so much of her life and the threat to the rest. Thanks to a few prophetic persons and groups we begin to realize that we have not been in the least "Godlike" in the way we have behaved as ruthless, inconsiderate, cruel death-carriers to the rest of creation. We reread now the Scriptures and hear the Lord again telling us about companionship, about taking care of his Earth, about being kind to animals, about dreams of peace with the whole creation, so that the lost Paradise would not be lost forever. Saint Paul heard this cry of the universe and saw its dignity linked to the very existence of Christ from the beginning (*Rom, Col, Eph*). Francis of Assisi and many other mystics have heard and seen it too. We have been and still are tardy and reluctant to listen and convert. We cannot yet see and understand that this cry of the Earth is our own city, a voice from the genetic, cosmic and historical wisdom that God has patiently built inside the whole of creation with exquisite love and care.

These are times when we have to decide which voices to listen to. We also have to make a choice as to how we are going to listen. The pressure from outside is great and seems to demand immediate responses to the artificial markets of our day. The spiritual wisdom of our Christian and Asian traditions tell us to open more space for the

heart and dare to let the spirit take the leadership again into a form of life according to the Heart of God. We have to resist the pressure and continue drawing from the depths "old and new" wisdom to offer our world.

At such a time we have a radical obligation to learn from all the sources of living inspiration. The inner journey of the future has to be a global pilgrimage. The needed light has to come from all sources. We cannot think of a spiritual new age that is not based on a process of dialogue with the cultures and religions of Asia. As our horizons widen, our limiting and reductive categories lose meaning and we are invited to accept as God's gift not only the so called "great" cultures or "great" religions, but all the cultures and all religions for whatever gift from God that might be hidden, but waiting for us to discover therein.

5. The Emergence of a New Individual?

Analyses of modernity and change are trying to understand what happens to the individual persons affected by them. It goes without saying that this question is crucial when dealing with spirituality. Who is going to make the journey? Is the modern Asian individual the same as two generations ago? Is the new individual equipped to face the future with all its uncertainties and its challenges? What kind of spiritual being are we thinking about when discussing spiritual ways? Here again the diversity of country, culture and situation makes it impossible to give an accurate robot-image for us to draw conclusions from. We will have to satisfy ourselves at this stage with a few possible common traits and let the workshop discussion unfold variations or contradictions out of local or regional experiences and perceptions. We all know, anyway, that the human person will never fully respond to types and classifications — helpful as they might be. We will limit ourselves here to three aspects.

A. The new individuals emerging in Asia find themselves in a world that provides them with a *wealth of possibilities* unheard of before, and that open for them a totally new range of choices and opportunities. Technology, economy, communications, science, research seem to be faced with a limitless field of involvement and

creativity. Obviously not all will share equally in the possibilities, but most will dream of them and make this dream the driving force of their life.

This means also that these individuals will be confronted with the ongoing need to choose, to decide for one or the other among the open alternatives. They will even have to decide whether they themselves want to make the choice or rather leave it to others - politicians, big companies, or even religious leaders. But less and less things in their lives will be taken for granted, as in the past.

Which means that the new individual will be under remarkable pressure. There will be pressure to make decisions, sometimes about life or death, that no individual before had to make alone. There will be pressure to be kept up-to-date, to be familiar with the new technology, the new computers, the new tools; to absorb mountains of information and be ready to forget them as soon as they become useless, in order to absorb new input. Pressure also to produce, to earn, to compete. In other words, the new individual will be required to be strong, fast, resilient, adaptable, imaginative in order to enjoy the new age.

B. At the same time the emerging person will be *greatly deprived* of many of the things that for ages have given meaning, coherence and purpose to life. Sociologists have spoken of the "homeless mind," the person without myths to integrate life, to relate to the past or the future. Modern myths are replicas of old ones, but they do not have the weight, the power, the community acceptance that the old had. Modern myths are short-lived like the life-styles and the purposes they incarnate.

The new individuals will have to live with a dearth of convictions. The pluralism and transitoriness of modernity relativize almost every thing we hold to be certain. This is not a healthy relativization coming out of a deeper immersion in the mysteries of reality. Often it is the simple inability to scrutinize, to study and reflect, to ponder in silence or in community the deeper truths hidden in much of popular wisdom and secular structures of human life. This will produce new levels of insecurity and sharpen the sense of homelessness for many.

Transcendence will also suffer in the process. Modern Asian societies are already parading the new person, so totally immersed in the demands of production that he cannot find time for the things of the spirit, for depth and silence, for a glimpse of the very transcendence that has been an Asian treasure for the world to respect and desire. With transcendence suffers also the sense of the holy in all things, the immanence of traditional religiosity, and all the healing and energizing powers within.

C. Finally, the new individuals enriched with possibilities like never before, but deprived of the deeper self, will be a *weaker* person in the face of challenge, manipulation or suffering. We are already experiencing its weakness in the face of propaganda and commercialism; the professional image-builders work with the same passion and dedication, and almost with similar success, at selling a politician and a piece of soap, or a car, or a mosquito killer. Loss of touch with the deeper self lowers one's sense of worth and educates the prospective consumer.

Group pressure from peers, politicians, business or religious associations can take the best of such weakened personalities. The need for belonging can easily become a way to fanaticism. New religions and new myths can become very attractive if they offer immediate gratification or response to the simple questions of modern man.

The fear to make lasting commitments will continue and possibly become stronger. The difficulties of personal relationships combined with the pressures of the age will make growth a goal difficult to attain. Without the support of a community, of a culture, or of one's inner depth, such commitments appear like an uphill journey that many will continue to fear and shun off. Modern individuals are very vulnerable psychologically. For them the invitation of the Lord to come and rest in him takes on a new meaning and importance. But how to make it a way of life? This will be one of the key questions for the Church of the 1990s.

6. A Spirituality for the Next Decade

A. General Observations

The spirituality we need had to respond to both dimensions of our future needs. On the one hand, it has to face the challenges, problems, shifts and threats that modernity and its accompanying developments bring about. On the other, it has to be meaningful and helpful for the kind of individuals or groups that are emerging in our midst. It has to contribute to a meaningful integration of their needs, weaknesses and their strong points.

This spirituality has to draw from all the available sources, Christian and Asian, old and new, popular and mystical traditions. We see today with new urgency the importance of the Gospel's praise of the wise man who keeps drawing new and old gems of wisdom from his abundant treasure house (Mt 13:52). The variety of needs, experiences and situations in which people and Churches will find themselves requires that we keep all the channels open for God's grace and guidance to reach us and direct our lives.

The spirituality needed in the coming decades is already around, discovered, created or simply lived by communities and individuals. Spirituality cannot be programmed; it flows from inside, and in Asia it is already flowing, as believers and people of good will respond in depth to the new realities of world and society. This is extremely important because it already indicates certain patterns of behaviour to be expected from the leaders of the Church.

1) First, we have to *learn* from the spiritual life of those who are immersed in modern Asia while living a totally committed and creative life of faith. They can be found in the different areas of social life, in some movements, groups or in the simplicity of their daily witness.

2) We have to be *supportive* of those initiatives, movements and projects that with no few difficulties and certain risks are engaging in dialogue with people of other religions or ideologies in a common search for greater depth in prayer, religious insight or compassionate commitment to the earth and its peoples.

3) We are also called to *support* processes and methodologies of Christian discernment in which so many Catholic professionals are involved. How to discern evangelically in issues that range from biogenetical questions to nuclear waste or international business is a question that weighs heavily on many sincere consciences. Maybe we should make discernment one of the central elements of present Church programs of faith education and spiritual formation.

4) Naturally we will have to *continue to support* also the ongoing dialogue with other religions at all levels, and particularly the existing openness towards experiencing in Christ those forms of prayer and asceticism that have led in the past so many Asians to enlightenment, inner freedom and compassionate commitment to goodness and justice.

Needless to say, the above processes will have to be based on good formation programs for spiritual growth. In this light we shall have to revise our catechetical journeys, especially that of initiation; we have to integrate in it a good introduction to prayer, in which people learn how to grow in Christ, how to be transformed, how to interiorize the Gospel by the very doing, the content and the method of prayer itself. We shall have to revise also our sacramental life so that the sacramental journey of memory and transformation incorporates and directs from Christ the historical journey of the coming years.

We will need to reconsider our calendar of feasts in order to offer a more balanced symbolic perspective of the Christian mystery. The depths of God's Fatherhood-Motherhood, the mystery of creation, the life of the Holy Spirit are not in adequate balance of memory, presence and community awareness with the mystery of the Son, Our Lady and the Saints. The limited awareness many Christians have of these life-giving original mysteries and their relationship to the earth, inner freedom and silent deep contemplation is not unrelated to the fact that they are not brought up to the level of collective memory through feast and celebration.

Similarly, we need to deepen and broaden our reading of the Scriptures. Maybe what we need now is to incorporate into our interest and study of the Scriptures the great and inspiring variety

of approaches to the Holy Books that make them sources of light, energy, inspiration and consolation. Preaching would not be a bad starting point for a new offensive in this line.

Finally, the spirituality we are looking for will need an ongoing prayerful and dedicated will to accompany wholeheartedly the many Christians who are deeply involved in the difficult questions of technology, social justice, political transformation, economy, services, work, professional life. How to accompany in the Lord might be one of the most charismatic services needed in our modern Church. Through it both the one to be involved and the one accompanying can learn the way of discernment, while creating in the process new spiritual paths for others to walk along.

B. *Christian Spirituality Is Trinitarian*

We are moving towards a future that goes beyond old limited boundaries of nation, culture, or language. The challenges are global and require from the Church a global response, within which to find concrete paths. This global response has always been the Blessed Trinity. It is here that the deepest sources of Christian life spring forth and where we find our most solid foundations. At the same time it is this global horizon that can protect and bring to full visibility the spiritual traditions of Asia religions and cultures. In the mystery of the Trinity we can be saved from the temptation of narrow categories and frameworks to face the world.

1) *The Father* is mystery in origin, the mystery nobody has ever seen, the source of all, the giver of life. He is the beginning and the fountain, the Creator. Through creation we know that his life is self-giving in an infinite variety of forms. He creates and he makes himself present to every variety of life and existence in the universe. Christian tradition expresses this original mystery in terms of Fatherhood-Motherhood. And we believers are invited to approach it in silence, self-transcendence and contemplation.

Whenever we try to understand what is happening to the Asian continent and all its peoples we should always ask ourselves: "What is happening to the mystery of Asia?"; not, naturally, the romanticized mystery of Western fantasy, but the sense of being immersed in

divine life. Are we losing it under the pressure of modern rationality? How can the Christian community contribute to enhance and deepen this sense and bring it to a shared communion in the realm of the Father? We are called today to be true to our faith in the Father and make this faith alive - a spiritual journey - in a renewed sense of contemplation of all that is created, in a responsible stewardship of God's world so that we can go beyond self-interest and shortsightedness and cooperate in the most sacred task of contributing to life in all its forms. To believe in and to do the will of the Father translates into care for others, for the earth, for awe and wonder at the richness of humanity and life we find all around in peoples, races, sexes, and cultures.

A spirituality of the Father can be best defense against any form of superficiality, of verbosity without life, of narrowmindedness, fanaticism or dogmatism. A defense that is strengthened if we are able to broaden our images of God-Father to those, also biblical, that help relate to God also as Mother. Beyond the present theological struggle to recover our lost feminine dimensions in theology, there is a whole spirituality to integrate in our life. We are going to need it very badly in the decades ahead.

2) Jesus Christ, *the Son*, is the historical and prophetic manifestation of the original mystery of God. The ultimate mystery of the Father takes on historical form in a life of healing and compassion in Christ. Jesus means salvation and this is his mission. What humanity destroyed in the negativity of sin and self-centered pride, the Son restored in the most self-emptying existence that we know. His prophetic realization of the life of the Father most evident in his merciful concern for an identification with the poor, the marginal, the sinners. Where life was most threatened he poured out his love and this became a new sign for those who believe in him.

The coming future of Asia will bring partial progress and global promises to its peoples. But, no matter how successful some experiences may be, "the poor will continue with us for a long long time." Healing, and justice and salvation in its many forms will be an ongoing need. The invitation of Christ will remain valid and a source of spiritual growth for all of us. The response to the Son has always been memory (which we do through the word of Scripture and the

celebration of Sacrament), solidarity and prophetic commitment. These continue to be crucial today and will be more so in the future. The new migrations taking place in Asia, visible in refugee camps and migrant workers, are raising problems of prejudice, selfishness and irrational nationalism that will need an overflow of solidarity, compassion and humanity to heal the wounds being inflicted day after day. On the other hand, the growing number of "victims of the race to success" in the more modernized societies is already filling society with massive doses of resentment, frustration and self-loathing. The health of our cities is in serious danger. The Christological invitation to become healing disciples and communities is fully relevant and urgent today.

This spirituality of the Son is also a crucial voice against competition and greed as a form of life. The living Christ of the present continues to blame the profanation of human life whenever the world is so disfigured by injustice and destruction that it stops being a house of prayer and becomes a den of thieves. Christology defies also isolationism and self-sufficiency and whatever contributes to build or reinforce a "culture of success." The civilization of love preached by the recent Popes will need many Christlike Asians in order to become reality in our countries.

3) *The Holy Spirit* is the flow of God's life in all things and times. The Spirit is the power of transformation, the re-creation of the universe. The Spirit is wisdom, and joy, and dance, and universal communion. The Spirit is nowhere and fills everything. The Spirit has the mysterious capacity to dissolve itself into goodness, creation, love and feast, healing and peace. The Spirit penetrates the whole of reality and by doing it keeps reality alive, beautiful and inviting us all to freedom, celebration and discernment.

The 1990s are in great need of the Spirit. Let us point out only two areas that are already crying for a more "Spirit-oriented" way of life. The first one is the increase of "negativity" in our world. To the natural disasters and the taken-for-granted reality of human sin, we have been experiencing lately the growing presence of new evils: drugs, terrorism, criminality, unemployment, destruction of the environment to the point of irreversible damage. Not a few authors anticipate a time of "cultural depression." We need more than ever a

renewed experience of the "creative Spirit." The world needs the witness of a Church that is in touch with the Spirit and its power to transform what seems irreversible; to change our way of life so that negativity does not become an expanding monster but evokes in believers the healing powers of "re-creation." There is need to show the world that we can "dance our way into the future," because of the surplus of love that the Spirit gifts us with.

The second phenomenon has to do with the psychological and cultural "fears" that the end of a millennium raise. We are already bombarded with prophecies of doom. At the same time we are witnessing a recurring of the old search for "signs and wonders," security blankets that will protect us from the coming terrors. We in the Church are invited to offer a fresh and genuine experience of the Spirit who can help us face the future in hope and with courage. We will need to play down signs and wonders, in order to open the hearts to the true signs of the living God in the hearts of people, in the loving concern of the communities and in the justice and peace of our small world.

The spirituality of the Holy Spirit is therefore an antidote to particularism, depression, hopelessness and boredom. It calls people to counteract the forces of destruction with a life out of the joyful depths of communion with every thing alive, in which we discover and celebrate the presence of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit gives the lie to those who wanted to make a super-machine out of a world made for birds, flowers and eucharistic meals.

We see therefore that the Trinity expresses and contains in himself the wide avenues for a journey through the coming age and the greatness of it all is that what we have separated for our consideration in reality is one; and when lived in depth and true communion, there is no dividing line because the three dimensions flow into each other. It is in this mutual penetration that Asian traditional harmony can find new creative possibilities.

C. *At the Service of an Emerging New Individual*

Our final reflection is directed to the people with whom we want to journey spiritually in the next decade. If our perceptions are

correct, we have a big task in hand. We have to respond to the need for a new framework, a new integrating whole in which to develop Christian life. If modern men and women are becoming more and more "homeless" in the new world, this is the time to offer a new, livable and welcoming spiritual home.

Naturally we are not thinking of a fixed system to take the place of an outdated one. Such systems never really apply and the help they offer is ambiguous, to say the least. Christians are people on the road, pilgrims to the Holy Mountain. The spiritual home we need will have to be very much like a tent for a long pilgrimage with God. But a tent that comforts, protects and becomes the place of encounter with the Lord. It will have to be a spirituality that is flexible, open, alert to all the signs, all the presences of God, and all the possibilities of goodness and light in other traditions.

Such a home cannot be narrow and exclusivistic, unidimensional or limited by dogmatism. It will have to be comfortable with a pluralism of forms and language, of life-styles and stages of growth. A spirituality for the future Asian individual has to be very much like a "treasure house," from which the community draws according to need, and there is always more there; or like Jesus' eating with the crowds, where after everyone was fed according to their needs, the disciples could still collect twelve baskets full of leftovers.

That is also why this journey cannot be one of the isolated mind, but has to be a journey of the heart, integrating in its communion with God, whatever the mind explores. We will always need recognizable words, symbols, norms, rituals and sacraments when we come together to express our faith, but always knowing that it is the Lord who is our true home. It is not the Law that saves, nor the theological systems, nor even the sacramental festivities of the community. They all have to be filled with the believing heart attuned to the silent voice of the Spirit of God. The home we are talking about is "fullness within," and therefore a source of strength and direction against the alluring and tempting invitations from the superficial developments around.

If we link this need now with all we have said above, we find that what is most needed is a global "sense," a new way of being and

feeling in the world and the Church. We can express this need in three headings:

1) A Deep SENSE OF BELONGING:

a. First, to God's family, all those men and women who in many mysterious ways are rooted in and live the communion of the Blessed Trinity. It might be difficult to conceive or imagine this truly extended family, but it is real and it belongs only to God to determine its limits.

b. Second, our belonging to God's earth and the communion with all living beings and the life that from God flows into all of us. We have to overcome whatever narrow individualism enters our cultures with modernization, and also give a cosmic and Christological dimensions to the global sense of life that is part of the best Asian traditions.

c. Third, we have to deepen our belonging to the sacramental family of those who believe in Christ. The experiences and learnings from the last year of Basic Christian Communities and other group or community movements can and must help us now to make of our Churches centers of communion, sharing and belongings. This implies also a renewal of our sacramental life in terms of their ability to better integrate the earthly realities of our lives and the mediation of the mystery that fills the world, the believers and the celebration itself.

2) A living SENSE OF THE SPIRIT in faith life:

a. A spiritual home is an "interiorized home." It does not become such through external norms, regulations or personal effort. Home is where one rests, relaxes and is able to find the sources of lost energy. This requires that more and more of our catechesis and spiritual growth be based on "welcoming" the Spirit and experiencing the energizing power of his presence in us.

b. A home without joy is no home. The Acts of the Apostles witness to a surplus of joy, even in the midst of persecution and misunderstanding. The Spirit is the consoler, the advocate, the

warmth of the heart, the wellspring of life. But these can remain beautiful words alone, unless we make the reality in a new spiritual thrust for the 1990s.

c. This sense of the Spirit will be the best positive protection against the fever for "signs and wonders" of our end-of-millennium times. We search for signs outside when we are devoid of them inside. The spiritually homeless will want to build a house even in the skies — to overcome the terror of isolation facing the future.

d. That is why in the years ahead we will need to spend much of our pastoral involvement in the ministry of "accompaniment," being and walking with people in the common journey to God and through many misleading phenomena. Maybe new forms of the traditional "spiritual direction," individual and community-based as well, can be one of the answers. In it we touch common traditions of East and West that are asking for renewal.

3) An action-oriented SENSE OF CHRISTIAN VALUES:

a. A healthy, generous, constructive compassion that emerges and grows spontaneously from a heart modeled and formed in close contact with Jesus Christ.

b. A wide ecumenical and cosmic solidarity with all those who suffer, who are in need, who one way or another suffer the unjust oppression or marginalization from life in all its forms: physical, cultural, political, economic, religious.

c. A Paschal conception of self, the Church and the world that brings along a commitment to live for others, to give more than to receive, to forgive rather than to resent, to love in such a way that people are healed and societies become more just, even if this commitment takes us to the Cross.

Questions Suggested for Discussion

1. *About the Spiritual Reality of Your Region*

— How far has modernization entered the social and personal life of the people? Is it viewed as a threat to traditional wisdom? Why and How?

— Is modernization changing fundamental values in the local communities? Are those values linked to people's perception of God and mystery?

— Are relationships being changed? Relationships to other persons, between the sexes, or even with the environment, nature, animals, etc.

— Are traditional perceptions of harmony being threatened? How? If so, is there a new understanding of harmony emerging?

— What are the main spiritual gains of modernization in your area?

2. About the Main influences People Receive

— Which "voices" are most heard and welcomed today? The voices of business and propaganda? Or those of the suffering in our midst? (Not only physically, but mostly spiritually heard and welcomed.)

— Is the cry of the poor, oppressed, marginal sufficiently heard by the Christian community in your pastoral field?

— How willing are our Christian communities to make children, youth and old people the center of their concerns? Is their "voice" welcomed? Or rather silenced for the sake of "other better" goals?

— What is the actual influence of women and women issues in Christian life and spirituality? Is there an adequate effort to welcome their concerns, their insights, the way their Christian perception of faith, love and the Church could change our present practice?

— Are we conscious enough of the earth's plight and willing to search in God's life and message for new light on how to relate to nature and how to heal the wounds we have inflicted on it?

3. *About Trinitarian Spirituality*

— Do you think the awareness and sense of the mystery of the Father is fully alive and operative in the Christians you work with?

— Which aspects of the mystery of the Father do you consider most important to develop and make people sensitive to in the coming decades?

— Is the awareness of and communion with Christ a living reality? Is our Christology sufficiently wide and deep to integrate the New Testament dimensions, all the way to the Cosmic Christ of the whole of creation?

— Does the communion with Christ lead people to do the works of Christ, in compassion, healing, fraternity, concern for justice, for the poor, the oppressed, sick, sinners, outsiders?

— How does the life in the Holy Spirit affect and guide Christian behavior, peace of heart, community, joy, hope?

— What manifestations of the Spirit are most common among Asian Christians you know? Are they limited and onesided? Or are they rich and creative in the whole openness of God's gifts?

4. *About the New Emerging Individual*

— How would you sum up the characteristics of modern Asian individuals in your country? Their strong and weak points, their tendencies and weaknesses?

— How would you express the spiritual priorities for our work in the coming years?

— How would you redefine the need of modern Asians for a spiritual home? How do you see their sense of belonging at present? Their sense of joy and the Spirit? Their living values?

5. *What Others Points Do You Want to Underline for the "Spiritual Journey of the 1990s"?*

PASTORAL WORDS

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

Congregation for Catholic Education

VI. FORMATION

Objective of the document

66. The guidelines given in the above exposition are intended for those who have the task and responsibility for the formation of candidates to the priesthood and of students in the various theological institutes. They have been prepared in order to facilitate and encourage formative work in the area of social doctrine. Thus there is no doubt that professors will benefit from them in giving a good general basis to the context and method of their teaching. The purpose of this document is in fact to highlight those points which are fundamental in the study of this discipline and therefore indispensable for a solid theological and pastoral formation of future priests.

Therefore, it seems useful to dedicate the present chapter to concrete indications that may enhance the specific preparation of professors and give a better structure to student's formation.

1. The formation of professors

*Theological, scientific and
pastoral formation*

67. It is not necessary to insist on the fact that a good reception of the social doctrine of the Church by students depends to a great

extend on the professors' competency and teaching method. Acquiring these qualities requires a great preparation on their part that cannot be ensured merely by some course on social doctrine taken within the framework of philosophical and theological studies.

For this purpose, bishops and superiors of centres of ecclesiastical formation have the grave responsibility to send some students, who are capable and interested, to the departments of social sciences and other similar institutes approved by ecclesiastical authority, in order to ensure the availability of professors equipped with an adequate scientific formation. The Church wants these professors, to whom the formation of the clergy is entrusted, to be chosen from among the best, and to master solid doctrine and adequate pastoral experience together with a good spiritual and pedagogical formation.¹⁴³

It must also be kept in mind that in order to teach social doctrine simple knowledge about the relative documents of the Magisterium is not enough. The professors must also have a broad and deep theological formation, competency in social morality, and knowledge at least of the basic elements of the modern social sciences. Furthermore, their close collaboration must be encouraged with professors of morality, dogmatics and pastoral care in order to ensure the consistency, unity and solidity of their teaching and, ultimately, to enable students to have a synthetic view of theology and pastoral care. Likewise, it is desirable for doctrinal formation and pastoral formation to be closely linked to spiritual formation.¹⁴⁴

Function of the social sciences

68. As has already been mentioned above (nn. 10, 50), the social doctrine of the Church cannot do without the social sciences if it wants to stay in contact with the life of society and effectively influence pastoral reality. For this reason, it is highly recommended that professors of social doctrine take an interest in the successful

¹⁴³VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Optatam Totius*, n. 5.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, n. 8

pastoral preparation of candidates to the priesthood, keeping in mind that in teaching they cannot limit themselves "simply to recalling general principles," but that they must concern themselves with developing them "through reflection applied to the changing situations of this world, under the driving force of the Gospel as the source of renewal."¹⁴⁵ It follows that it is also their task to initiate students into the use of the means offered by the human sciences, according to the norms of the Church.¹⁴⁶

The human sciences in fact are an important instrument for evaluating the changing situations and setting up a dialogue with the world and with men of all opinions.¹⁴⁷ They offer the social teaching in the empirical context in which the fundamental principles can and must be applied; they provide abundant material for analyses for the evaluation and judgment of social situations and structures; they aid orientation in the concrete choices to be made. Undoubtedly, in study and interest in the social sciences, the danger must be avoided of falling into the snares of ideologies that manipulate the interpretation of data, or into positivism which overevaluates empirical data to the detriment of an overall understanding of man and the world.

Ongoing formation

It is an obvious fact that social reality, and the sciences which intervene in it, are subject to continuous and rapid change. For this reason, the ongoing formation of professors is particularly necessary which guarantees their continuous updating. Lack of close contact with the new problems and new directions on the national, international and world level, as well as with the new developments of the social doctrine of the Church, can deprive their teaching of interest and formative capacity.

¹⁴⁵ PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971), n. 42: AAS 63 (1971), page 431.

¹⁴⁶ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 62; Decree *Optatum Totius*, n. 20.

¹⁴⁷ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43; Decree *Optatum Totius*, n. 19.

70. For professors to teach social doctrine, not as an abstract theory, but as a discipline directed toward concrete action, direct pastoral experience will be most useful to them. It will be an experience that is diversified according to places, situations and the abilities and inclinations of each one, but always chosen and set up so as to enhance the concreteness, validity and effectiveness of their teaching.

2. The formation of students

Pastoral instruction

71. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law, qualification for the pastoral ministry of candidates to the priesthood is achieved through an integral formation that is careful to allow the aspects of the priestly personality to grow: human, spiritual, theological and pastoral. The same can be said with regard to preparation of the laity for the apostolate.

In this regard it must be remembered that, while it is true that all formation has a pastoral end, it is still necessary to foresee specifically pastoral instruction for everyone,¹⁴⁸ which also takes into consideration the social doctrine of the Church.

72. In the context of this formation, which undoubtedly requires and includes, as we have said, an adequate theological preparation for announcing the Word according to the needs of persons, places and times, and for the dialogue of the Church with the world, the students' interest in, and sensitivity about, the Church's social doctrine and pastoral care must be aroused. In this sense the code speaks about the need to educate future priests to "dialogue with persons," and to sensitize them to the "social tasks" that await the Church.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸C.I.C., Can. 255.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, Can. 256.

73. With regard to the space to be reserved for social doctrine within the programme of studies on centres for ecclesiastical formation, it seems clear that, in conformity with what has been said, it is not enough to deal with it in some optional lessons within philosophy or theology courses. Required and elective courses on this discipline must be included in the programme.

The best moment for these studies depends on the academic curriculum of the different centres and institutes of formation. Perhaps it would be useful to spread these courses over the entire period of the students' formation. This solution would guarantee the required continuity and graduality of learning, and would allow for better understanding of the concepts of social philosophy and theology present in the various documents. In any case, it is absolutely necessary for knowledge about the major social encyclicals to be ensured during formation.

These encyclicals must be the subject of special courses and represent required reading material for the students. Their contact with them will have to keep in mind the socio-cultural context in which they were written, the theological and philosophical premises on which they are based, their relationship to the social sciences, and their meaning for the present situation. Furthermore, in connection with the documents of the universal Church, the social problems of the particular and local Churches will have to be studied.

Philosophical-theological foundation

74. In addition to pastoral sensitivity to social problems, students must be offered a solid philosophical-theological foundation on the principles of the social doctrine and their interdisciplinary relations. This foundation is of special importance in the present-day situation of "dialogue with the world," which the Church lives by putting the guidelines of Vatican Council II into practice. In fact both priests and the laity involved in the social apostolate are often questioned by radical and totalitarian ideologies, both collectivist and individualist, by secularizing trends when not by a secularism which is extraneous to the Christian spirit.

*The authentic and integral
message of Christ*

75. As has already been stated, theological-pastoral and spiritual formation of all those who wish to dedicate themselves to social action includes sensitization to the different problems of society and the habit of evaluating situations, structures, and economic, social and political systems with the criteria of the doctrine of the Church. It also includes specific preparation for operating adequately on the various levels and in the different sectors of human activity.

Above all, however, this formation requires that lay people and candidates for the priesthood become aware that, through their work, they must give witness to Christ in the world. In particular, bishops and priests are called upon to preach the message of Christ in such a way that all human temporal activity will be permeated by the light of the Gospel.¹⁵⁰ Undoubtedly the Church's essential contribution in the social area is always the integral announcement of the Gospel, which also dedicates great attention to social problems.

Interpretation and application of the Gospel to social reality today is thus essential in the theological and interdisciplinary formation of the students, and has a decisive value for the effectiveness of pastoral care. In this formation, life witness, preaching and action cannot be separated because they stand united in the very person of Jesus, in the Gospel and in the tradition of the Church.

First pastoral experiences

76. During the period of formation, it is suggested that students be directed towards experiences of a pastoral and social nature which place them in direct contact with the problems studied, as is already taking place in some countries with positive results. In such formation, it is very important for students to be fully aware of the specifically priestly role in social action which has been stressed particularly in recent times on various occasions by the Magisterium of the universal Church and of the particular Churches. Highly

¹⁵⁰VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43.

recommended are visits and dialogue of students, accompanied by their professors, with the world of labour—business people, workers, trade unionists — with social organizations and marginalized sectors.

*Task of the priest
with regard to the laity*

77. As part of their formation in social pastoral care, students must be instructed about the task and method to be followed in making the laity have an increasingly vivid awareness of their mission and responsibility in the social area. In this perspective, the priest's task is to help the laity become aware of their duty, form them both spiritually and doctrinally, follow them in their social action, participate in their toils and sufferings, recognize the important function of their organizations both on the apostolic level and that of social commitment, and give them the witness of a deep social sensitivity. The effectiveness of the Christian message also depends, in addition to the action of the Holy Spirit, on the life-style and pastoral witness of the priest who, by evangelical service, reveals the real countenance of the Church.¹⁵¹

CONCLUSION

78. Lastly, the Congregation for Catholic Education, in entrusting this document to the bishops and to the various institutes of theological studies, expresses its sincere wish that it may offer a real help and a sound guideline for the teaching of the social doctrine of the Church. Such teaching, if imparted correctly, will inspire a new apostolic momentum in future priests and other pastoral workers, pointing out the sure path for effective pastoral action.

In consideration of the many spiritual and material needs of present-day society which have been pointed out on many occasions by the Supreme Pontiff, John Paul II, it can only be hoped that each candidate for the priesthood will become an enlightened and responsible messenger of this modern expression of evangelical preaching,

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, n. 43.

which is the only one capable of proposing effective remedies to the evils of our times and thereby contributing to the salvation of the world.

It is up to the bishops and those in charge of the institutes of priestly formation to provide all the means so that these "Guidelines," when duly illustrated and integrated into formation programmes, will strengthen doctrinal and pastoral preparation which today is awaited everywhere and responds to our common wishes.

Rome, Palace of the Congregations,
30 December 1988.

William Cardinal Baum
Prefect

+ JOSE SARIVA MARTINS
Titular Archbishop of Tuburnica
Secretary

Approval of the Use of the Revised Translation of the Words of Consecration

Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments

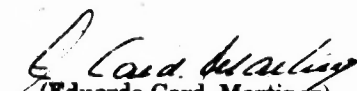
Your Excellency,

This Congregation has received the request of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines for permission to use the revised translation of the words of Institution, second consecration, in the English version of the Eucharistic Prayers:

IT WILL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL


We gladly grant this request since several other Episcopal Conferences of the English speaking world have adopted this form and so this brings the Philippine usage in line with those Conferences that use this version.

With every good and prayerful wish, I remain,
Yours sincerely in Christ,


(Eduardo Card. Martinez)
Prefect

His Excellency
The Most Reverend J. A. Dosado, C.M.
Archbishop of Ozamiz
Chairman, NLC/Ph PHILIPPINES

Prot. N. CD 227/90
4 May 1990

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Guidelines for the Eucharist*

National Liturgical Commission

Preliminary Note. When the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) is quoted, reference is made to its text in the second typical edition of the Roman Missal, which is in fact already the fourth edition of this instruction. This edition, given in Documents on the Liturgy [DOL], n. 208, pp. 465-533, is needed, as it changes many things in comparison to earlier versions. Further changes have been made as a consequence of the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law (most of them found in *Emendations* . . . quoted below. The same is true for the Introduction to the Lectionary of the Mass, which had its second edition in 1981 (referred to below as Lectionary) with many changes compared to the first edition of 1969. It is these latest editions to the Missal and the Lectionary that are always used below, unless otherwise indicated. The following abbreviations occur often in the text below:

- DOL: Documents on the Liturgy (for 1963-1979 only);
- GIRM: General Instruction of the Roman Missal;
- CDW: Congregation for Divine Worship;
- CDS: Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments;
- CSDW: Congr. for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, for the time when the two preceding ones were combined into one;
- CWS: Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments, since the middle of 1988 when both congregations were reunited once

*Approved by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, January 1990.

more. Note also that the Roman Congregations were called "sacred" till 1984.

- CCL: stands for (the new) Code of Canon Law.

- *Notitiae* is the liturgical periodical of the CDW; though not officially "official," it publishes most of the official documents on the liturgy, but contains other materials too;

- Emendations in the Liturgical Books following the New Code of Canon Law, English version by ICEL, Washington, 1984, 26 pages.

A few of the recommendations of the Guidelines are not *directly* stated in any official document, but are deducted "*by omission*" from a comparison of the newer texts in documents with the old rubrics in the pre-Vatican Missal. We have made use of such "omissions" only where the old rubrics stated very emphatically a point which is no longer mentioned after Vatican II, and only if noticed by several authors.

Normally, only the most recent and most accessible source is given, e.g., GIRM or CCL, without referring to earlier or less complete documents. Those who want to check all related documents will have to look up the references in the document concerned or to check the General Index and Appendices of Documents on the Liturgy, at least for documents prior to 1980.

I. In General

1. It is not the purpose of these guidelines to do away with the legitimate freedom which is offered in the post-Vatican eucharistic liturgy. In many parts of the Eucharist the liturgy gives several options. This is a sign that we should make use of these options according to the pastoral needs of the concrete community the priest is facing, and in most instances also a sign, particularly for the texts of prayers, introductions and invitations, that the celebrant may use his own words. This is sometimes, but not always, indicated when a text says, "*in these or similar words.*" Because the faithful had been accustomed to rigid regulation before Vatican II, they, and some celebrants, have still a hard time to accept and adjust to this freedom, which, of course, we should use responsibly.

2. *Place of the Celebrant.* The place recommended for the celebrant during the eucharistic celebration is: for the *introductory*

rites: at the chair; for the Liturgy of the Word: at the chair if and while others are doing the reading(s) and the Responsorial Psalm; at the lectern for the gospel, and also for the earlier readings and the Responsorial Psalm if there is no other minister for them; at the lectern or the chair for the homily and the General Intercessions; for the whole Liturgy of the Eucharist at the altar; but for the Prayer after Communion and for the concluding rites (Blessing and Dismissal) at the chair, though the priest may also keep standing at the altar (GIRM ##8, 86, 94, 99, 102, 121-122). Note how clearly it is indicated that the celebrant should stay away from the altar except for the Eucharist proper, as the altar is the table of the sacrifice.

What is now the proper place of the chair? That depends on the arrangement of the church and its sanctuary. The briefest answer would be: "a place that is clearly visible to all the faithful and that makes it plain that the celebrant presides over the whole community," wherever that place is in the sanctuary. Normally one should not preside from the altar itself if avoidable (see S. Cong. of Rites, Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* of Sept. 29, 1964, n. 92 [DOL p. 108]; GIRM #271).

3. *Postures of the People during the different parts of the Mass. For the Philippines* the following postures are prescribed: The people should *stand* from the beginning of the Entrance Song or when the priest enters until the Opening Prayer or Collect inclusive; for the singing of the *Alleluia* before the gospel and during the proclamation of the gospel; during the profession of faith and the General Intercessions; from the Prayer over the Gifts until the praying or singing of the *Sanctus* is finished; from the Lord's Prayer to the end of the praying or singing of the *Agnus Dei*; from the invitation "Let us pray" before the Prayer after Communion till the end of the Mass. The people should *sit* during the reading(s) before the gospel and the Responsorial Psalm, for the homily and the presentation of the gifts and, if it seems helpful, also during the silence after Communion. The people should *kneel* from after the *Sanctus* until the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, then again, as a sign of reverence before receiving Communion, from after the *Agnus Dei* until Communion. If the acclamation after the consecration is sung, the people may stand for it and keep standing. Note also that the kneeling rule is suspended when the people are prevented by lack of

space, large numbers, dirt floors in barrio chapels, or other reasonable causes (GIRM #21, and further specifications by the CBCP, Jan. 1986).

4. *Prayers and other parts assigned to the priest.* a. There are parts that strictly belong to the priest alone as the one who, by the power of orders, presides over the eucharistic assembly "in the person of Christ": the so-called *presidential prayers*; they may never be assigned to other ministers or to the congregation as a whole. These are the Opening Prayer, the Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer after Communion, and the chief presidential prayer, the Eucharistic Prayer. For the latter, the people may only intervene with the proper acclamations. Also the homily belongs properly to the priest or the deacon (See CCL, Canon 907; GIRM ##10, 42, 60, 61 and 131; Lectionary #24).

b. The new liturgy also assigns to the priest as presider over the assembly some instructions and words of introduction, invitation and conclusion already found directly in the rites themselves. These, "by their very nature do not need to be expressed verbatim in the words in which they are given in the Missal." He may express them in his own words "to adapt them somewhat to the concrete situation of the community" (GIRM #11). Concrete cases are given below.

c. The presiding priest is now given also the following short introductions not found in the liturgy before, but very important to set the tone of the celebration: at the beginning of the Mass after the greeting, a general introduction to the celebration of the day; before the readings an introduction to the day's liturgy of the word; before the preface an introduction to the eucharistic prayer; some parting comments before the blessing and dismissal. (See GIRM #11; Lectionary #42; Directory for Masses with Children #54). Note that these now *belong properly to the role of the presiding priest*, as they are named in a special section entitled . . . "Parts assigned to the priest," no longer to the "commentator," and that apparently the other suitable minister" (see GIRM #29) who may also introduce the Mass of the day acts only as an alternative or substitute. The presider himself should clearly act as the person in charge of the whole worship.

5. Besides guidelines referred to in the section on individual parts of the Mass, there are some general directives for Masses with Children that apply to several parts. Our bishops have allowed, as suggested in the special *Directory for Masses with Children* (nos. 30 — 36), the children to play musical instruments during Mass and the playing of tapes and records to support the singing of the children; also, at least on special occasions, audiovisuals may be used, not only at Masses with children but also for young people and groups for whom it would be fruitful (CBCP decision of July 1975). Note that this directory for Masses with Children is a very useful document to know and use, as it allows for many adaptations to children. It is given in the introductory part of the altar edition of the Roman Missal, after the General Instructions.

II. Individual Parts of the Mass

6. The introductory rites may be somewhat simplified in Masses with children, i.e., in Masses where practically all are children or wherein their number is proportionately large (Dir. Masses w. Children #19, 40).

7. If there is an entrance song, the entrance antiphon is not said and when there is a song at Communion, the Communion antiphon is likewise omitted (GIRM 26 and 56, i/).

8. The words of Introduction assigned now to the celebrant (see also 4.b. and 4.c. above) are very important for setting the tone of the whole celebration. It calls the attention of the people to the occasion or the feast and the central message of the celebration. Here the celebrant can best link the celebration with the life of the people, starting from a human experience, question or problem, and that in a concrete way. This shows them that the celebration is not estranged from everyday life but rooted in it. This introduction should not yet give a brief explanation of the readings, as it is not a part of the liturgy of the Word; perhaps on weekdays, when there is usually no homily, we could more directly refer to the readings (GIRM #11).

9. On Sundays, in all Masses, including the anticipated Mass of Saturday evening, we may have the *Rite of blessing and sprinkling of holy water* as a reminder of our baptism, for we celebrate the

Eucharist as a priestly community of baptized people, and it is by the reason of our baptism that we have the "right and duty" to participate in the Eucharist (Liturgical Constitution, art. 14). To encourage the frequent use of this rite, more recent editions of the Sacramentary in various languages usually print this rite now as part of the Order of Mass rather than in an appendix.

10. The Penitential Act and the Kyrie are omitted *whenever another liturgical rite immediately precedes the Mass*, as part of the Liturgy of the Hours, the rite with holy water (preceding number), the blessing of candles or palms, the *Encuentro* on Easter morning, and the like.

11. The *Penitential Act* comes in three forms, all of them adaptable further in all their parts according to the norm given in GIRM #11 (see 4.b. above). The preference of celebrants and the communities seems to go clearly to the first (*I confess*) and the third forms (acclamations combined with *Lord or Christ, have mercy*). The latter form allows also to simplify a bit the rather cluttered introductory rites, because the *Kyrie* is not to be repeated if it has already been used with the Penitential Act.

12. *The Penitential Act of the Mass is clearly nonsacramental and may not be used for General Absolution*. All the other sacraments can be integrated with the Eucharist, for the very reason that the Eucharist is the center and the high point of every activity of a Christian, whether ecclesial or personal, sacred or profane *and also the center of all liturgical rites* (see GIRM #1). But in the present discipline of the Church this cannot be done for the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation, even though the Eucharist and Penance are closely related and the Eucharist shows its penitential traits in many of its parts. This was made very explicit in the Pastoral Norms *Sacramentum Penitentiae* of the Cong. for the Doctrine of the Faith of June 16, 1972, n. X, and a subsequent letter to the bishops of the USA, Jan. 14, 1977 (DOL pp. 951 and 978). The following CBCP decision is found in the *Rite of Penance*, Philippine edition, #32 of the Introduction:

General absolution is not to be integrated with the eucharistic celebration and should not take the place of the

penitential act of the Mass, but it can come immediately before the Mass. If general absolution immediately precedes the Mass, the penitential rite of the Mass may be omitted on the basis of the general principle of avoiding duplication.

In commentaries about the absolute separation of the rites of these two sacraments, the basic reason given is pedagogical: how are the people going to distinguish whether the penitential act of the Mass is sacramental or not in a given instance? It is also for this reason that the old alternative form of the concluding words has been scrapped as confusing: "May the almighty and merciful God grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins" (*Indulgentiam* . . .). And this disciplinary ruling also shows that absolution is not necessary before every Communion, as especially some older people still think.

13. The *Kyrie* is no longer said or sung if it has been used as a part of the Penitential rite (GIRM 30). Note that the *Kyrie* is addressed to Christ, not the Trinity, and even as part of the Penitential Act it is primarily a joyful acclamation to Christ.

14. When the *Gloria* is sung, it may be intoned either by the priest, the cantors or the assembly. The priest should leave it to others to intone it if he cannot sing (GIRM 31 and 87). Like the Creed, the *Gloria* may be used also when not prescribed by the rules to enhance the celebration at special occasions. And, also like the Creed, the *Gloria* may not only be sung in alternation but also recited in this way, for example, between the priest and the assembly or, even better, between two sectors of the assembly, as properly speaking the Glory and the Creed belong to the people (GIRM 31 and 87; Response #33 in *Notitiae* n. 55, June 1970, p. 263; Response #14 in *Notitiae* n. 148, Nov. 1978, p. 538).

15. The *Invitation to pray* before the Opening Prayer is followed by a silent pause long enough to give the people the time to pray for some moments. This invitation "Let us pray" may be lengthened with a few words so as to give the people an intention to pray for, especially in relation with the theme of the day's celebration; in this way the Opening Prayer comes as a real "Collect" or summing up of the people's prayer (GIRM ## 32 and 88).

16. In Masses with children the priest may choose *presidential prayers* more suited to the children than those assigned for the day

(Directory, n. 50) or even, if he cannot find good ones, he may adapt them to the children's capacity (Ibid., n. 51).

17. The *Liturgy of the Word*, making up with the Liturgy of the Eucharist the two constitutive parts of the eucharistic celebration (GIRM #8), should be proclaimed with great care by well-trained ministers (GIRM 66). Note that the Word of God goes in a way beyond the Bible; it is more than the reading of texts written in the past many centuries ago. The Word of God is God through Christ speaking in the words and actions of the Bible to his concrete, living faithful in the Church today. It is to an actual, concrete community that he addresses his challenges and answers their questions, keeps revealing himself and making "history of salvation" with them. This is why this part of the liturgy is not to be a mere reading but a real proclamation, and the homilist should further actualize it in the homily (GIRM 9 and 41; Lectionary ##4-10, 24-27, 49-57).

18. Instead of the priest giving a *general introduction to the Liturgy of the Word* (as indicated in #3c above), each reading could also be introduced separately, even by the leader of the praying and singing or by the lector himself, if he says it is an explanatory tone of voice before proclaiming the reading proper (See Lectionary ##15 and 42; Directory Children n. 47).

19. Our bishops have allowed, where and when pastoral reasons so suggest (great number of communicants, and the like) that on Sundays, solemnities and feasts with three scripture readings, only two be used, *preferably* the one of the two readings that is closest to the gospel (GIRM #318; Lectionary #79; CBCP decision of July 1969). In most instances this may cause the second reading, the one from the apostle, to be omitted; however, it would be regrettable to do so when the message of this second reading is pastorally important. If the two readings are used, it is recommended that they be proclaimed by different readers (Lectionary #52).

20. Even if ministers of a higher rank are present, the *lector* always retains his proper function. This applies also at concelebrated Masses (GIRM ##66 and 89-91; Lectionary ##51-52). A similar rule governs also the task of the *deacon*; if present, he should read the gospel, even at a concelebrated Mass (GIRM #34; Lectionary #49).

21. Note that in the Philippines *women* may also act as lectors, "commentators" or leaders of the people's participation, cantors, announcers of the general intentions and special ministers of Holy Communion (GIRM #66; Instr. *Fidei Custos* of April 30, 1969, #3 and Instr. *Immensae Caritatis* of Jan. 29, 1973, #1. IV; CBCP decision of July 1969).

22. In *Masses with children*, if more scripture texts would be rather difficult for them, it may be enough to have only one, and if so it should be the gospel. Difficult readings may be replaced with easier ones and difficult verses may be left out if the meaning of the message is not distorted thereby; simple translations of the Bible prepared for children may be used, but paraphrases are to be avoided (Directory *Masses with Children*, ##42-45). If a text is suited for it, it may be read by them according to roles, in a way similar to the reading of the passion during Holy Week (Dir. #48).

23. There may be some confusion regarding the *readings for celebrations of saints on weekdays*, because the new Lectionary now gives suggested readings for all celebrations of saints to indicate the ones best in conformity with the character or message of life of that saint. This is done only to provide for those occasions where this particular saint would be of special pastoral importance to a community ("for compelling pastoral reasons"), but the rules as to what readings to take remains as follows: on *solemnities and feasts* of saints on weekdays: of the saint; on *memorials*, whether obligatory or optional: for the few saints (mostly biblical ones) who have proper readings — and these are identified in the Lectionary as "proper," usually only one of the two — then from the proper of the saint; otherwise, the preference of the Lectionary goes to the ordinary weekday readings (see Lectionary ##82-83; the first edition was clearer in this regard: see #8.e; also the special introduction on the celebration of saints when the *editio typica* of vol. III of the Lectionary was released in June 1972, #1.b).

24. The one who proclaims any reading announces it simply the way it is indicated in the Lectionary, without mentioning the chapter and verses, e.g., "A reading from the book of . . ." or "A reading from the gospel of . . ." Note that in a Mass with a congregation *the readings are always to be proclaimed at the lectern* (GIRM #272; Lectionary, ## 16, 32-34, 121).

25. The *Responsorial Psalm* is now an integral part of the liturgy and may not be replaced with just any song, though a seasonal or easier adapted psalm may be used. It is best sung, at least the response (GIRM #36; Lectionary #20).

26. If not sung, the *Alleluia* or the verse before the gospel may be omitted, says GIRM #39; the Lectionary states more forcefully in its introduction (#23) that "the *Alleluia* or verse before the gospel must be sung . . . not only by the cantor . . . but by the whole congregation together," implying that it should be omitted when not sung. Note however that if there is only one reading before the gospel, one of the options is to omit the *Responsorial Psalm* and to substitute the *Alleluia* or verse before the gospel (GIRM 38 a and b), provided, of course, that it is sung.

Note that when in *Lent* there is no *Alleluia* but only a verse, this verse sounds very thin and remains almost unnoticed; unfortunately, in most places the lector or cantor is the only one to say or sing it, whereas it belongs also to the people. For this reason the Lectionary suggests the singing (or reading) of a short additional acclamation introducing and concluding the verse. Four models are given: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!*, or *Praise and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ!*, or *Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!*, or *Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!* (Lectionary, Introduction, #9 [old edition]; in the new edition of 1981, these introductory and concluding acclamations are already in place, given each time with the verse itself).

27. The priest celebrant gives the *homily* either from the chair, standing or sitting, or from the lectern (Lectionary #26). All announcements are now separated from the homily and relegated to immediately after the Prayer after Communion (Ibid. #27). The homily comments on the readings of the day or another part of the liturgy, applies their message to the Christian life, and links it also to the liturgy of the Eucharist. As the homily is an integral part of the liturgy (GIRM 9, 41; Lectionary #24), there should be *no sign of the cross* before or after it, for this would set it off from the rest of the liturgy (Response in *Notitiae* #83), May 1973, p. 178.) The homily is *obligatory on Sundays and holydays of obligation* (see GIRM ##41-42; Lectionary ##24-25; CCL #917; *Emendations* #42, p.7 and #25,

p. 9). In Masses with children the homily may be given in the form of a dialogue with them (Directory #48).

Although the homily "is reserved to the priest or to a deacon" (CCL #767; see GIRM ##41 and 46), bishops' conferences can set norms for making exceptions to this rule, as CCL says in Canon 766: "*Lay persons can be admitted to preach in a church or an oratory if it is necessary in certain circumstances or if it is useful in particular cases according to the prescriptions of the bishops and with due regard for canon 767, par. 1,*" namely that the priest and the deacon are the normal homilists. The CDW's *Directory for Sunday Liturgies without a Priest* of June 2, 1988, in #43, gives itself already an exception, namely for the presiding (lay) minister, where it suggested that he read the homily prepared by the priest, but the conference could also delegate him. Other examples which some conferences admit are: qualified lay theologians, at least occasionally; a layman or laywoman, on the Sunday of the family or parents' day or laity week; a lay missionary or a religious sister or brother leaving for the missions; a lay person when the presiding priest is not familiar with the local vernacular; as explicitly stated in the *Directory for Masses with Children*, #24, *a teacher or another adult* at a Mass with children if the priest is clumsy in addressing children; and the like. So far, the CBCP has not issued any norms for such cases, but allows lay persons to give a homily *outside Mass* in instances where the diocesan bishop allows it.

28. On days when the *Profession of Faith* is to be said, we may also use the *Apostles' Creed* in the Philippines, provided we also use occasionally the Nicene Creed (CBCP decision, Jan. 1969). As the Creed is a profession of faith, it is not by itself a song, and therefore the recommended practice in most countries is to recite it, except at important solemn occasions, like congresses (see Lucien Deiss, *Spirit and Song of the New Liturgy*, 2nd. ed., 1976, pp. 213-215). For Masses with children, a text simpler even than that of the *Apostles' Creed* may be used; the same applies also to the *Gloria*, the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei* (Directory #31). On the other hand, the Creed (and the Gloria) may be added, whether recited or sung, to enhance the solemnity of a local celebration also on days when it is not prescribed (GIRM #44), e.g., at the first Mass of a priest. When the Creed is sung, the same rule applies for intoning it as for the Gloria: the priest, or a

cantor, or the choir or the whole assembly. For alternating the text between two groups, see also the remarks about the Gloria above.

29. In the *General Intercessions* the Church prays for the wider needs of the Church and of the world. Note that the General Intercessions are now a standard part of all Masses celebrated with a congregation.

Normally, the following intentions are presented: the needs of the Church; the good of public authorities and the salvation of the world; those oppressed by any suffering or need; the local community and/or special categories of people; one or the other particular intention may be added at the end. In ritual Masses (like marriages, funerals, confirmations) and other special celebrations, the intentions may be geared more directly to the particular occasion. The priest directs the prayer from the lectern or preferably from the chair by saying the invitation at the beginning and the concluding prayer at the end, whereas the intentions are said by the deacon or another minister from the lectern; also some of the faithful may propose intentions (See GIRM ##45-47, 61, 99, 132; Lectionary ## 30-31; Consilium, The Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful of April 17, 1966: DOL #239, pp. 594-603).

30. The bringing forward or setting aside and placing on the altar of bread and wine for the Eucharist should no longer be called "Offertory" but the *Preparation of the Gifts* (see responses ##25 and 26 in *Notitiae* #50, Jan. 1970, pp. 37-38). Only at this Preparation of the Gifts should the sacred vessels (chalice, etc.) be placed on the altar. Money or gifts for the poor, for the sustenance of the clergy and for the church as well as symbolic gifts brought forward by the people should not be placed on the altar but in a suitable place nearby (GIRM ## 49, 100-102, 133).

Only the prayers of the presentation of the bread and that of the wine may be said aloud, as the two most important prayers of this part, with or without the answer of the people "Blessed be God." But the rubrics of the Order of Mass prefer even these two prayers to be said often "inaudibly."

At the preparation of the gifts, after the deacon who assists the priest (or in a concelebrated Mass, the priest who acts as deacon) has

handed to the priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, he is the one who pours the water and a little wine into the chalice, saying inaudibly the accompanying prayer *Through the mystery* . . . and then passes the chalice to the priest; the priest has not to say that prayer anymore. If a deacon (or another priest in a concelebration) assists, that preparation is best done at the side table. The water to be mixed with the wine is no longer blessed (GIRM #133). But acolytes and servers may only place the sacred vessels on the altar and bring forward the bread and wine; it is the priest himself who has to do the mixing of the water and wine (GIRM ##131, 145, 160). At the washing of hands, the priest should wash his hands, not merely his fingers (GIRM #106).

31. The *presentation song* (the old "offertory song") is a functional processional song accompanying the bringing forward by the people of the gifts and their placing on the altar by the priest or the deacon. If no gifts are brought forward, the song is normally omitted, and it should end in any case when the priest is ready to pray the Prayer over the Gifts (GIRM 50 and 100). As invitation to the Prayer over the Gifts it is enough to say "Let us pray" (see *Messebuch* [the German Missal], which gives three options, pp. 346-347).

32. Remember that the Missal recommends to the priest to introduce briefly the *Eucharistic Prayer*. It might be good to link this introduction with the key message of the readings of the day as a reason for thanksgiving (GIRM ##10-11). And the priest should see to it that he voices the Eucharistic Prayer as a real proclamation (see CDW, Circular Letter *Eucharistiae Participationem* of April 27, 1973, #8; DOL #274, pp. 623-629). The same circular states also (##8-10) that bishops' conferences may propose to the Apostolic See variable elements similar to those already found in existing eucharistic prayers, apparently including also additional acclamations; bishops may do so for the proper of dioceses and the competent authorities for the proper of religious families. We have further examples of such variables in the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children and in the one for important Church assemblies. Perhaps we have not used enough this possibility.

33. For the *Eucharistic Prayer*, do we make a good pastoral use of the many options open to us? In too many churches there is rarely any other Eucharistic Prayer heard than the Number II. GIRM #322

and the Consilium's Guidelines *Au cours des derniers mois* of June 2, 1968, for the catechesis of the new eucharistic prayer II-IV (DOL #244, pp. 614-619), recommend the Roman Canon (E.P. I) and E.P. III for Sundays, E.P. II for weekdays, E.P. IV for groups better versed in the scriptures. And, of course, in Masses with children (and occasionally with adults too) we should use those for children; in Lent and other penitential occasions those of reconciliation; for large assemblies, pastoral meetings and small groups the one for important assemblies (the one originally of the Swiss Synod).

Keep in mind also that when in the "mementos" or intercessions of the eucharistic prayer (and in other liturgical prayers too) the names of the Holy Father and/or of the bishop are to be mentioned (usually when there is an "N" indicating that we have to fill in the name), we simply and merely give the *Christian* name, without any honorary titles or other additions, for example, in Eucharistic Prayer II: "John Paul, our pope," instead of "John Paul II, our Pope"; "Orlando, our bishop," instead of "Orlando, our Archbishop"; "Jaime, our bishop," instead of "Jaime Cardinal Sin, our Archbishop." According to our culture we might prefer to give a fuller title, but by a very old and constant tradition the liturgy gives only his function (pope, bishop . . .), plus the Christian name, indicating in this way that he is dear and close to us as the head of our local Church. "It is not simply or mainly a matter of honor but of communion and charity," says CDW, Decree *Cum de nomine* of Oct. 9, 1972 (DOL #247, pp. 622-623), as stresses even more the accompanying commentary in *Notitiae* #78, Dec. 1972, pp. 349-353).

The host should in no case be broken during the Institution words when the priest says, "He took bread, broke it . . ." See further below, #38.

34. There is often confusion regarding the choice of *Prefaces on the memorials of saints*. The liturgy wants to avoid the pitfall of overusing a small number of prefaces at the expense of the ones normally to be used. For Prefaces P66 to P70 (Martyrs, Pastors, Virgins and Religious, Holy Men and Women I and II) the rubrics give clear preference for their use at solemnities and feasts of these saints, and when it is added that these prefaces may be said also at memorials of these saints, it is to be understood in the sense of what

was said about the readings of saints (#23 above), namely, if it is on the day of a saint especially venerated by the people.

35. In the Philippines we have for Masses in English at least five acclamations after the Consecration to choose from. One is proper to the Philippines and approved by our Bishops' Conference in January 1969. It is rarely heard. What is sad, though, is that we rarely hear any other acclamation than "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." This one was created by ICEL, and not in the Latin original as such but as an alternative translation of the first of the Latin texts. It is also the poorest of the acclamations: for the other acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer (the alternatives and the "Holy, Holy,") or in other parts of the Mass we use the form of direct acclamation, addressing Christ directly; for this overused "Christ has died, . . ." we merely make a statement of fact and do not speak to Christ.

So, why not use the other alternative acclamations too, for example, rotating them on a monthly basis? The same remark applies generally also to our vernaculars, where the first of the three printed in the Sacramentary is the one almost exclusively used.

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer the priest (and in a concelebrated Mass the priest who assists him) should keep the consecrated elements raised until the end of the concluding *Amen*. Note that this concluding *Amen* may be amplified upon or repeated to give it more emphasis. It should express the people's assent in a loud and clear voice.

36. For the *rites before communion in Masses with children*, only the Our Father, the breaking of bread and the invitation to Communion are always to be retained; all the rest between the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion itself may be omitted and/or adapted according to the capacity and preparation of the children. This gives us a lot of leeway in this part. (Directory #53). Some national directories of other countries prefer to retain for children the rite of peace.

37. The eucharistic liturgy recommends that in a Mass where there is singing the *Our Father* be usually sung (see S.C. of Rites,

Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* of Sept. 24, 1964, #48.g [DOL p. 98]; S.C. of Rites, Instruction *Musicam Sacram* of March 5, 1967, #29.c, [DOL p. 1298] which places the Lord's Prayer in the first category, i.e., those songs recommended for use in all Masses with singing; CDW Note *Passim quaeritur* of May 1975 [DOL pp. 1350-1352]).

Note that for the *rite of peace* the presider wishes peace to all and asks them to exchange the sign of peace with one another. He himself gives the sign of peace to the deacon and at concelebration to the nearest concelebrants, but not to the faithful, except perhaps in special circumstances, like a wedding, a burial, or a very small group celebration (GIRM ##56b, 112, 136, 194).

38. The *breaking of bread* was already a part of Jewish meal rites. It was used by Jesus at the institution of the Eucharist (see the accounts of it in the Synoptics and in 1 Cor 11 of Paul), and was the name of the Eucharist during apostolic times. It is regrettable that this important rite, so rich in symbolism, is paid scant notice, as it is covered by the singing of the *Agnus Dei*. This breaking signifies that we, though many, are all one in Christ, since we all eat the same Bread of himself which Christ breaks for us; it unites us in love as one family (GIRM ##56c and 283). It also indicates, as some liturgies (Greek, Gallican) state, that Christ breaks himself for us and gives us the power to do the same for one another. Some authors recommend that at least once in a while the priest calls attention to this breaking in a sort of introduction similar to that to the Eucharistic Prayer.

The eucharistic liturgy recommends that larger hosts be used that can be broken into more pieces, and that at least parts of the priest's host be given to a few communicants (GIRM # 283; Response #24 in *Notitiae* #50, Jan. 1970, p. 37).

We are aware that some priests, mistakenly break the host during the words of the Institution, when they say, "He broke the bread," because of a false literalism, forgetting that there is a proper rite of breaking later. If they would be logical in that literalism, they would also have to distribute the consecrated hosts right after they break the host.

The *Agnus Dei* properly belongs to the people and/or to the schola; therefore it is not recommended or necessary that the priest says it. Note also that this song may be adapted in Masses with

children and that when there are many hosts to be broken its petitions may be repeated (GIRM #56, esp. c and e, and 113; Directory #31, response in *Notitiae* ## 143-144, June-July 1978, p. 306).

There is no more striking of the breast during the *Agnus Dei* and the "*Lord, I am not worthy*," though one striking is still retained for the *confiteor* (Response #10 in *Notitiae* #148, Nov. 1978, pp. 534-535).

39. In the pre-Vatican rubrics of the Missal it was said that after *consuming the host* the priest had to hold his hands joined before his face and *pause for a moment in meditation*. The post-Vatican Mass supposes that the priest continues without pausing, as it is said that "he reverently consumes the body of Christ. Next he takes the chalice and continues . . ." (GIRM #116). Though it is of minor importance, this is mentioned because many priests still observe this long-abolished rubric.

40. After Vatican II many rescripts and the (unpromulgated) Instruction of the CDS *Fidei Custos* of April 30, 1969, had been given to individual bishops and to conferences allowing religious sisters and/or laypersons to give Communion to the people in special circumstances. This permission was extended in general, also to laypersons, where the local bishop permits it in view of existing needs, in the CDS Instruction *Immensae Caritatis* of January 29, 1973; see DOL #264, pp. 650-652; GIRM #68; Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, n. 17; Code of Canon Law, Canons 910, par. 2 and 230, par. 3. Also priests can appoint such ministers in given occasions.

The special ministers of the Eucharist considered fitted for this task are acolytes (GIRM #146), lectors, major seminarians, religious brothers or sisters, catechists, other suitable laymen or laywomen. They may give Communion to themselves and to others of the faithful when no priest, deacon or acolyte is available; when the same ministers are impeded because of their ministry, ill-health or old age, or when the number of people who wish to receive Communion is so large that the celebration would become too long. Note that in the latter case the bishop, priest or deacon present has himself always to help giving Communion (Cong. for Sacraments, response published June 15, 1987: *Notitiae* #267, Oct. 1988, p. 669). These special

ministers of the Eucharist may also, unless otherwise restrained, bring Communion to the sick, and must do so for viaticum in case of necessity (CCL Canon 911, par.2).

ICEL states in its introductory note to the second edition of *Holy Communion . . . outside Mass* that in English usage these ministers should be called special ministers of the Eucharist, as in common English usage "extraordinary" is too strong a term.

41. *Immensae Caritatis*, quoted in the previous number, allowed the faithful to receive Communion twice in one day in a limited number of occasions. Canon 917 has extended this permission for any occasion, provided the second reception takes place during the actual celebration of the Eucharist in which the person participates. The only exception wherein a person could receive even a third time is in the case of viaticum or danger of death (Canons 917 and 921, par. 2).

42. It is strongly recommended that the faithful receive Communion from *hosts consecrated at the same Mass* as they are attending (GIRM #56h); with a little planning, parishes can do this easily. This request had been officially voiced long before Vatican II, as early as the 18th cent. by Benedict XIV (Encyc. *Certiores effecti*, sec. 3) and very emphatically restated by Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* of Nov. 30, 1947, ##118 and 121; (see James Megivern, *Worship and Liturgy*, McGrath Publishing, 1978, pp. 100-102). Since Pius XII this directive, which enhances the sign value, has been constantly repeated in the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 35), *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of 1967, #31, GIRM 56h and several subsequent documents.

43. It is also desirable that the faithful *share in the cup when permitted*. In both instances the sign value becomes clearer, that they share in the actual celebration of the sacrifice of the body and the blood of Christ (GIRM ##56h, 137, 240-252). Though for Communion under both kinds direct drinking from the cup is preferred as a fuller sign (see CDW, *Instruction Sacramentali Communionis* of June 29, 1970, #6), normally in the Philippines we have to resort to intinction because of the very high cost of the Mass wine we have to import.

44. *The washing of the chalice and other vessels*, especially when a deacon or other ministers assist, may be done at the side table

or could be done after Mass (GIRM 120, 138, 204-206). The liturgy prefers this to be done "if possible" at the side table (GIRM #238).

45. The processional *Communion song* is begun as soon as the priest is taking Communion and the people start moving for receiving Communion (GIRM ## 561 AND 119). If the people sing a Communion song, the Communion antiphon is no longer said. The liturgy distinguishes between two songs at communion time and immediately afterwards: the Communion song proper, which should end when Communion ends, and a hymn of praise and thanks or psalm after Communion. Instead of the latter there may be some time for silent prayer (GIRM ##56i and j, and 121).

46. If there has already been a period of silence or the foregoing hymn after Communion, there is no more *pause for silence* after the "Let us pray" introducing the Prayer after Communion (GIRM #122).

47. Before the *Blessing* the priest may make parting comments, perhaps summing up very briefly the central message of the day and how to put it into practice in life in the days to come (GIRM #11; Directory for Masses with Children #54). It is recommended, at least on some fitting occasions like Sundays and feasts, to use either the more solemn, triple blessing or the *Prayer over the People*, of which the Sacramentary gives several models; either form always ends with the standard trinitarian form of blessing (GIRM ##57a and 124; Directory ## 39 and 54.)

48. In the *dismissal*, which the priest may formulate in his own words, he sends the people out into the world to do good works, as they bless and praise the Lord (GIRM 57b).

49. If *another liturgical celebration follows* immediately after the Mass the final greeting, blessing and dismissal are omitted (GIRM #126).

50. The so-called *recessional* or *closing song* has no liturgical function whatsoever in the eucharistic liturgy. The official liturgical books do not mention it. The only times that it is referred to in post-Vatican documents is (only incidentally) in the Instruction *Musicae sacram* of March 5, 1967, of the S. Congreg. of Rites, which first does not mention it among the songs but then adds in #36: "Sometimes it

is even quite appropriate to have other songs at the beginning . . . as well as at the end of the Mass" (see DOL p. 1300). The other is the CDW's *Guidelines and Proposals for the Marian Year*, which recommends (#21) that one of the traditional Marian antiphons corresponding to the season ("Hail, holy Queen", etc.) be used after the ritual dismissal at Marian celebrations (*Notitiae* #251, June 1987, pp. 355-356). Apparently, the only guideline for suggesting it would be local custom, but then we should not add any rules in its implementation, like requiring the priest to wait at the altar until the song is finished.

III. Special Guidelines

A. *Concelebrated Masses*

51. Unawareness of the underlying *theological principles of concelebration* is apparently the cause of the reluctance or indifference of quite a number of priests to join in it. For several instances the liturgy recommends concelebration, though always protecting the pastoral needs of the people and the right of the individual priest to celebrate privately. See CCL 902, which gives examples of recommended occasions, among others: in Masses for any kind of meeting of priests, either secular or religious. Thus, not allowing concelebration at retreats, for example, would clearly contradict the norms of the liturgy.

These bases are presented clearly in the S.C. of Rites' *Decree Ecclesiae semper* of March 7, 1965, promulgating the concelebration rite (DOL pp. 554-556). They can be summarized as followed: a. Every eucharistic celebration represents the one single sacrifice of Christ on the cross, but when priests concelebrate as one, this unity of the sacrifice of the cross is expressed more clearly; b. Also the unity of the priesthood stands more clearly revealed in a concelebration, particularly so when the bishop presides, even though individually priests too are ministers of Christ and exercise his priesthood, for now they act as one while exercising that priesthood; c. A concelebration, again around the bishop and with faithful present who exercise their various ministries, is the "preeminent manifestation of the Church in the unity of sacrifice and priesthood and the single offering of thanks around the one altar with the ministers and holy people." The great value of concelebration lies in being a sign of that triple unity.

52. Liturgical guidelines put no limitation on the number of participants in a concelebrated Mass, but sometimes liturgical or pastoral considerations may do so, at the discretion of the bishop, for example, if the number would become unwieldy.

As much as possible, priests should participate in a celebration or a concelebration in their own distinctive way as priests and not simply receive Communion in the manner proper to the laity (S.C. of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of May 25, 1967, #43 [DOL p. 412] and CDW, Declaration *In celebratione Missae* of August 7, 1972 [DOL p. 563]). The Eucharist is a sacrament and therefore it is a sign. Is there still a sign and a concelebration on his part when a priest wants to concelebrate "in secret" while sitting among the faithful? For a concelebration the visible signs, expressing the above-mentioned unity, are the place where the concelebrants sit, the vestments they wear, the gestures they make together, especially the imposition of hands at the first epiclesis and the words they say together during the Eucharistic Prayer. The *Eucharistic Prayers Arranged for Concelebration*, available at the Liturgical Commission secretariat, indicates the division into roles for the ten Eucharistic Prayers approved for use in the Philippines.

53. The rule is strict regarding joining a concelebration once the Mass has begun: it is *not permitted* "under absolutely no consideration" (S.C. of Rites, *Rite of Concelebration*, Introd., #8; GIRM #156).

54. Although in antiquity, and in some Oriental churches even at present, the concelebrants participated in the Eucharistic Prayer in silence, present legislation asks the concelebrants to join in the following parts of the Eucharistic Prayer: a. the preconsecratory epiclesis (with imposition of hands); b. the words of Institution (with gesture toward the species if not inconvenient); c. the memorial prayer; d. the prayer of offering; and e. the postconsecratory epiclesis; concelebrants are free to join or not the principal celebrant for the Doxology (see GIRM ##168-191). Parts assigned to all, like the memorial prayer or the epiclesis, may not be assigned to individual concelebrants. Which Eucharistic Prayer is to be used in the concelebrated Mass is to be announced before the Preface, so as not to interrupt the Eucharistic Prayer, which begins with the Preface.

55. The principal celebrant should clearly be the leader of the celebration: that again is a part of the sign. This is why the parts of the Eucharistic Prayer that are said in unison should not sound like a "choral recitation" but be recited in a softer voice (several national directories even say, "in a very soft voice just audible to one's neighbor"), so that the principal celebrant's voice stands out clearly. Otherwise the congregation cannot understand the text at all (*Rite of Concelebration*, Introd., ##13-14; GIRM #170). If the gospel is read by a concelebrant who is a priest, he does not ask for the blessing of the presider, unless the presider is a bishop (Lectionary #17; Ceremonial of Bishops, ##74 and 173). Note that the presider should not read the gospel himself if a deacon is present or another priest acts as deacon (GIRM #34; Lectionary #49).

56. If aside from the concelebrants there are no faithful present, the invitation "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith" and the memorial acclamation are not said (*Notitiae* #47, Jul-Aug. 1969, pp. 324-325, #3).

57. At the *Doxology* of the Eucharistic Prayer, the principal celebrant alone raises the eucharistic bread while the deacon or the concelebrant acting as deacon holds up the chalice, but other patens and chalices if there are, are not raised. One bread, one cup! (GIRM ##135, 160).

58. For the Communion of the concelebrants, they either take the Eucharist directly at the altar, or the deacon or one or more of the concelebrants go around to present the paten and the chalice to them, or the paten and chalice are passed around from one to another (GIRM ##197, 201b, 205). When a bishop presides, either the concelebrants come to him to receive the host or the bishop distributes the host to them while they stay in their places; he may be helped in this by the deacon or concelebrating priests, but in any case the bishop presides also over the giving of Communion (Ceremonial of Bishops #163).

59. The principal celebrant is the only one who gives the blessing, while the other concelebrants remain at their seats; the deacon or the concelebrant acting as deacon says the dismissal (GIRM ## 140, 207).

B. *Mass without a Congregation*

60. For the rules when priest celebrates Mass privately with only a server or at least a member of the faithful to assist him and to make the responses, see GIRM 209-230. But for *some legitimate and reasonable cause*, for example, when it is hard to get a server, a priest is allowed to celebrate Mass all alone. Note that the new CCL is broader on this point than the older GIRM. If the priest offers the Eucharist alone, all greetings and the blessing and dismissal are omitted (GIRM #211, CCL 906; Emendations #211, p. 8) as also the memorial acclamation (*Notitiae* #47, 1969, pp. 324-325, #3).

C. *Music for the Eucharistic Celebration*

61. With the great number of vernaculars approved for Philippines for the liturgy, in addition to English and Spanish, and the great variety of songs in use, it is quite hard to propose norms for liturgical singing, and we will leave this to a subcommission in the course of being revived. Just these remarks. For the liturgy we should use songs religious in content and fitting the pertinent parts of the liturgy or at least the season (GIRM 19; S.C. of Rites, Instruction *Musicae sacram* of March 5, 1967; CDW, *Graduale simplex* (2nd ed.) of Nov. 22, 1974; CDW, *Ordo Cantus Missae* of June 24, 1974). We should not bother too much about popular secular songs that get occasionally used in the liturgy, for they are the hit song type and easily come and go; soon they will die a natural death. Important is that the congregation should never be left out of the singing (*Musicae sacram* #34) and therefore we should avoid that the choir or a musical group gives its own performance during Mass, thus excluding the congregation. The *schola* or choir is there to encourage active participation (GIRM 63).

D. *Arrangement of Churches*

62. It is hoped that a subcommission on art and architecture will provide more complete guidelines. In the meantime we merely call attention to some points easily overlooked. A good *sound system* is a must for the intelligibility of the ministers and the participation of the faithful. Many churches are still defective in this regard (S.C. of Rites, Instr. *Inter Oecumenici* of Sept. 26, 1964. #90, [DOL p. 110]; GIRM #273; Lectionary #34).

63. The lectern (also called "ambo") is the proper place for the proclamation of the Word of God and its natural focal point. In designing or remodeling churches, much care should be given to the harmonious and close relationship of the lectern with the altar. The lectern, therefore, should be of a suitable design and nobility. It should also be wide enough to allow a few ministers to use it at the same time (as during the reading of the Passion or the General Intercessions). It is strongly recommended that it be a fixed place, not movable; and *reserved for the readings*, the Responsorial Psalm, the Easter proclamation (*Exsultet*), and because of their relationship to the Word, also the homily and the General Intercessions. Therefore, wherever possible, the commentator and the leader of the singing and other forms of the people's participation should minister from another place than the lectern (GIRM 68a, 272; Lectionary ##32-34). There should be no separate lecterns for priests and laity.

64. After more than two decades of liturgical reform after Vatican II, the time has more than come to have *fixed, consecrated altars*, as advocated by the liturgy (CCL 1235, which also stresses that all churches are to be solemnly dedicated or at least blessed, and all Cathedrals and parish churches dedicated (CCL 1237).

An *altar* should be freestanding, to allow ministers to walk around it easily. Other becoming, solid, and well-crafted materials than natural stone may also be used (GIRM 262-266; CSDW, *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*, Ch. 4, ## 6-11 [DOL pp. 1379-1381]; CBCP decision of July 1969; CCL c. 1236; Emendations ## 255, 262, p. 8). Also the practice of placing *under the altar* to be dedicated relics of saints is to be maintained, but it should be checked whether these relics are authentic (GIRM #266; Dedication of a Church and an Altar, ## 11 and 29; CCL c. 1237, par. 2). Relics should be of sufficient size to be recognizable as parts of human bodies, otherwise they should not be used (Dedication #11c).

65. The *candles* and the *crucifix* may be placed on or near the altar. Other dignified materials may also be used for candles, as beeswax is no longer specified (GIRM 269-270; Response #4 in *Notitiae* #90, Feb. 1974, p. 80). There are many churches or chapels where there is a large crucifix against the wall of the apse in the sanctuary or hanging above the altar. If so, no further crucifix is re-

quired on or near the altar (Response #101 in *Notitiae* ##21-22, Sept-Oct. 1966, pp. 290-291). Though the cross does not need a corpus any longer, as the insistence on a corpus in pre-Vatican rubrics has been dropped, we have to respect the sensitiveness of the people if they insist on a corpus.

66. As a rule, there should be only *one tabernacle* in each church. Liturgical guidelines recommend a special chapel of reservation, separate from the body of the church and suitable for private adoration and prayer of the faithful (GIRM 276-277; CDW, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* ##5-11; CCL c. 938). If it is impossible to have a separate chapel for reservation, the Eucharist may be kept in the sacred place where the Mass is celebrated.

E. Requisites for Celebrating Masses

67. The Church has *always used bread and wine* with water as the materials with which to celebrate the Lord's Supper. In the tradition of the entire Church, the bread must be made from pure wheaten flour without any other mixture than water to bake it, and in the Latin Church it must be, by a long-standing tradition, unleavened (GIRM ## 281-282; CCL c. 294 and 296).

68. The sign value of the *eucharistic bread* demands that it looks as much as possible like bread. While the traditional round shape should be retained without giving it the form of bread for daily use in the home, still the hosts should be made, as much as possible, *larger, thicker, and more the real color of bread*, as when made, for example, of full wheat (*still with the bran*), so that they can be broken to be shared by more people and also be more absorbent for Communion under both kinds (see GIRM #283; Response #24 in *Notitiae* #50, Jan. 1970, p. 37; CDW, Instr. *Liturgicae Instaurationes* of Sep. 5, 1970, #5 [DOL p. 163]; CSDW, Instr. *Inaestimabile Donum* of April 3, 1980, #8 [*Notitiae* #167, June 1980]; CCL c. 924).

69. The wine for the Eucharist must be natural and *pure grape wine*. In 1974 the Congr. for the Doctrine of Faith gave to the U.S. bishops the faculty to allow priests under treatment or treated before for alcoholism, if they made the request, to use "must" or *mustum*, i.e., unfermented grape juice, instead of wine. This had been considered

valid but gravely illicit except in case of grave necessity, among others by St. Thomas Aquinas. In 1983, this faculty was revoked except for those who had already received permission. Priests with this difficulty are advised to take the consecrated wine by intinction (see DOL p. 522; BCL Newsletter of Jan. 1985, pp. 3-4; CCL c. 924, par. 3).

70. If at Communion time the priest notices he has by mistake used water instead of wine, he replaces it with wine and consecrates it without consecrating bread again (GIRM #286). To consecrate additional hosts when there are not enough at Communion time is not allowed (see CCL c. 927).

71. For the *sacred vessels* of the Eucharist, other solid and dignified materials may be used than the customary ones, especially those regarded as noble in a particular region and more in conformity with local culture as to shape and materials. The *paten*, for example, could be made out of one of our beautiful hardwoods and inlaid with shells; it is recommended that it be larger too, to accommodate not only the host of the priest but also those of the ministers and the people. A *ciborium* or a *pyx* is not a drinking vessel, and therefore best not in the form of a cup. *Chalices* should be made of nonabsorbent materials. Note that the preferred way for the blessing of a paten and chalice is by using them during Mass and adding the prescribed prayer of blessings; outside Mass it becomes a much more elaborate rite. Any bishop or priest can bless a paten and chalice (GIRM ## 289-296; Blessing of a chalice and paten: chapter VII in CSDW, *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar* of May 29, 1977; CBCP decision of July 1969).

72. For the *sacred vestments*, any dignified natural or artificial fibers and fabrics may be used (GIRM #305; CBCP decision of July 1969). Note that the cassock is not by itself a sacred vestment, but since it is derived from the alb and is much like it, the *white cassock* may be used as alb in the Philippines, provided it is a clean one and not worn for street dress during the day (CDW, Prot. n. 820/69 of August 5, 1969).

73. Since GIRM #304 allows adaptations in the form of vestments with the consent of the Holy See, the CBCP requested use of the so-called "*chasuble-alb*" already approved for some countries via

the CDW Concession *La Sacree Congregation* of May 1, 1971 [DOL pp. 1401-1402). The "chasuble-alb" is a loose-fitting vestment that reaches almost down to the floor (and not just halfway the knees or legs!) and envelops the entire body of the celebrant; it serves both as chasuble and alb and the stole is worn on top of it; only the color of the stole has to fit the occasion of the day, not the vestment itself (which is therefore best of a neutral color). Approvals given restrict its use for concelebrants in concelebrations, celebrations for special groups, "for celebrations outside a place of worship, and for other similar occasions where this usage seems to be suggested by reason of the place or the people involved." The CDW included the Philippines in this permission on April 3, 1973 (Prot. n. 480/73).

74. For a concelebrated Mass, it is enough that concelebrants wear an alb or white cassock (see 72 above) with a stole on top of it (GIRM #61).

75. As to the *colors of the vestments*, we follow the traditional ones (GIRM ##308 and 310). Note that for *Masses for the dead* violet is now preferred, but other colors may be used "suited to the sensibilities of the people, not out of keeping with human grief, and expressive of Christian hope as enlightened by the paschal mystery" (S.C. of Rites, Instr. *Tres abhinc annos* of May 4, 1967, #23 [DOL p. 139]), like white for a "resurrection Mass," was suggested at a CBCP meeting by several of our bishops. Card. John Knox of the CSDW orally assured our then chairman, Bishop Brasseur, during the latter's visit to Rome in the course of 1975, that also white could be used (*Liturgical Information Bulletin* XII/6, 1975, p. 158).

F. *Choice of Texts for Mass*

76. The priest should be very attentive to the spiritual wants of his people and learn to attend to these needs and legitimate devotions by making generous use of the options given him in the Sacramentary and the Lectionary. This spiritual good of his flock should be his guide rather than his own preferences. In planning his celebration and attending to these needs, he should involve the ministers and others concerned (like the couple in a marriage) in choosing the texts and preparing them for their roles (GIRM #313). For the many options open, see GIRM ##314-341. Priests should be well acquainted with the many options open to them and the people in the sections of the ritual Masses (those for the celebration of certain

sacraments and sacramentals), the Masses for various occasions and needs, and votive Masses. We call attention here to some of the possibilities which seem interesting yet apparently unfamiliar to many.

77. When there are *optional memorials* on the weekdays of Advent between Dec. 17 and 24, on weekdays of Lent except Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, and in the Octave of Christmas, the priest says the Mass of the weekday, but he may take the Opening Prayer (only) of the memorial listed in the General Calendar for that day (GIRM #316).

78. *Ritual Masses for the dead* should be used sparingly. For anniversaries and intentions for the dead, it is better to take the Mass that would normally be celebrated that day and to apply the intention itself as requested (GIRM #316). The names of the deceased could then be mentioned in the General Intercessions and the special insert for the dead in the Eucharistic Prayer.

79. To obtain a greater unity of message, the Opening Prayer and the other presidential prayers on *weekdays in Ordinary Time* may be taken not only from the preceding Sunday but also from other Sundays in Ordinary Time or from Masses for various occasions (GIRM #323).

80. *Ritual Masses* are prohibited on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter season, on solemnities, on days within the octave of Easter, on All Souls, on Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week (GIRM #330), and so, if other sacraments have to be celebrated within Mass on such days, we have to use the Mass texts of the day, not of the ritual Mass; note, however, that the ritual books themselves often give further specifications, for example, allowing that a reading or another text may be taken from the ritual Mass.

81. On any day except solemnities, the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season, on days within the octave of Easter, on All Souls, Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, an appropriate Mass other than the one of the day may be celebrated at the direction of the local Ordinary or with his permission, in cases of serious need or pastoral advantage, for example, in one of our dioceses the bishop asked all parishes to celebrate the Mass of St. Lorenzo Ruiz on the Sunday he was raised from "blessed" to a saint (GIRM #332).

82. Similarly, in Masses with a congregation, at the discretion of the pastor or the celebrant and if some real need or pastoral advantage so requires, another Mass than the one prescribed for that day may be celebrated, even from among the Masses for various needs or votive Masses, for the benefit of the people; this applies on obligatory memorials, on the weekdays of Advent up to Dec. 16, weekdays of the Christmas season after the Octave of Christmas, weekdays of the Easter season after the Octave of Easter. Note that the weekdays of Lent remain excluded. Examples would be: votive Masses of the Sacred Heart or of the Immaculate Heart of Mary if many of the faithful practice these devotions (GIRM #333; responses #17 in *Notitiae* #48, Sept-Oct. 1969, p. 404 and #1 in *Notitiae* #92, April 1974, p. 145). Use of the new Marian Masses in a place of Marian pilgrimage would be another example.

83. *Funeral Masses* may be celebrated on any day except solemnities that are days of obligation, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season (therefore, including the octaves of Christmas and Easter) (GIRM #336; response #37 in *Notitiae* #55, June 1970, p. 263).

84. *Masses for the dead, if the occasion is the first news of a death, final burial, or the first anniversary*, may be celebrated even on days within the Christmas octave, on obligatory memorials, and on any weekday, except Ash Wednesday and Holy Week (GIRM #337; responses in *Notitiae* #55, June 1970, p. 264 and #4 in *Notitiae* #92, April 1974, p. 146.)

85. Funeral rites are to be celebrated for *catechumens*. In keeping with the provisions of CCL, canon 1183, which prescribes the permission of the local Ordinary, celebration of funeral rites may also be granted to the following: a. *children* whose baptism was intended by the parents but *who died before their baptism*; b. baptized members of another Church or non-Catholic ecclesial Community, but not if it is known that they did not wish this nor if a minister of their own is available (*Emendations* #4, p. 25).

86. At *funeral Masses* there should normally be a homily but no eulogy of any kind. Note also that many non-Catholics or nonpracticing Catholics attend funerals and therefore priests should take special care to use this opportunity to proclaim the Good News of the Lord's resurrection and of eternal life (GIRM ##338 and 341).

F. *Benediction and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

87. For a *Benediction after Mass* and any other form of benediction, it is required that a reasonable time be given to the reading of the Word of God, hymns, prayers, and silent prayers, as circumstances permit (S.C. of Rites, Instr. *Eucharisticum mysterium* of May 25, 1967, #66; CDW, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass* of June 21, 1973, #89). As these documents will repeatedly recur below, they will be referred to as *Euch. Myst.* and *Euch. outside Mass*.

88. Exposition held merely for the purpose of giving benediction, whether after Mass or at any other time, is prohibited (same two documents, same numbers).

89. The *celebration of the Mass* is prohibited within the body of the church or chapel during exposition of the blessed sacrament, notwithstanding earlier concessions, traditions and practices (*Euch. Myst.* #61; *Euch. outside Mass* #83). If during a longer form of exposition a Mass is to be celebrated, then the exposition is to be interrupted and the blessed sacrament placed back *in the tabernacle* (*Euch. Myst.* #65; *Euch. outside Mass* #83; *Emendations* #83, p. 11).

90. To religious communities and institutions which by their constitutions and regulations have perpetual adoration or extended periods of adoration, it is strongly recommended that they bring these practices in harmony with the spirit of the liturgy. It is recommended to them that they maintain the practice of having one or two members of the community taking turns before the blessed sacrament (*Euch. outside Mass*, #90).

91. But for the faithful in general, *lengthier periods of exposition* and adoration are encouraged and permitted in the *following two cases only*: a. in churches where the blessed sacrament is reserved, once a year, and *only if suitable numbers* of the faithful are expected to the present; b. when the local Ordinary orders exposition for a grave and general necessity in churches where the faithful assemble in *large numbers* (*Euch. Myst.*, ##63-64; *Euch. outside Mass*, ## 86-87; BCL Newsletter, June-July 1986, pp. 24-25; CCL, canons 941-942; *Emendations*, #86, p. 12).

92. In the absence of a priest or deacon, a religious sister or brother for a religious community, an acolyte or another special minister of communion, even a lay person for a pious association devoted to eucharistic adoration may, if permitted by the local Ordinary, publicly expose and later repose the Eucharist for adoration of the faithful, but they are not allowed to give the blessing with the sacrament (Euch. outside Mass, #91; CCL canon 943; *Emendations* #91, p. 12).

93. Processions with the blessed sacrament *within the Church* are forbidden; what we have after the Last Supper Mass on Holy Thursday is not a procession but a transfer (response in *Notitiae* #102, Feb. 1975, p. 64).

94. Though not strictly and explicitly forbidden, the following practices are considered by the CDW as not in consonance with the spirit of exposition and adoration of the blessed sacrament and are better held separately: the rosary or other devotional prayers to Mary or the saints (Response #110 in *Notitiae* #39, April 1968, pp. 133-134); the evening prayer or other parts of the Liturgy of the Hours (response #11, *Ibid.*); a sermon should not be given, but only a brief homily or some inspirational words on the Word of God read or on the eucharistic mystery (response #122, *Ibid.*).

95. *Genuflection* before the blessed sacrament, whether reserved in the tabernacle, exposed for public adoration, or carried in procession, is on *one knee* only (Euch. outside Mass, #84).

96. The CBCP has approved in their meeting of Jan. 1987 for trial use for five years *Guidelines for Masses in Homes and for Small Groups*. Copies of the text were given to all bishops.

97. The CDW has released a *Directory for Sunday Liturgies without a Priest* (*Notitiae* #263, June 1988, pp. 366-378). Those interested can use the booklet on the same topic available from the Secretariat of the National Liturgical Commission. It was prepared by Fr. Anscar Chupungco.

98. The CDW is also preparing a *Directory for Youth Masses*, which will contain *guidelines and special adaptations* for Masses with young people; it is expected soon.

The Official Statement on the Banal na Pag-aaral Headed by Mrs. Salve Carreon*

To All the Priests in the Archdiocese of Manila

Dear Monsignor/ Father:

Last June 1990, the Archdiocese of Manila issued a circular letter banning the Banal na Pag-aaral. This organization has successfully established chapters (called Vigil Adorers' Chapter) in several parishes not only in Metro Manila but also in other key cities in the Philippines and in the United States. With its center in San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City, the BNP is said to have approximately 20,000 dedicated members and continues to attract new members by exploiting the popular religiosity of Filipinos.

The activities of the BNP include mission classes called *Panawagan* (weekend retreat patterned after the *cursillo*), nocturnal adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and our Lady of Fatima devotion (block rosary). These practices are used by the BNP to give them a semblance of an authentic religious movement approved by the Catholic Church. In reality, these activities are used primarily by the BNP as occasions to teach their followers the doctrine of the *Mahal na Inkong*. This doctrine is referred to as the phenomenon.

According to this phenomenon, *Mahal na Inkong* is God manifesting and revealing himself through the person of Mrs. Salve Carreon, the foundress of BNP. The phenomenon consists specifically in the total indwelling of the *Mahal na Inkong* in Mrs. Carreon.

*Circular No. 38, Series of 1990, 20 June 1990.

When this happens, Mrs. Carreon is said to become God himself, which demands the complete surrender of the BNP followers' will to the will of *Mahal na Inggkong*. This doctrine and the total surrender it demands are not in accord with Catholic teaching and have led to family disintegration, financial losses, and fanaticism.

Because of the refusal of Mrs. Carreon to revise the BNP teachings to conform with the doctrines of the Church, the Archdiocese of Manila has banned the BNP. (The Archdioceses of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Jose, California have long since banned the BNP from their respective archdioceses).

As of June, 1990, no BNP activity is permitted to be held in any Church, or chapel or institution within the Archdiocese. Therefore, I enjoin you not to render any services to any BNP activities under any circumstance.

One effect of the BNP can be to bring participants to active participation in their parishes. But they come back to parish life with BNP biases solidly implanted in them. They form themselves into an exclusive group; they prefer to be a non-mandated organization, so they could operate independently of any parish supervision and guidance. They only follow the directives of *Mahal na Inggkong*. They also tend to look down on the mandated organizations.

For lack of adequate religious education, the BNP followers do not see any contradiction between the Church's teachings and BNP's. They maintain and consider themselves as practicing Catholics. As a matter of fact, some of them are honestly and sincerely looking for a very concrete relationship with God.

Because of this reality, I advise you to help them find themselves back into the mainstream of the authentic life the Church. Encourage them to continue in their vigil adorations and Fatima devotions. If you need any assistance, please call Fr. Nicasio Cruz, S.J. former spiritual director of BNP (Ateneo de Manila - 98-25-41).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

(Sgd.) + Jaime Cardinal Sin
Archbishop of Manila

To All Members and Graduates of BNP

After due investigation the Archdiocese of Manila has formally declared that the Banal na Pag-aaral is banned, and the case of the BNP is irrevocably closed.

Therefore, all BNP members are enjoined to sever all connections with the Banal na Pag-aaral, if they want to remain faithful to the Catholic Church.

You may continue our vigil adoration, and your Fatima devotion, but under the direct supervision and guidance of your respective parish priests.

I want to assure all of you the Church's deep love and concern for your spiritual welfare. My only hope is that you remain faithful to the teachings of the Church and obedient to its legitimate authorities and that you draw closer to God through Jesus Christ in accord with the traditions of the Church.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

(Sgd.) +Jaime L. Cardinal Sin
Archbishop of Manila

Dear People of God:

After having received the extensive report from the Archdiocesan Commission on Visions and Phenomena, which established the non-supernatural character (*constat de non-super-naturalitate*) of the phenomenon of Mahal na Ingkong and;

In view of the non-negotiability of the *Mahal na Ingkong* phenomenon, which Mrs. Salve Carreon and her officials insist upon as an essential part of their doctrine and ritual, and their adamant refusal to revise the Banal na Pag-aaral, making the position of the BNP simply untenable from the point of view of Catholic doctrine and liturgy.

I, as pastor of the Archdiocese of Manila, officially declare that the Banal ng Pag-aaral is banned. Therefore the case of the Banal na Pag-aaral is irrevocably closed and Circular No. 59-A Series of 1989 dated October 16, 1989, pertaining to the declaration that the BNP is a Catholic association not in good standing issued by me, stands. Now, the BNP is banned in the Archdiocese of Manila.

As of June, 1990, no BNP activity is permitted to be held in any church or chapel, institution, or open site within the Archdiocese of Manila. Under no circumstances are priests of the Archdiocese (and for that matter, any visiting priest) allowed to say Mass for any BNP activity.

I issue this declaration in compliance with Canon 301, #1 of the Code of Canon Law which states: "Competent ecclesiastical authority alone has the right to establish associations of the Christian faithful which set out to teach Christian doctrine in the name of the Church to promote public worship or which aims at other ends whose pursuit by their nature is reserved to the same ecclesiastical authority."

May the Holy Spirit bless us in this undertaking.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

(Sgd.) + Jaime Cardinal Sin
Archbishop of Manila

Extraordinary Form in Contracting Marriage

Excelso G. Garcia, O.P.

I have always been confused about the extraordinary form in contracting marriage. The presence of a delegated priest or deacon with two witnesses makes the form of contracting marriage to be ordinary. But if a priest or deacon other than those delegated by the local Ordinary or by the parish priest solemnizes the celebration, when one of the contracting parties is in danger of death or in case the parties cannot have the parish priest or his delegated one for a month, this form of marriage celebration is said to be extraordinary. In these last two cases, is not the priest or deacon present delegated by law to solemnize the marriage? Will not this law delegation make the form of marriage celebration to be also ordinary? To think otherwise is not correct, I believe.

A Deacon

By reading the proposed case we can easily see that the consultant deacon does not have a correct idea of the *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage. He assumes that the priest or deacon, who perhaps may be present when the parish priest or his delegate cannot assist at the marriage celebration in the two instances mentioned by him, *is delegated by law to solemnize the marriage*, which is not correct. The law does not delegate him to solemnize the celebration

of marriage. Canon 1116 simply says that: "If another priest or deacon is at hand who *can be present*, he must be called upon and, together with the witnesses, *be present* at the celebration of marriage." It is not said that they receive a delegation by law to solemnize the marriage. This will be clear from what we will explain.

What differentiates the *ordinary* from the *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage is the *active presence* of the *qualified witness* of the Church who is *always present* in the *ordinary* form, while it is *absent* in the *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage. A *qualified witness* of the Church is the local Ordinary or the parish priest, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them who *assists* at the marriage celebration (c. 1108, § 1). They are said "to *assist* at the celebration of marriage *only* when they *are present and ask* for the contracting parties' consent, *and receive* it in the name of the Church" (c. 1108, § 2).

This *active presence* of the *qualified witness* of the Church which is necessary for the validity of marriage in the *ordinary* form of contracting it, is not necessary for its validity when the *extraordinary* form is resorted to in a marriage celebration. Even when the local Ordinary or the parish priest or their delegate are "materially present at the celebration, but they cannot ask and receive the matrimonial consent because of some grave inconvenience," they are presumed to be absent and are prevented from *actively assisting* at the marriage celebration. In such a case the spouses mutually give and receive their matrimonial consent before the two *ordinary* witnesses only, and their marriage is perfectly valid. This is what we call *extraordinary* form of marriage celebration.

The *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage is dealt with in canon 1116, which reads as follows:

"§ 1. If one who, in accordance with the law, is competent to *assist*, cannot be present or be approached without grave inconvenience, those who intend to enter a true marriage can validly and lawfully contract in the presence of witnesses only:

- 1o. In danger of death;

2o. apart from the danger of death, provided it is prudently foreseen that this state of affairs will continue for a month.

§ 2. In either case, if another priest or deacon is at hand who can *be present*, he must be called upon and, together with the witnesses, *be present* at the celebration of the marriage, without prejudice to the validity of the marriage in the presence of only the witnesses."

It is clear that the priest or deacon mentioned in § 2 are not delegated by the Bishop or parish priest, nor by law. They are "called upon and *must be present* along with the witnesses." It is not necessary for the validity of the marriage that such priest or deacon ask and receive the matrimonial consent of the contracting parties. They are not *qualified* witnesses. They *may* ask and receive the matrimonial consent for the *licitness* of marriage celebration at the most. This is not necessary, however, for its validity.

The presence of this priest or deacon is desired by the Church, considering the sacred nature of marriage. They can guarantee that the mutual consent of the contracting parties is properly given, since they are supposed to know how the matrimonial consent must be given *ad validitatem*. They can dispense of possible impediments, according to canons 1079, § 2 and 1080, § 1. They can inform the parish priest about the marriage celebration, as canon 1121 § 2 prescribes, in order to register it in the marriage book of the parish.

The reason why the *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage is allowed by the Church is obvious. When the *ordinary* form for the celebration of marriage cannot be observed without serious inconvenience, such form is not binding anymore. Since the right of contracting marriage is a natural right, marriage can be contracted by observing what is regarded as essential for its validity. Natural law prevails over ecclesiastical law.

Notice, however, that in the observance of the *ordinary* form there are two kinds of witnesses, namely a *qualified* witness (Bishop, parish priest or their delegate) and two *ordinary* witnesses. In cases where none of these witnesses can be present without a serious inconvenience, their presence is not essential for the validity of the marriage. Natural law does not require their presence. But when the

presence of the two *ordinary* witnesses is possible without serious inconvenience which might affect only the presence of the *qualified* witness, the latter is by natural law and by ecclesiastical law not necessary, being enough the presence of the former, as prescribed by the Church Law. This is exactly the case when the *extraordinary* form in contracting marriage takes place.

During the revision of the new Code, the words "he must *assist* at the marriage" of canon 1098, 2o of the 1917 Code were changed by the words "he must . . . *be present* at the celebration of marriage" (can. 1116, § 2). Considering the authentic interpretation of the term *to assist* given in canon 1108, § 2, it is surprising that in canon 1079, § 2, the word *assist* is still used. Obviously, *is present* should be used instead, in conformity with canon 1116, § 2.

Religious Obligation

A religious priest reluctantly offers himself to help in the various duties of the community. We have a parish to attend to. He has managed, however, to get involved in teaching in one private school. No permission has been asked nor received from the Superior to accept this assignment. As a consequence he is absent from most of the community acts, since there is conflict between these and the schedule of his scholar activities. Moreover, he does not submit to the Community the emoluments or salary he receives from the school. His attention has been called on several occasions. He replies that his vocation is more fit to teach than to live in the community and help in the parish ministry. I don't really know what to do.

A Religious Superior

The solution of the case proposed is not difficult to be given if the norms of the present Code of Canon Law are applied. I presume the Constitutions of the religious Institute have also some rules on the matter which should be followed.

Undoubtedly a religious is supposed to get involved in the fulfillment of the duties and obligations proper to his own Institute or which have been accepted by the same. The parochial ministry, mentioned in our case, is one of these obligations. Once a parish has

been accepted by the Institute, its ministry has to be carried out properly by the members of the community according to the law. In no case it can be neglected, since the care of souls is supreme in the Church's laws.

If a religious, after having pronounced his vows, does not feel fit to fulfil the Institute's commitments, he may ask from the competent authorities to transfer to another Institute devoted to the activities to which he thinks he is more fit. But while he remains in the Institute where he has made his religious profession he is bound to carry out the obligations of the Institute. To remain in the Institute without fulfilling its commitments is not proper.

Moreover, to continue in the Institute without submitting to the community the emoluments he earns by working, in our case in the private school of another Institute, is absolutely unfair and against religious laws. Canon 668, § 3 reads as follows: "Whatever a religious acquires by personal labor or in behalf of the Institute, belongs to the Institute. Whatever comes to a religious in any way through pension, grant or insurance also passes to the Institute, unless the Institute's own law decrees otherwise."

If the religious concerned does not like to transfer to another Institute, there is a good basis for his dismissal. Canon 696, § 1 gives us the various grounds for dismissal of a religious from the Institute. It reads as follows: "A member can be dismissed for other causes, provided they are grave, external, imputable and juridically proven. Among such causes are: habitual neglect of the obligations of consecrated life; repeated violations of the sacred bonds; obstinate disobedience to the lawful orders of Superiors in grave matters; grave scandal arising from the culpable behaviour of the member . . . ; other reasons of similar gravity which are perhaps defined in the Institute's own law."

The process for dismissal to be followed by the Major Superior is given in detail in canon 697.

Pope Paul VI on Union of Parishes

I have read your answer to various cases concerning parishes entrusted to religious communities before the publication of the new Codex. I expected you to make some reference to the pronouncement of Pope Paul VI in his motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae. He said: "From now on no parish should be united pleno iure to the Chapter of Canons. Where there is such a union, the parish should be separated, and a parish priest is to be appointed, who will enjoy all the faculties that belong to parish priests in accordance with the norms of the Codex." It seems to me that this pronouncement of Pope Paul VI shows clearly the Church's desire that the union of parishes to a juridical person, such as a Chapter of Canons or a religious Institute should disappear in the future. In fact canon 520 of the new Codex states: "A juridical person may not be parish priest."

As a logical consequence, no religious community may claim any right to a parish, even if the parish was united to the religious house before the new Codex. A parish priest should be appointed, who will enjoy the faculties of other parish priests. Consequently, there is no reason to talk about acquired rights that a religious house may enjoy in the future.

Your Former Student

The present case gives us an opportunity to touch various points not mentioned in our answer to the cases published already in the *Boletín Eclesiástico* since March-April of 1990.

Pope Paul VI made the pronouncement, quoted by our consultant, in his *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, n. 21 § 2, issued on August 6, 1966. It is worth being noted that the papal pronouncement refers only to *parishes united to Chapters of Canons*. He did not make any allusion to parishes entrusted to religious houses. The *logical consequence* is that his pronouncement had no effect on parishes united to religious houses according to canon 1425 of the 1917 Codex.

The foregoing assertion was obviously sustained by the Commission for the Interpretation of Conciliar Documents on June 25, 1979. It was asked to the Commission:

"I. Whether the norms given in the *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, 21, § 2 concerning parishes *united pleno iure to the Chapter of Canons*, should be applied also to parishes entrusted *pleno iure to religious Institutes* according to canon 1425, § 2 of the Codex.

II. If affirmative, whether parishes so united should be separated and be prohibited in the future."

The answer given by the Commission was: "*Negative ad primum; ad secundum, provisum iam in primo.*" (AAS, 71, 1979, p. 696)

It is clear, therefore: 1) that the pronouncement of Pope Paul VI on parishes united to Chapters of Canons, mentioned by our consultant, does not apply to parishes entrusted *pleno iure* to religious Institutes; 2) that parishes entrusted to religious houses should not be separated from the religious houses, to which they are united according to canon 1425 of the 1917 Codex; and 3) that this union of parishes to religious houses should not be prohibited in the future.

The pronouncement of Pope Paul VI has been reproduced in the new Codex. Canon 510 reads:

"1. *Capitulum Canonicorum ne amplius uniantur paroeciae; quae unitae alicui capitulo extent, ab Episcopo dioecesano a capitulo separentur.*

2. *In ecclesia, quae simul sit paroecialis et capitularis, designetur parochus, sive inter capitulares selectus sive non; qui parochus omnibus obstringitur officiis atque gaudet iuribus et facultatibus quae ad normam iuris propria sunt parochi*".

With regards to religious Institutes there is no prohibition in the new Codex of entrusting them with parishes in the future. It is true that the norm contained in canon 1425 of the 1917 Codex has not been reproduced in the new Codex, but this does not mean that the supreme authority of the Church cannot in the future allow the entrusting of a parish to a religious house, as before. In fact, canon 520 allows the diocesan Bishop to unite a parish to a clerical religious Institute or Society of apostolic life, which was already granted by Pope Paul VI in his *motu proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, 33.

A difference, however, should be noted in the power given by Pope Paul VI and by the new Codex to the diocesan Bishops. *Ecclesiae Sanctae* granted them power to "commit a parish to a religious Institute," while the new Codex gives them power to "commit a parish to a clerical religious Institute or to a clerical Society of apostolic life." As we said in our answer to the case entitled *Acquired Rights Not Abrogated by the New Codex*, this power granted to the diocesan Bishop does not cover all cases of incorporation dealt with in canon 1425 of the 1917 Codex.

On June 25, 1979, it was asked of the Commission for Interpretation of the Conciliar Documents whether the norm given in *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, 33 concerning the power of diocesan Bishops to entrust a parish to a religious Institute included also the faculty to abolish said union without the need for permission from the Holy See. The answer was: "Affirmative, as long as the acquired rights, if any, be respected." Obviously this applies also to unions granted by the diocesan Bishops in virtue of canon 520 of the new Codex.

Our consultant will notice in the foregoing answer of the Commission the great respect the Church has for *acquired rights*. If with regards to unions granted by the diocesan Bishops the local Prelates are reminded to respect the acquired rights of religious communities, the same respect, if not greater, is expected to be given to the rights that religious communities have acquired by virtue of

unions created by papal indult, as happens in the incorporation *pleno iure* of parishes to religious Institutes, according to canon 1425 of 1917 Codex. The closing words of our consultant seem to forget somehow this respect. We cannot help but repeat what we have said in our answer to the case entitled *Acquired Rights Not Abrogated by the New Codex*. "It is inconceivable that the new Church law would leave the entrusted parish with the benefit of using the church of the religious house and leave the latter only with the inconveniences attached to the incorporation of the parish."

The consultant mentions the new norm contained in canon 520 of the new Codex: "A juridical person may not be a parish priest." This new law has simply abolished the former norm that the juridical person entrusted with a parish *pleno iure* was the *habitual parish priest* running the parish through an *actual vicar* (cc. 471, § 1, 402). Obviously this is not possible now. The old law did not constitute a right proper. It was a norm determining how the parish committed to a juridical person should be governed.

But this does not mean that a juridical person cannot be entrusted with a parish, which is the consequence apparently inferred by the consultant. The fact is that the same canon 520 states that a clerical religious Institute and a clerical Society of apostolic life can be entrusted *in perpetuum* or *ad tempus* with a parish. This entrusting and being a parish priest are two different things.

GOD'S WORD FOR TOMORROW

Homilies for November and December 1990

Roman Carter, O.P. & Ramon Perez, O.P.

Thirty-first Sunday of the Year, November 4, 1990

(Mal 1:146 - 2:2b,8-10; 1 Thes 2:7b-9,13; Mt 23:1-12)

The readings for this Sunday's Mass bring forth unusual tones of fierceness, gentleness and wise common sense. They should, therefore, stir us up from any lingering complacency, the residue of worldliness, that might keep us from the judging power and healing strength of God's Word. We are urged to learn to take nothing for granted but rather to attempt discerning God's will in our day to day work.

The levitical priesthood of the Jerusalem Temple comes under special fire from the Prophet Malachi. The unknown, possibly even anonymous ("Malachi" merely means "my messenger" and is not necessarily a name) author is appalled by the ignorance, self-indulgence and greed of the "clergy" of the unreformed era around the year 460 B.C. He not only curses them but turns their very blessings to curses for they have misused their privileges, broken the covenant of Levi of the eighteenth and thirty-third chapters of Deuteronomy and generally neglected their duties. Nonetheless, the universal Fatherhood of God among his People and the good faith they have with him and one another can repair these faults.

St. Paul writes in a gentle vein of his own work among the Gentile Thessalonians. He is "nothing, devoted and protective" in his apostolic care for them. Yet this has involved the ultimate sacrifice, that of *himself* for the Gospel. And this Sacrifice is seen not in terms of some lofty ideal expressed in words alone but as hard work (probably weaving tent cloth) for his maintenance so as to be a burden to no one else. This striving hard in a gentle spirit has, of course, paid off and the Thessalonians have accepted Paul's message. But he must remind them that it is the Living Power of God.

In the Gospel Our Lord makes a very important distinction between speech and speaker, content and human context, God's Word and man's feeble and often misdirected "religiosity". He says in effect of the scribes and Pharisees, "Do what they say not what they *do*." Few preachers, unfortunately, can like Malachi, Paul or Jesus offer their lives as examples of how God's will is done. All who have heard the Word at all can relay, however, what God says to everyone. Nonetheless, mediocrity need not be accepted as a dynamic norm. On the contrary, humility before God as Sole Father, Christ as the only real Teacher, and acceptance of our own position in service can save us from Malachi's curses and Jesus' admonishing critique. It can identify us with Paul in this apostolic zeal.

God has called us here today to be blessed, not to be cursed. Jesus in our midst as Great High Priest saves us by rectifying God's Word personally in the Eucharistic Sacrifice which transcends and fulfills all that was done in the Temple of old. But at the same time he rightly demands from us more than mere acknowledgment of the superiority of this teaching and this role. We must offer ourselves apostolically in union with him. We must bring him our work here and now and continue to perform it whole-heartedly after the Mass is ended. Then, as true servants of God, we can bask in his blessings, continue in the fellowship of his Saints and proclaim by Living Power that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Thirty-second Sunday of the Year, November 11, 1990
(*Wis 6:12-16; 1 Thes 4:13-18; Mt 25:1-13*)

Wisdom, death and preparedness for the Kingdom are the themes of what we have just heard proclaimed. They are three very

distinct themes which are held together not by any proximity in the order of thought or that of feeling but, rather, as aspects of the Divine Plan of which we, too, form a part.

The so-called "Book of Wisdom" is Deutero-Canonical in that it is only found in Greek, the language in which it was written. In the third century after Christ it was even listed in the New Testament! It is a book of abrupt changes of tone and style, it being probably written by several authors over a period of many years in the second and first centuries before Christ. Alone among Old Testament books, it proposes a categorical and clear idea of man's purpose and destiny in God's plan. Its orientation is both to beauty and finality, and its sense of the relationship between time and eternity is exquisitely unique.

Wisdom is personified as a female friend of God who has been with him for endless ages and now has the task of guiding men. In the sixth chapter from which we have read a long section on the "call to immortality" is rounded off. The brilliance of Wisdom's divine origin and the depth of her knowledge are seen as magnetic to the sincere and vigilant seeker. She is at once a liberator and a comforter not only sought by her followers but seeking them out. This created but supratemporal Wisdom is of course a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, himself the wisdom of God made man, who comes seeking us as much as we seek him and who promises us his own life without end.

The second reading shows St. Paul's analysis for the doubting Thessalonians of the greatest obstacle to our intimation of immortality and to our grasping of the Divine Plan: gloom-laden preoccupation with death, a pseudo-finality. In this part of what maybe the oldest Pauline writing the Apostle views the fate of departed Christians with wholesome hope, having considered the place of orderly love in our present life and in preparation for a discourse on the End Times. What bothers the Thessalonians is whether or not their fellow Christians who have died will take part in the triumphant and final Advent of Jesus. Paul assures them that death and resurrection are not only mysteries of the Lord but the fate of all who believe in him, even those who will have died before his coming. Since that in all probability includes all of us, we are given a share of Paul's exhortation and in his own apostolic hope.

But we can never be so smugly self-assured as to think that God's will is to be done in us "automatically," come what may. The romance of wisdom, the inevitability of death and the challenge of the Gospel are factors in our life, & human life of knowledge and will, truth and goodness, error and sin. This life of ours is our chance before God to correspond with his grace and do his will or to reject him and "do our own thing." And so we as Christians are forever faced with the need to renew ceaselessly our basic option, our choice of and for God.

What have we done by coming to this Mass? We have said "yes" to the Lord. Attracted, however superficially, by his wisdom, bewildered by our mortality and that of our loved ones who have died and to whom we dedicate this month of November and called by Christ the Bridegroom to be prepared for his heavenly banquet, his wedding feast with the Church on High. For, whenever he comes, we are *here*. The One who invited us to his foretaste of his joy will fill our lamps, will instill in us new courage and lead us into wise paths. But simply *being* here is not enough. We must *pray*, asking God for his gifts, thanking him for his love and praising the very wonder of his Presence in our midst. Then, indeed, this Mass will be a fruitful encounter with Christ. In it he will, as Risen Lord, give us himself as pledge of immortality. He indeed will as Wisdom-in-Person be found, held, cherished and kept for Eternal Life.

Thirty-third Sunday of the Year, November 18, 1990
(*Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thes 5:1-6; Mt 25:14-30*)

Effectively today is the Last Sunday in Ordinary Time as next Sunday, the 34th, is now kept as the Solemnity of Christ the King. All three readings today, therefore, have a certain "static finality" which can be deceptive about them. Wives are living human beings subject as much to change as to pattern. Most of our waiting for the Lord is neither in utter pagan darkness nor in brilliant Christian light. And not very much banking nowadays is done by either zero or double offers of interest or profit. To understand the readings, then, we must delve below their surface and seek the Spirit which vivifies the letter. The "Perfect Wife" passage from the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, for instance, comes from the very last part of the book. Proverbs is filled with earthly "wisdom" and relatively lacking in any transcen-

dent sense. Thus, its illustrations seem to be its content. However they are more an ideal to be copied than a necessary reflection of affairs. The proverbs are no mere moralizing. They are an offer of a higher state of affairs. So we must look carefully at the passage to glean its worth.

The Perfect Wife passage is, indeed, a parable of human works elevated by grace. However, these works are by no means transformed beyond recognition. Quite the contrary, they are, in anything all too plain. The Perfect Wife is not anyone's wife, of course, or even necessarily a woman. Rather the Perfect Wife is an image of the Christian soul disposed towards service, exercised in industry, generous to the needy and, because of wisdom, praiseworthy. She is an example of how simple tasks find their place in the work of sanctification, how temporal concern blends with spiritual endeavor.

Turning to the second reading, we hear St. Paul warning us not to be overly interpretative about natural phenomena, the chance-like happenings of time and space. The Lord will overtake the sons of darkness suddenly and unexpectedly. But to those who are awake, the sons of light, he will come as hope fulfilled. So we must calm our fears of earthquakes, fires and floods. We must put our whole trust in the long-expected One who comes to Christians not in frightening surprise but as the sober Vision of all we have sought our whole life long. But there is a process of unfolding involved in his coming. We shall know the day because wide awake we have experienced the dawn.

The themes of trust and responsibility seen in the parable of the Perfect Wife of Proverbs are vividly taken up in the parable of the Master who departs and the trusted servants left behind from the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. Two of the three servants end up enjoying the Master's happiness whilst the third is doomed to his scorn. Why? Because the third misjudges the Master, belittles his own abilities and takes the easy way out, that of sheer laziness. The details of this like those of many Matthean parables are unimportant. What counts is the reward and the punishment based more on the inward disposition and willingness or unwillingness to engage in real work on the part of the servants than on any pre-established norms laid down by the Master. God is a judge of the

heart not a mere arbiter of what did or did not take place. He does not need our profits, but he does want our goodwill. Rectitude is, therefore, rewarded and deceit with its obscurantism and false reasoning is cast aside.

Today at Mass we can resolve to work for and with God. We are already doing so by our participation in this liturgy. We can put aside idle fears and refill our hearts with hope. For the Lord who comes to us in the Holy Communion is the same Lord who will come in glory. And, for us at least, he is no "thief in the night." Best of all, this holy exercise can be profitable. We can accept God's grace, invest in good works and be ready with full hands to greet Christ when he comes again.

Feast of Christ the King, November 25, 1990
(Ez 34:11-17; 1 Co 15:20-26,28; Mt 25:31-46)

First Reading. The prophet Ezequiel gives us a hint as to the kind of "King" the Messiah will be: rather than a military or powerful sovereign he will appear more like a humble shepherd. The comparison is taken, of course, from a normal occurrence around the Mediterranean basin: the shepherd-sheep link. Unlike other watchers of animals, the shepherd had (and still has) something like a special relationship with his sheep. He is at all times with them, gives each one a name, protects them from wild beasts and personally brings them to the fold at the end of the day. Not only the prophets but Our Lord as well found the shepherd's life an excellent description of his mission. He is then a king of hearts, who attracts them exclusively by his love and humility, not by coercion or force. A hint also for all of his disciples who must learn to bring the "bad" to the truth through the same technique. This reading sounds particularly loving and appealing, but it will be meaningless if read without feeling. Perhaps the celebrant should see the lay reader ahead of time and together agree on the best way to proclaim this beautiful piece from Ezequiel. Only the personal devotion of reader and celebrant can bring out the full force of these marvelous and tender lines.

Second Reading. The topic of these verses is not primarily the kingship of Jesus but the resurrection of the dead on the day of the

Parousia. But it will be on that day when the whole creation will be fulfilled and manifested in all its glory the fact that our Lord had been handed overall authority and sovereignty. It will be only then that death itself will be defeated. Paul wrote these lines to give courage to his readers and to strengthen their faith in this vital dogma to the Christian faith. True we must not just lean on falsely "angelic" attitude, living in the illusion that this world does not matter. But at the same time we must also look forward to the reality and certainty of the Lord's coming as the King of all hearts he has conquered through his redemption and grace.

Gospel. After presenting the kingdom through a series of parables, Matthew focuses his attention on the coming of the King himself at the end of the world to pass the final judgment on all "nations", thus expressing the universality of this judgment. Admission to or elimination from the kingdom of God will depend on whether we were "sheep" or "goats". Again the sheep as the image of the just is emphasized but this time in contrast with the goats as a symbol of the wicked. The choice of this comparison is based on the simplicity and sense of "obedience" to the shepherd by the sheep as opposed to the "stubbornness" of goats. The basis of the King's sentence will be justice and love. This is actually the strong part of the message. Helping - and doing justice - to the oppressed and the needy will constitute the reward of the King, not because these works of mercy were done but because they were done "for him". The King identifies himself with the poor and the abandoned, the lonely and the sick. In these days of so much agitation in favor of the poor and the oppressed, it will be very important to remember the *motive* that should guide our social action programs: the person as an image and child of God.

The consequence of the judgment are but most serious: eternal life or eternal punishment. Are these words of the Lord not clear enough?

First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 1990

(Is. 63:16-17,19, 64:2-7; 1 Co 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37)

First Reading. This moving appeal to God for mercy was made after the destruction of Jerusalem's temple. The prophet acknowl-

edges the sins of his people that brought about destruction, misery and exile. But he also expresses faith and hope in God, who still remains Israel's true Father: "We the clay, you the potter . . ." Briefly Isaiah describes, in his own inimitable poetic style the cycle of our own lives: fall and rise; the humiliation of sin but the ever present possibility of conversion, thanks exclusively to the generosity of God's grace, that "tears the heavens open . . ." How great the mercy of God, our Father, who in the face of repeated offenses, still forgives and loves us.

Second Reading. These short verses as part of the letter's greetings to the Corinthians seem to be intended to cheer them up before Paul will severely call their attention to divisions and to totally unacceptable moral deviations that were taking place in Corinth, like incest and lawsuits before pagan judges. Paul admits that their Christian community had received a number of charismatic gifts, which he enumerates later in chapter 12: preaching, faith, healing, miracles, etc. Teachers and preachers of the Faith are especially singled out for praise. The existence of these graces would have been more reason to present to the pagan society of their time a clean witnessing of Christian life. As Christians we too have received countless proofs of the Lord's love for us, which we undermine or fail to share with others through a faithful and loyal practice of our faith. How true it is that only a "restless" Christian is a genuine one.

Gospel. The theme is the same as that of the thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary time: vigilance. The reader is kindly referred to the homily of that day. It may be added that this Sunday the Church focuses its attention on the historical coming of our Lord on Christmas not as final but as the sign of his eschatological one. In spite of all its intense attraction, to stop at the Christmas celebration would defeat the purpose of Advent and of the Nativity. Christ "will come again" and that will be the final coming. His birth into human history has the sole purpose of leading us to the final encounter.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1990
(*Gen 3:9-15,20; Ep 1:3-6,11-12; Lk 1:26-38*)

The First Reading introduces us to mankind's great tragedy: sin. But it also announces the consoling promise of our salvation and

of the fact that we can always overcome and even prevent serious sin. The second reading explains how that salvation works out: through the entirely gratuitous gift of the Father who sent His only Son to "claim" us for Him. The gospel insinuates the first fruit of the Lord's redemption: Mary, who is greeted with the unusual expression "full of grace," unknown until then in biblical literature. Tradition explains that Mary could not really be "full of grace" if she had been stained by original sin, the sole source of our weakness and tendency towards evil. Being free from original sin from the very first instance of her existence would also free her entirely even from the capacity to sin. As a consequence of her immaculate conception, Mary could not commit even the slightest venial sin, nor in any way say *no* to what she knew was the will of God. And all this exclusively because of the gracious kindness of God, not because of any merit on her part.

Yet Mary lived in the most natural and human way, in great humility and simplicity. Why was our Blessed Mother so privileged? Why was she redeemed "in advance" so to speak? Just because of her future motherhood. All her privileges converged on the fact that she was God's Mother. Whatever happened before that blessed day, it prepared her for it. Whatever followed was a consequence of her maternity. We may be tempted to just admire Mary's incredible privileges and purity and stop there. Yet Mary's exceptional case is God's "hint" for all of us. It is a fact that we take his grace for granted; that we abuse his patience and goodness; that we do not give much importance to the idea of perfection. How terribly far is this attitude from that of Mary! Really how much does God expect from us? How do we become really worthy of him? How do we please him best? Observing how he prepared our Blessed Mother to receive him we get a fairly good idea. To make her worthy of him he made of her the most perfect garden of virtue, purity and love. Let us not take God for granted and let us see in what he made of Mary, a model whom we should strive to imitate.

Second Sunday of Advent, December 9, 1990

(Is. 40:1-5,9-11; 2 Pet 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8)

First Reading. Chapter 40 of Isaiah (actually the "Second Isaiah") provides us with one of the most beautiful pieces in the

Scriptures, both in form and in substance. It is the beginning of the "Book of Consolation," that ends with chapter 55. The people of God are now suffering exile in Babylon while their nation is ravaged. The prophet announces the end of their trials because Jerusalem's sin "has been atoned for." The strength of prophecy lies on the fact that it is the Lord God who makes it; it is his solemn word that cannot fail. So he asks that the *straight way* worthy of God be made to receive Him, coming in all his glory to save his people. It was the unusual thing in ancient times to "make straight" the road through which an emperor or king would pass. This would entail at times enormous work and expenses, but people wisely or not, thought the dignity of their leader demanded it. Surely the return of God to his people did not ask for that kind of straightening, but for the flattening in man of the mountains of his arrogance and pride. Only that would enable him to see his God coming, not as emperor but "as a shepherd gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast . . ."

Second Reading. Connecting with the theme of readiness presented by the first reading, St. Peter tells us not to take for granted the delay of the Lord's coming. He has promised us "new heavens and new earth," free from injustice and sin; but to deserve that reward we must take full advantage of God's patience and time to "live holy and saintly lives . . . without spot or stain so that *he will find you at peace*. Constant preparedness must then be the aim of our lives. If this is necessary for all, a special call must be made to those who, as a matter of habit, live separated from the Lord by a situation of injustice, using power and politics as a vehicle for it; or immorality, life adultery or prostitution, and a thousand others. To be credible, and effective though, aside from the strength of an impeccable life, our denunciation of evil must make no exception and the presentation of the Lord's message be complete.

Gospel. In the first reading Isaiah speaks of a messenger sent by God to prepare his way. The voice of the messenger cries in the wilderness. Now St. Mark "officially" identifies the messenger as John the Baptist. His announcement to mankind is one of penance, that is, total conversion. Only that conversion can be adequate to deserve the real object of John's preaching: Jesus. All Christians must be a reproduction of John in proclaiming the coming of the Lord, but we too must live like him if we want to be credible: with total

detachment from wealth and power - all kinds of power. The purpose of a proclamation is to touch the heart of the listener, not to pressure him by force. The "sinner" who is "changed" because of pressure will not remain changed for long. In this regard it might be useful to ask ourselves: who has been more effective in proclaiming the gospel, Mother Teresa in her powerless and feeble voice or other angry and loud individuals or groups? Who has moved more hearts? Apparently it is not enough to be right or zealous or even poor. Ironically, a messenger must also be a *nobody*, like John, so that God's powerful message may come forward, not our own.

Third Sunday of Advent, December 16, 1990
(Is 61:2-2,10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8,19-28)

First Reading. In the present context of our own country the words of Isaiah should produce a hopeful echo. The same God who sent Isaiah to "bring good news to the poor, to bind up broken hearts, to proclaim liberty to captives" (in whatever form!) is the same God who sends other "anointed" to do exactly the same in our time, for God does not love us any less than he loved ancient Israel. They too had the same miseries, sins and sorrows we now have. But to let that visitation of God become operative in us we too must be ready to accept a condition: integrity, that is justice, so as to appear before the Lord clothed as a bride. This sense of integrity is needed by all: the rich who amasses wealth and the hospitality girl who sells herself; the politician who abuses his power and the jeepney driver who cuts trips; the military who "salvages" and the dissident who does the same thing, etc. It is a serious error to single out some who, just the same, fail somewhere else. All human beings, including the "consecrated", need constant reform and search for integrity as the only possible way of finding "joy in Yahweh."

Second Reading. Paul beautifully and in four words presents the major characteristics of a Christian: love, joy, prayer and thanksgiving. From the negative side he warns the Thessalonians to avoid every form of evil, keeping themselves blameless in heart and body. What for? For the coming of our Lord. This last sentence provides the advent motive for its use at this time.

Gospel. The theme of today's Gospel is the same as that of last Sunday: the presentation of St. John the Baptist as the Precursor of our Lord, but this time it is the version of St. John. By now John has become very famous not just because he baptizes but because he changes people from sinners into decent persons, thus preparing the way for the Gospel message of our Lord. John is aware of his importance but his humility will not let him capitalize on it and take all the honors. On the contrary he insists he is merely a "voice" for Someone coming after him. The latter's is the honor and for his sake John preaches to the crowds. That is his mission, not self glorification.

The attitude of John provides an excellent example for priests and laymen alike. In the apostolate we are merely a "voice", or instruments of the Lord, a voice he uses to call our brothers and sisters to a Christian and holy life. If we pretend to make ourselves not the instrument but the real thing, then our ministry and apostolate will necessarily fail. Our whole honor is in obeying *his* plans, clearly shown by the Church, not ours. When meditated upon a little bit, we will find the personality of John an extremely attractive model for a fruitful apostolate.

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23, 1990

(2 Sam 7:1-5,8-11,16; Rm 16:15-27; Lk 1:26-38)

First Reading. David has obtained national peace and he thinks of building a temple to honor God. But the plans of God are different. He tells his servant through the prophet Nathan that his mission is not the temple but the foundation and strengthening of the house of David, as the Messianic symbol of God's kingdom, a kingdom that ultimately will be established by the appearance of Jesus in the world. The reading, then, is highly technical but what is important for us is to see in it the human and historical roots of Our Blessed Lord; that is, his becoming one like us. He wanted to have "ancestors" like ours (some of them not exactly holy) precisely to encourage us to approach him with total trust. His assuming of human measure lifts also our dignity to its highest possible level. That great is his love for us. That great too should our response be.

Second Reading. The text of this doxology has been disputed, especially as to its location. But that is not important to us now. The

message is: the mystery of the Messiah hidden for centuries has now been revealed in Jesus Christ. What had been a promise to David, now has bloomed into full reality, way beyond what David could have ever dreamed of. "So clear" is the revelation that even pagans can see it. And here we, formerly pagans, come in. How wonderful, how unbelievable that God should share his divine secrets with us, sinful and stubborn mortals! What more can we possibly ask for? And what is, again, our response to his loving revelation?

Gospel. Christmas is by now around the corner. The narration of the Lord's conception increases the sense of expectation in men of goodwill. The cycle of Advent is about to end and humanity relives again the inexhaustible mystery of Christmas. But the homilist must clearly emphasize that we are witnessing not merely the birth of a child, albeit extraordinary, but the incarnation of God's Son in Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the real gift celebrated at Christmas. The materialistic approach to the birth of our Lord has brought sadness, loneliness and, for some, even sins because of its stress on the commercial aspect. Many people will feel bored on Christmas eve because they have too much; many others will be lonely and hungry because they have nothing. All because of our distortion of the real meaning of Christmas which is not a spending spree, but the celebration of God's supreme gift to mankind in the person of his Son. The materialistic abuses of Christmas are so deeply rooted now that people will not change just because the priest says so. Nevertheless, we must unceasingly project to our parishioners the genuine face of Christmas to help them see its real beauty and move their hearts to the gift of themselves to others, just as our Lord gave himself to us.

Christmas Day, 25 December 1990

(Is. 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-8)

It is with an overwhelming sense of *fulfilment* that the Church celebrates this Solemnity of the Birth of Jesus Her Lord. This *fulfilment* has to do with the Eternal Plan of the Father, with the prophecies of the Old Testament and with a new found sense of restored human identity to be found in Christ alone. So what we are celebrating is not just a Special Baby's Birthday but the dawn of a New Creation, light and life for all mankind.

In the first reading the author we call Deutero-Isaiah solemnly entones what amounts to a veritable Enthronement Hymn for the Son of God. The mountain running messenger makes known the tidings which invite the Remnant of Judah to ruined Jerusalem to meet the King. The King is God himself. But he is God-made-man who can be met face to face. He not only offers joy and consolation to his relatives. He offers salvation to all mankind. The thankful glee of Israel restored becomes, thus, the inheritance of the ends of the earth.

The Gospel shows how what took place in time and space when the personal Word of God was born is part and parcel with what was planned forever in the divine design of all creation. The Plan is monumental. The Plan is great. The Plan is irresistible.

God comes to man as light. God comes to man as transforming power. God comes to and as sharer of eternal glory. God comes to man as man - a man of grace, a man of truth, a man of divine fulfilment for every aspiration of the human race.

Our second reading ties together as it were the first reading and the Gospel. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews insists on the unique privileges of the Son of God in the Realm of Light. Jesus Christ is in reality higher than all the angels. Jesus Christ is greater than the varied sayings of the prophets who foretell Him. For Jesus Christ both sustains the universe and destroys sin. Jesus Christ is God Himself, heir and agent of the Father, and is manifest in the Spirit for the worship of all creation from the loftiest angel to the least speck of matter.

However, this great fulfilment which takes place in Christ and is essentially and uniquely His is not something He selfishly safeguards. No. He has come to share not just its news but its reality with us. He has come to share his regal state. He has come to bestow light and grace, to teach us His love and to accept our joyful worship because it is consonant with his whole manner of being.

And this is Christmas: receiving Christ who comes to give Himself. Christmas is *our* fulfilment as well as his. Christmas brings us out of darkness into light, out of error into truth, out of sin into forgiveness and, if taken to heart, out of time into eternity. May God give

us the grace to perceived these truths of fulfilment in Christ and to give them day by day until the fulfilment He has inaugurated by His Incarnation and earthly life becomes for us who have made it ours in acceptance the glory of His presence with the Father and the Holy Spirit in heaven, forever!

Feast of the Holy Family, 30 December 1990

(Si 3:2-6.12-14; Col 3:12-21; Lk 2:22-40)

We may run the risk of speaking in beautiful but very general words about the family in today's homily. That the family is the nicest and most important institution is not new to anyone. But what Christians need to know today is the "how" to become an ideal family. The Church possesses an immense wealth of divine wisdom as well as of merely human experience to assist the family effectively. Unfortunately that wealth does not filter into actual situations as much or as often as needed. On this most precious feast the homilist should present strongly the mind of the Church on the family and challenge the congregation to take a clear stand on it. The family is losing ground at an alarming speed and we have every reason to believe that soon very little of it will be felt. *Unless* the Christian community reacts sharply and fast. What has been done so far is indeed commendable but insufficient.

Three major aspects in the family apostolate need reinforcement as *Familiaris Consortio* indicates: 1) the remote preparation which begins with the initial catechetical formation of the child; 2) the immediate preparation before the wedding, which should last long enough; 3) the growth afterwards through regular sharings, seminars, etc. and, of course, through intense family prayer. Every Catholic family should find time for any of the several family organizations existing in our parishes. The art of preparing young people for marriage is an exacting one and few parents are gifted with it. In turn, unprepared parents will bring up unprepared children and the cycle will never be broken. Can the Church, that is those sufficiently formed for it, do something to dispel the wrong impression that capacity for procreation equals maturity for marriage? Priests need the cooperation of parents in expecting from couples three basic things: 1) good adult understanding of the Faith and of family duties; 2) a minimum of psychological and mental maturity for

the responsibilities of marriage; 3) solidarity with the poor by eliminating once and for all from our Churches the scandalous weddings *en grande*, which drive away from the sacrament thousands who cannot afford "beautiful weddings".

The Church has a golden opportunity before the wedding to prepare a couple. But it is her *only chance*; if she misses it she misses everything. For this reason the gentle pressure of the Church demanding sufficient time for counselling should be easily accepted. Rush marriages are never a help and always a death sentence on genuine family life; a death sentence that is almost always carried out mercilessly. When it comes to rush weddings parents are often the culprit because instead of preventing them they become their major accomplices. They too permit their children to live together to the profound scandal of other children and neighbors. Parents act this way because they were never trained in the true values of the Gospel.

The broken-family epidemic is another area that needs urgent and strong action not only from the Church but also from the government itself. The Church should use its voice and its moral authority to press the government to effectively protect the many thousands of innocent children cruelly abandoned by their parents. Society cannot tolerate this enormous injustice. A lot of pressure is being exerted to defend the rights of the poor and the oppressed and the effects are often impressive. How about using that same formidable weapon to prevent evil parents from denying support to their families while joining immoral unions? Such "parents" are not only a threat to the institution of the family: they are an actual destructive force of the whole society since the family is the first cell in that society.

We all wish to have in our midst the ideal family of Nazareth. But to achieve that dream, Christians from all sectors must work very hard on the one hand to prepare at length those who have received the vocation for parenthood, and on the other by preventing the obviously unfit from entering into such a sacred institution. The need is extreme; the efforts exerted so far not nearly enough. Let us imitate the holy Father, Pope John Paul II, who so valiantly and tirelessly fights for the rights of the family everywhere he goes.

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