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(MAY-JUNE 1991)

TO PRIESTS: LONG LIVE!

Priests had looked forward to the holding of the eighth Synod of Bishops the theme of which was: Formation of the Clergy in the Circumstances of the Present Day (30 September to 27 October 1990). Their hopes were high.

The delegates did serious preparations so that they could actively participate during the synodal sessions.

The bishops of Asia had made, in fact, a fitting preparation by making the synodal theme as one of central issues studied during the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences held almost three months before the gathering in Rome (July 12-27, 1990).

The serious preparation brought forth satisfactory results. The Synod, we believed, was able to answer the most fundamental question on the priestly formation raised by the Holy Father during his homily in the Opening Mass: "What is this formation?"

It is good to note some points of the final message of the Synod addressed to the laity, priests, and seminarians and young people.

To the Laity: *"You need your priests, and priests and seminarians need your love and support, as we work together to build up the Body of Christ, in the service of all, and especially the poor."*

To the Priests: *"You are ministers of the Eucharist and ministers of God's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation. It is you who support the people in their daily lives."*

To the Seminarians: *"In humbly accepting the truth which comes from God, you have said yes to Him for the first time. Hold on to this truth with all your strength so that you can pass it on to others."*

However you must bear in mind that priestly formation continues all through life."

To the Young People: *"We recognize your generosity and idealism and ask you to reflect with us on the vocation to priesthood. A priestly vocation comes from God, a gift which He offers to young men who He trusts to imitate Jesus Christ in serving God and mankind."*

In this issue we try to offer our readers the points contributed by the Asian delegates, including those who came from the Philippines. These points are for all who are working for the promotion, the deepening and the keeping of priestly vocation.

To all our priests: Long live!

FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE DELEGATES TO THE
II PLENARY COUNCIL OF THE
PHILIPPINES

HOLY FATHER'S HOMILY AT THE SYNOD'S OPENING MASS*

"Go, work in my vineyard!"

1. "Son, go and work in the vineyard today" (Mt 21:28).

Thus said the father of today's parable to his sons. Thus He says to those whom He calls to priestly service in the Church.

Go and work in my vineyard!

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate and Priesthood, and all of you who have come to this Eighth General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, to study the topic of "The Formation of Priests in Circumstances of the Present Day," *we wish to follow the words of the Owner of the vineyard*, who today also calls us. These words resound all around the world, among so many peoples and nations, in so many churches. *The Lord's vineyard is vast, as broad as the world*, and wherever people created by God and redeemed in Christ live, wherever the Pentecost Spirit reaches, *these words can be heard*: "Go and work in my vineyard!"

Young and old alike hear these words. It is always a *personal call*: the Lord calls by name, as He called the prophets and apostles. At the same time it is made within the community: in the Church and for the Church. Every priest is chosen from among men and is appointed to act on behalf of men (cf. Heb 5:1).

*On Sunday 30 Sept. in Saint Peter's Basilica, John Paul II presided at the solemn Eucharistic Concelebration for the opening of the Eighth Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

In the course of the Sacred Rite, after the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pope pronounced this homily. Published in *L'Oss. Rom.* No. 41 (1160) 8 October 1990.

2. During this Synod of Bishops we want to concentrate on the topic of the "*formation*" of priests. What is this "*formation*"? We could say it is a response to the call of the *Lord of the vineyard*. The first response (the *direct one*), is availability to continue on the vocational path, while the *indirect one*, the gradual and global response, is the one which is given all through life and with one's whole life.

Here we must enter into the hidden meaning of this response. It is *simple and at the same time complex*, just as the human being is complex, just as the conditions of human existence are complex and diverse, be they internal or be they those which are the result of circumstances of time and place: historical circumstances, environmental circumstances and circumstances of civilization.

Why does it happen that the first son who was called in the parable says "*yes*" and then he does not go to work in the vineyard; the other son says "*no*" and then goes to the vineyard. Why does this happen? And what should we do so that the filial "*yes*" to the call from the Lord of the vineyard should reach full maturity and strength?

3. Saint Paul writes: "*You should have the same feelings which were in Jesus Christ*" (Phil 2:5). It could be said that in these words we find the definition of priestly formation.

The priest is a person *who must share these feelings in a particular way*. These feelings are the *raison d'être* for his ministry. In each one of us, our humanity, our personality is fulfilled when we share in these feelings which were and continue to be in Jesus Christ. *Actually these feelings do not have only an historical dimension, but they are always alive and constantly reviving us:* in the power of the Holy Spirit they come to be, through His work in people and in the community.

4. The Apostle describes those "*feelings which were in Jesus Christ,*" and his description is at the same time a hymn and a kerygma: *he proclaims the mystery of Christ!*

Incarnation and redemption are thus both united in this mystery: *the salvific emptying of self and the salvific exaltation.*

Christ is the consubstantial Son of the Father who "*emptied himself, taking the form of a servant*" (Phil 12:7). Being God, He became man and *as man He humbled Himself*. A measure of that humbling was His death on the cross, humanly the most infamous. In

His death Christ became "obedient" to overcome man's "disobedience".

Here we reach the fundamental depth of existence and of human life. Christ is a manifestation of this depth. *It is only through Him that we can pass from the slavery of sin to liberation in God.* His exaltation on the Cross becomes the beginning and the foundation of our uplifting in God. We are all called to participate in that uplifting.

This call is manifest in the words: *Go and work in the vineyard of your redemption.* Go and work! Jesus Christ is the Master of this vineyard! Go and work! Stay united with Him, to the glory of God and Father.

5. This call is directed to reach person. Within the Church it takes a sacramental form. *The first moment we are called is at Baptism.* The priesthood of the faithful is already to be found in that. Priestly ministry has its source in Baptism and is linked in a special way to the Eucharist, where the Mystery of the Cross and of Christ's exaltation (the Paschal Mystery) is renewed and made present for the good of the Church and of the world.

6. The priestly vocation has a pastoral dimension. The priest, in serving, becomes like Christ, earlier heralded as He who "instructs sinners in the way; leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the poor His ways" (Ps 24/25:8-9). He teaches with the word of the Gospels; *He confirms with His messianic service that He knows His sheep and they follow Him* (cf. Jn 10:27). But He teaches above all with the word of His cross and His humbling. Through this He shows the only way which leads to the exaltation of man in God. Priestly formation *prepares* the new disciples of the Redeemer and those who *imitate the Good Shepherd.*

7. As we celebrate together this Holy Eucharist, at the beginning of this Synodal Assembly it is a source of great joy to all of us to know that all the ecclesial communities in the world join us in prayer: even those which cannot be represented here today by their bishops. In the first place we remember fondly our brothers in China, and secondly we remember the Delegates from the Episcopal Conferences of Vietnam and Laos, who are not yet here among us, in the hope that they will be able to join us in the course of our synodal tasks.

I would like to extend my most cordial and fraternal greetings to all the Participants of this Synodal Assembly who have come here today: Bishops and Priests, *Auditores* and *Auditrices*, the religious, the lay men and women who come from all continents and many different Church environments; to the experts who put at the disposal of the Synodal Fathers the fruits of their particular skills, and all those who in so many different ways render service for the smooth working of our Synod; in particular the staff of the General Secretariat and the group of young priests and seminarians, who have offered their help and will give their valuable assistance with great generosity.

To all of you I extend a welcome, and I express my joy at being here with you in this moment of so much importance, when the attention and the hopes of the Church are focused on a subject as vital as that of the formation of priests. While I thank you for your presence, let me express the hope that your labours here will produce the abundant fruit which the ecclesiastical community is expecting.

I am comforted, as I have already said, by the certainty that in this celebration we are assisted by the prayers which rise from the whole Church. The *Father does not say "no" to the prayers of His Children*. He gives them a share in the Spirit, which is indispensable to our important task.

We must now try and share those feelings which are in Jesus Christ: may our feelings be those of Christ.

We must try, through our labours to allow to express itself that "comfort which comes from charity" (cf. Phil 2:1) and which determines the vocation of the priestly life in the Church and in the world. The Lord must find us awake (cf. Lk 12:37). Christ "is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:1).

Amen!

SYNOD GENERAL DISCUSSION: ASIAN BISHOPS' PARTICIPATION*

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

I wish to touch three points:

- I. Religious-cultural influences in sacerdotal formation;
- II. Need for a spiritual foundation in formation;
- III. Selection of professors in seminaries.

I. To my mind there are two great cultural influences. One stems from Islam which concerns 96 percent of the population; the other from the general atmosphere in the East. The priesthood, in the strictest sense, does not exist in Islam. The "Mullah" or "Islamic priest" is rather an interpreter of law and "magister." He decides and judges. Therefore, he is considered above all as a man of authority. On the other hand, the priest, according to Eastern thought is considered as a man of God and a man who prays. This mentality is much more in line with our tradition. The question I wish to pose is the following: what influence should prevail in sacerdotal formation, the one which results in the exercise of authority or the one which results in the donation of the grace of God?

Despite all that is said today concerning the sacerdotal service, the image of the priest generally remains as that of a guide. In many parts, the priest himself considers it important to enter secular fields. In my view, this tendency should be reduced, indeed changed. This is for several reasons, of which I shall cite one in particular. If the priesthood of laymen must be kept in great account for its great value, this reaches its fullness through the ministerial priesthood, it follows therefrom that the line of sacerdotal formation must be mainly a line of spiritual service.

*Reprinted from *L'Osservatore Romano* Nn. 41-43, (1160-1162), 8-22 October 1990.

II. To be a man of God for the priest means to be a disciple of Christ. In this he finds his identity. The identity of the priest derives from his identity with Christ. Christ Himself manifested His identity in a very clear way, that is, His identity with the Father especially when He was hanging on the cross without any human help. Also the priest must find and understand his identity with Christ in the same way that Christ manifested His identity with the Father.

This is the fundamental principle which we must not allow ourselves to forget on the subject of the formation of priests. The reason is this: Very often the temptation prevails in us priests to find and to imagine a Christ that conforms to our wishes, rather than a Christ in whose image we should conform.

III. In my judgement, the *Lineamenta* have neither dealt in a sufficient manner with the problem of selecting professors for our seminaries. Today, even if young people enter seminary with greater confidence in themselves, yet as a disciple they have the greatest respect and esteem towards the teacher, especially when the latter is highly qualified in his field. From this arises the need for the greatest prudence and discretion in the choice of rectors and seminary teachers.

CARD. JOSEPH CORDEIRO
Archbishop of Karachi, Pakistan

EXTEND PERSPECTIVES

Our education and formation for the priesthood are without question very much, or almost exclusively, inward centered, a perspective within the boundaries of Church and Church-life. Priestly formation must also see the future priest within a religiously pluralistic society, with a positive contribution to his humanity and religious development, or in a situation of fundamentalism and fanaticism, which we must recognize for what they are. He must be formed to religious dialogue and evangelization, with respect for all religious professions as he proclaims the Lord's Gospel.

2. What is the goal of seminary education and formation for the priesthood? Is it the transfer of theological information, of religious knowledge, of ecclesiastical folkways and accustomed ways of pastoral care? All our formation, intellectual, pastoral or spiritual,

must flow from and look to an interiorization, and not simply a transfer of information and techniques of pastoral action. This fundamental attitude of interiorization is one that the religions of the East can recall us to in all phases of seminary life.

Until now, we have been largely following a Semitic religious approach in priestly formation with the orientation to a transcendent God. We need now to complement it with the non-Semitic religious approach, as done in the religions of the East, which tend to look at God as immanent and lay stress on personal awakening, enlightenment and realization in the formation of the disciples.

Archbishop ALPHONSUS MATHIAS
of Bangalore, India

PRIESTS AND CATECHISTS

In a society where there is an absence, even a denial of God, both in theory and in practice; where there is pervasive poverty, injustice, how is faith to be handed down? In this secularized and pluralistic situation there is an urgent need for an integral, systematic catechesis; for a catechesis that "makes sense" of Christian faith; that enhances the believer's full Christian life in all its dimensions and that stresses "performative faith" in a communitarian setting, with special reference to social justice and the poor.

Obviously, in view of this catechesis, the formation of our catechists, particularly the lay, becomes compelling. But it is the person of the priest who holds the key to the realization of this kind of catechesis for our times. Hence the urgent need to provide our priests with an adequate basic and on-going formation as leaders and directors of catechesis in a pluralistic and secularized world.

The basic formation of priests in catechesis today should stress the following: 1) The seminarians must get some formal training in the history and present theories of catechesis. The common sense erroneous notion that catechesis or religious education is just "watered down theology" must be corrected and a positive appreciation of religious education as a distinct discipline engendered; 2) Some practical work with local catechists, following *their* program, should

be included in the program of studies for all major seminarians. Unfortunately, the catechetical work done by seminarians is not infrequently counterproductive because they do not follow the prescribed syllabus, nor bother to work with the parish or community catechists, under the direction of the parish catechetical coordinator.

In terms of the *on-going* formation, there is serious need: 1) for updating parish priests and curates in the progress made in catechetical theory, and especially in available improved catechetical materials; 2) for parish priests to work closely with parish catechetical coordinators; 3) for personal contact with the parish catechists, particularly in regard to their formation and development.

Archbishop LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P.
of Caceres, Philippines

SMALL COMMUNITIES

The great challenge to priests is to live the brotherhood among them and the Bishop, without the distances (of time, place and emotions) that life offers. The practical solution is to reduce a large Presbyterate into small and warm fraternities of priests – encouraged and visited by the local Ordinary – where priests open up to the presence of God, to people, and to one another. Personal and communal growth ensue from these small groupings or fraternities of priests.

Bishop GAUDENCIO B. ROSALES
of Malaybalay, Philippines

RESTRUCTURING SEMINARIES

The priest should be the man who, after the example of Christ, has made his own “the joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties” of the men and women of his time and country.

The seminary formation seems to dry up slowly the idealism and generosity the seminarian had when he entered the seminary.

This situation seems to be due to the lack of experience of the life of the people he is called to serve and active reflection on it on the part

of the seminarian, leading to a growth in human and spiritual maturity.

I plead for restructuring seminary formation in such a way that the seminarian has an opportunity to experience the injustices, oppression, marginalization of the poor, the religious conviction of people of other religions and then to reflect on his experience and through it experience the saving mystery of Christ.

He will thus be motivated to become a minister of Christ's saving power.

Archbishop CASIMIR GNANADICKAM, S.J.
of Madras-Mylapore, India

TRIBAL VOCATIONS

The tribals constitute a significant proportion of the Church in India. Though like indigenous people everywhere they have been trampled upon, God's preferential love for the most disadvantaged and oppressed has reached out to them, and hundreds of thousands have responded to the call of the Lord. They have migrated because of their poverty, but they have kept their tribal and Christian identity. They have nurtured vocations and given to the Church hundreds of brothers and priests, thousands of women religious and 15 Bishops. Thus God has raised up for His people shepherds and prophets from their own ranks.

This points to the need for promoting everywhere an indigenous clergy, rooted in their own culture and community. As disciples of Christ who became incarnate, inculturation of the faith would be their job. Even if they find oppression in the world, the Church must encourage them and their specific qualities, enabling them to make their specific contribution to the variegated robe of Christ's Bride.

With their traditional background of training people in special youth centres, tribal vocations have found apostolic schools very helpful and these should be encouraged in the Synod document. At the major seminary they should have a chance of mixing with students from other cultures so that they are integrated into the wider world. Appropriate specialization should also be encouraged.

Archbishop TELESPORE P. TOPPO
of Ranchi, India

FORMATION IN INDIA

Referring to the special situations in India, I make the following five points regarding priestly formation.

1. Self-formation: Formation is always self-formation. Motivation must be instilled in the seminarians so that with the grace of God and with the responsible use of their freedom they become "fishers of men" (Mk 1:17).

2. Formators: In selecting the professor we should give preference to holiness and integrity of life. He should be a *guru* (teacher) who has experienced God in himself. Also it is time that we start special "teachers' training centres" for formators.

3. Inculturation: India is the land of three great religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Inculturation is a great help to penetrate the spirit of the Gospel in the living cultures and traditions of the land. Indian priests formed in the borrowed Chaldean traditions are most likely to find themselves irrelevant in the Indian context.

4. Inter-ritual Studies: Formation for appreciation of all the rites of the Catholic Church is an urgent need for India which is blessed with three rites.

5. Post-Ordination Formation: It is high time that we think about continued formation of the priests also after their ordination.

Cardinal ANTHONY PADIYARA
*Metropolitan Archbishop of Ernakulam of the
Syro-Malabarese, India*

THE BIBLE

The priest is called and sent by God through the Church to proclaim the Good News to all nations. This is why the Word of God is of fundamental importance in the initial and permanent formation of priests.

It is now 25 years since *Dei Verbum* was promulgated. The Council hoped to give a new boost to the spiritual life on the basis of

a greater respect for the Word of God (*DV* n. 26). This hope was not disappointed. Today we can see the fruits of it in many renewal movements throughout the Church.

Nevertheless, many Christians are shouting out in their hunger and thirst for the Word of God and are not listened to by their pastors. There are far too many, especially in Catholic countries, that abandon the Church and become the victims of various religious sects.

This is a problem that concerns the entire Church. Have we discovered the wealth of the Constitution *Dei Verbum*? Are these riches lived by priests in their ministry as prophets and pastors?

It is the task of this Synod in dealing with the initial and permanent formation of priests to cause this respect for the Word to be alive in the same way as that given to the Body of Christ (*DV* n. 21). The Risen Lord feeds all His disciples at this two-fold table, symbolized in a living way in the celebration of the Eucharist.

From the beginning of his formation, the candidate for the priesthood must learn to read the Bible as the Word of God, listen in faith to the call that the Lord directs to him, and learn the needs of the life of a disciple. If his response is positive, this formation will prepare him for a permanent dialogue with the Lord who sends him into the world as His Priest, His Prophet and His Pastor.

The Bible, the Word of God, is the inheritance given us by the Church of apostolic times. Only in the Church can this be well-understood and become prayer. In the formation of priests, it is important to develop this ecclesial approach. So that this reading of the Word of God may yield all its fruits, to help priests and whoever collaborates in the ministry of the Word, the need for a Biblical Pastoral Guide is increasingly becoming more urgent.

Bishop JOSEPH SATOSHI FUKAHORI
of Takamatsu, Japan

IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

Although the number of Catholics in Asia represents only 2.3 percent of the total population – about 75 million Catholics – the number of priests is about 30,000. This is still totally disproportionate to the almost two billion people who are to be evangelized.

However, the proportion of priests to the Catholic population is one for every 2,512 Catholics – a proportion much more favorable than in two other continents. Asia has 16,900 seminarians, students of philosophy and theology. Our own country has 102 seminaries, 54 of them major seminaries with more than 4,000 major seminarians.

But Asia puts also a premium on the qualitative aspect of the spiritual formation, giving special importance to the formation of formators. In the Philippines this is confirmed by the results of a survey conducted several years ago, when close to 2,000 major seminarians stated unequivocally that the most important formation person in the seminary is the spiritual director. Thus, eight years ago a “Colloquia Series for Spiritual Directors in Diocesan Seminaries” was established as a continuing formation program for spiritual directors. It meets yearly. Directors of religious seminaries also attend the Colloquia which meets for 8 or 10 days and has about 70 participants. Last year the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) organized at the Asian level a very successful congress for the same purpose, and another congress is in the offing.

Cardinal RICARDO J. VIDAL
Archbishop of Cebu, Philippines

COLLABORATION WITH LAITY

Many of the dioceses in Indonesia cover very vast geographical areas. Especially in areas with a grave shortage of priests, collaboration between priests and lay pastoral workers is of paramount importance, also for the future of the Church. In such situations the co-responsibility of the laity for Church life and mission stands out more clearly than ever.

The relationship between “common priesthood” and “ministerial priesthood” calls not only for theological consideration, but also for elaboration in more concrete terms. Collaboration between ordained and non-ordained ministers should take place during the years of initial formation and those of ongoing formation for their respective ministries.

Candidates for the priesthood should not be formed in isolation or alienation, but in close and continuous contact with human society

in general. From the outset they ought to become well acquainted with their contemporary and fast changing world, so that – being truly inculturated among those they will have to serve as priests – they become themselves, with the participation of the entire Church, *sacramentum salutis*, sacraments of salvation.

Bishop MICHAEL CORNELIS
C. COOMANS, M.S.F.
of Samarinda, Indonesia

SPIRITUALITY OF EASTERN CHURCHES

Priestly spirituality and mission demand of the candidates to priesthood and intimate association and identification with Christ. This is achieved in and through the Church. Our aim should be, therefore, to form the candidate into a true *vir ecclesiasticus*. More than others, the priest should be a man of the Church.

Ecclesial formation is essentially formation for a liturgy-based spirituality. Liturgy constitutes and expresses the Church. Therefore, also, the local ordinary has a sacred obligation to give proper guidance in liturgical celebration. Differences in liturgy express different approaches to the mystery of faith and consequently reflects the differing spiritualities of the Churches within the Catholic Communion. Essentially each Church (Rite) embodies a spirituality, a Tradition, a way of following Christ.

Since the various Churches in the Catholic Communion differ at the level of theology, spirituality, discipline – and all summed up in the liturgy + there has to be necessarily a specificity of ecclesial formation that is to be imparted to the candidates for the priesthood. The seminarians are to be trained to exemplify in their lives the particular spirituality of their own Church. The *Instrumentum Laboris* does not sufficiently stress this aspect of specific ecclesial formation.

Archbishop JOSEPH POWATHIL
Metropolitan of Changanacherry of the
Syro-Malabarase, India

OPTION FOR THE POOR

In speaking of evangelization, the document on "Justice in the World" issued by the Bishops' Synod of 1971 stresses that "efforts for human promotion are a constituent element of evangelization." The Church is concerned with the integral well-being of all and every man.

The Good News should transform the entire human society in all its aspects. Therefore also the priests is not only there in order to build up the faith community, but also to contribute his efforts towards a better society by introducing Christian values.

Seen in that context, I think the priestly image presented in the *Lineamenta* seems excessively "sacral" (nn. 7; 10). The *Instrumentum Laboris* also stresses rather strongly the ministry of the sacraments. In developing Asian countries people expect genuine commitment and active involvement of the Church, including the priests. Their ministry of the Word and their prophetic role are at least as important as the ministry of the sacraments.

The Church, and particularly the priests, should truly live the preferential option for the poor as an imperative in evangelizing mankind. Seminary formation should prepare and form candidates for the priesthood towards making that preferential option.

Priestly formation ought to be deeply inculturated within the life situations of Asian countries (cultural, social, economic, political, etc.). Both the method and the content of formation should be developed from within the challenges of contemporary Asian societies. There can be no uniform system imposed from abroad. In tune with *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1, students for the priesthood and all priests alike should learn, day after day, to share in "the joys and expectations, the sadness and anxieties" of their brothers and sisters, "especially of the poor and of those who suffer" around them.

Bishop ANTON PAIN RATU, S.V.D.
of Atambua, Indonesia

CHRISTIANITY'S DECLINE IN TURKEY

The Turkish Church is made up of the few remaining successors of those Christians who were introduced to the faith by the Apostles

and today is led by two Latin Rite Bishops, one Chaldean Archbishop, one Armenian Catholic Archbishop, one Patriarchal Vicar for the Syrian Catholics and one Archimandrite for the faithful of the Byzantine Churches. There are two Christians for every 1,000 Muslims; 1 in 10,000 are Latin Rite Catholics.

Unfortunately, these figures are destined to shrink because of the low birth rate and emigration. This last phenomenon is particularly evident and deleterious because it deals mainly with the Chaldean Catholics, until recently a good source of vocations for the tiny seminary in Istanbul.

The Turkish Episcopal Conference, concerned with the formation of priests due to the fact that most of its clergy is European, stresses a missionary formation "*ad suos*" and "*ad gentes*." Today's seminarians will face different situations from the ones we are experiencing, changes they are marginally aware of, even if they go "beyond the news." To avoid uncertainty and disappointment, from the very beginning they are educated in eternal truth, without excluding contributions from the human sciences which will help them attain a stability that will make them into authentic men and generous apostles.

Social and human events have determined the decline of Christianity in Turkey; no one forbids us thinking that other events may encourage its return; we do need, however, to be ready for this with capable and generous men (whom we await from our sister Churches), filled with that zeal that made Asia Minor a land so soaked in faith that one of its cities, Antioch, was where the "disciples were called Christians for the first time."

Archbishop GIUSEPPE GERMANO
BERNARDINI, O.F.M. Cap.
of Izmir, Turkey

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CHURCH

It is 60 years since the Malankara Church, after a separation of three centuries, returned to the unity of the Universal Church. It has grown rapidly in number of faithful, priests and religious. One of the chief reasons is the discipline of the clergy and their generous ministry. Vocations to consecrated life are increasing rapidly. The

newly started major seminary will consolidate this growth and make this ancient community contribute substantially to the spiritual and cultural life of the great subcontinent of India.

Celibacy of the priests opted for by the Malankara Church has proved a great blessing. It is by undivided attention and whole-hearted love for Christ that the ministry of the priest becomes fruitful.

The faithful should be made fully conscious of their dignity and duty as royal priests. This is done chiefly by their full participation in the liturgy and a life of service imbued with the spirit of prayer. This requires the conscious and generous effort of the priests in the formation of the faithful. Priests themselves should be carefully trained and encouraged for this apostolate. In this way the family will become the "domestic Church" and the "first seminary."

Archbishop BENEDICT VARGHESE
G. THANGALATHIL
*Metropolitan of Trivandrum of the
Syro-Malankarese, India*

GUIDELINES FOR POVERTY

The Church in South Korea has seen a marvelous growth in the numbers of converts, in priestly vocations and religious vocations. What is the reason for this outburst of divine grace? We attribute it to the blood of the martyrs, of the tens of thousands of martyrs of the last centuries, and of the martyrs of the last 40 years. Our priests and religious are hard-working, often over-worked, taking care of the hundreds of thousands who have sought to enter the Church.

Our Catholic people have respected the priesthood from the first days of the Church in Korea when they sought priests to help them. Our priests are zealous in their ministry to the people. They work also in social action, for the reunification of our nation, for human development, democratic ideals and human rights. We may have our tensions, conflicts and polarization, but we do not doubt the sincerity of their motivation and service.

Our priests are respected and supported by our people who have become affluent, and so the Bishops of Korea feel they must emphasize not only the spirit of poverty but also provide guidelines for a life

of practical poverty. Our priests must have a decent living but not a luxurious one. Their financial status and their remuneration, including their Mass stipends, should be made known to the people, and they should be accountable for their spending. They should not spend for leisure activities in a way not available to ordinary Church employees. And they should not have any financial privileges not enjoyed by every citizen.

The programme for the on-going formation of priests should be structured both locally and nationally, with an institute for such an education at the national level. Each diocesan priest should be able to take a pastoral sabbatical.

Our attitude about our priests is hopeful and also humble. We want holy priests who are mission-minded. We also want many priests to share with other peoples, and especially with the Korean "Church of Silence."

Archbishop VICTORINUS KONG-HI YOUN
of Kwang Ju, Korea

THAILAND'S CONCERNS

1. *Interreligious dialogue:* The Church in Thailand is a very small minority, only about half of one percent of the population. In such a situation, interreligious dialogue is an essential way of Christian life. We must be careful not to think of it as simply a new strategy for the proclamation of the Gospel, with conversion to the Church in view. Courses on other religions such as Buddhism and Islam are to be taught in the seminary.

2. *Ongoing formation of priests:* Bishops and priests are to be helped to make their own the mind of the Church in the matter of interreligious dialogue. The national dialogue commission has assumed the task of going around to different dioceses for this purpose. Besides, there is a five-day live-in seminar in the major seminary every year to help bishop and priests foster their spirituality and update their knowledge.

3. *Missionary spirit:* We have formed a new "Missionary Society of Thailand." Through the setting up of this society we hope

that a missionary spirit will be better inculcated and promoted among our priests, men and women religious, and laity.

Bishop JOHN BOSCO
MANAT CHUABSAMAI
of Ratchaburi, Thailand

POVERTY

My contention is that the spirit of poverty is not taught but caught. It is interesting to note that the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests invites priests and bishops to embrace voluntary poverty. "By it they will be more clearly likened to Christ and will become more devoted to the sacred ministry." In it priests as well as bishops are asked to avoid all those things which can offend the poor in any way. Again, priests and bishops, it says, should spurn any type of vanity in their affairs. "Finally, let them have the kind of dwelling which will appear closed to no one and which no one will fear to visit, even the humblest" (N. 17).

Hence, my plea is that we bishops be the first to show "leadership by example"! The impression a priest gives and the impact he has on the people he is called to serve and lead will depend very much on what they see and experience in and through him of Jesus, who became a human being in order to save all by leading them to the Father. If it is true to say that "*Ecclesia non pro semetipsa, sed pro mundi vita*" then it must also be true that "*Sacerdos non pro semetipso, sed pro mundi vita*"! And Blessed Joseph Allamano, who was beatified last Sunday by our Holy Father in the Vatican, was "a priest for the world"!

Archbishop ANTHONY SOTER FERNANDEZ
of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

FINAL MESSAGE OF THE SYNOD*

I. Introduction

Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

During the last twenty-five years, synods have been a feature of Catholic life. They reflect "the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and anguish of all mankind," and more particularly of the People of God. Encouraged by the constant presence of Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, we, the Fathers of the 1990 Synod, have followed in the path of the Second Vatican Council and discussed the formation of priests in this day and age.

During our discussion, prayer and reflection, we often thought of the lay faithful, to whom the last Synod was devoted, as well as deacons, men and women religious, and all those active in the Church. You, our brother priests, were particularly in our hearts and mind, because we share the likeness of Christ the Good Shepherd as your fellow workers among the People of God.

The presence of bishops from all the countries of Europe has reminded us of the recent enormous political changes. This has strengthened our faith in Christ, our Lord and Master, "the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of man's history," whose death and resurrection the Church always proclaims.

There is no shortage of challenges and difficulties. But we place our hope in Christ, who watches over the Church. We rely on the cooperation of all who are members of the People of God, just as we particularly count on the unstinting loyalty of you, our brother priests, and on you, our young people, to respond generously to the Lord, who is always calling workers into his vineyard.

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II. To the Laity

We now speak to you, the Christian faithful living in many Catholic communities throughout the world.

We are followers of Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour. He remains the light of the world as we approach the third millennium of Christian history. God is with us in our work and in our families, in our successes and in our disappointments. The warm hand of God is always there for those who wish to grasp it in friendship.

Through baptism, priests, religious, and lay people share the common priesthood of Jesus Christ. Together, and only together, we can do many things to increase the Kingdom of God in our societies. You need your priests, and priests and seminarians need your love and support, as we work together to build up the Body of Christ, in the service of all, and especially the poor.

We face challenges and difficulties, such as religious indifference, materialism, poverty and injustice, an increasing gap between rich and poor nations and classes, family difficulties, the burden of debt. But we thank God for the blessings He has bestowed on the world we love, through the progress of science and technology, the spread of education, the rise of medical standards, the possibility of travel and the spread of democracy.

We live in a time of hope, of widespread if not universal growth in our Church. We should not forget to thank God that the number of students for priesthood has risen fifty-three percent throughout the world in the last thirteen years. We pray especially for the Churches in those areas not yet experiencing this increase,

We thank the parents of priests and seminarians, and all those who support them in their life and work.

III. To Priests

Brother Priests, we want to express our appreciation to you, who are our most important collaborators in the apostolate. Your priesthood is absolutely vital. There is no substitute for it. You carry the main burden of priestly ministry through your day-to-day service of the faithful. You are ministers of the Eucharist and ministers of God's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation. It is you who support the people in their daily lives.

We acknowledge your work and thank you once again as we urge you to continue on your chosen path willingly and joyfully. No one should be discouraged as we are doing God's work; the same God who calls us, sends us and remains with us every day of our lives. We are ambassadors of Christ.

a. While we derive our identity ultimately from the love of the Father, we turn our gaze to the Son, sent by the Father as High Priest and Good Shepherd. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united sacramentally to Him in the ministerial priesthood. Our priestly life and activity continue the life and activity of Christ, the High Priest. Here lies our identity, our true dignity, the source of our joy, the very basis of our life.

The great richness of our priesthood binds us to God and to all people so continuing the ministry of Christ himself. Therefore, every priest, inspired by the love of God and His people should be a missionary and an apostle for a renewed evangelization.

Our whole spiritual identity comes from living out these realities in faith, hope and love, so that we strengthen our unity with God by prayer and apostolic work and lead people to God.

In our discussions, celibacy has shone out for us in a new light and with new clarity. This celibacy is a complete self-giving to God for the good of souls; and intimate union with Christ the Bridegroom, who so loved his Bride, the Church, that He gave up his life for her. Observing the evangelical counsels remains a sure way of acquiring virtue and attaining a true a complete freedom of spirit. In this way, in taking up our cross, we follow Christ more closely and carry out the Father's will.

b. Dear priests, during the Synod, the necessity of a deeper understanding of who and what we are was brought home to us once again. On-going formation, brothers is a high priority for us. We want to do this with you as father, brother, and friend. We undertake to work with you loyally and steadfastly in this renewal.

As witnesses to the great *Mystery* of God, as ministers of the Word of God, we must develop every day in our faith, so we become true men of the Gospel.

As builders of Community, of *Communio*, we must try to grow in our personal and communal integration in the service of the Church, which is the family of the children of God.

As agents of *Mission*, we must struggle constantly to respond to the signs of the times, to understand the judge of Gospel criteria our cultural, political, social and economic circumstances, which are changing ever more quickly and which provide such a challenge to our service for all humanity.

The first and most important agent in the ongoing formation of the priest is the priest himself. As we continue on our spiritual journey, we should always remember that we have done nothing to deserve God's call to us; we should realize there is no reason to lose heart; that our service, even when it seems useless, is always a joyful gift which brings down God's love and blessing.

Each diocesan community participates in the on-going formation of its priests, while the body of priests, closely united around their bishop, will always be the best milieu for this formation.

c. We pay special tribute to our elderly brothers, those priests who have given their life in the service of the Gospel. We especially remember all priests who are ill, united with the suffering of Christ, and offering their sickness for the Church. We give thanks for those who were persecuted, and still suffer persecution for their loyalty to the faith. They inspire us to remain faithful to our ministry.

We wish to express once again our admiration and profound gratitude to you, all of you, who prepare our future priests. We realize what self-sacrifice and self-giving your work requires. We also acknowledge gratefully all those lecturers in our seminaries and universities who provide a solid doctrinal formation for our students. We encourage you to act always in complete harmony with the Church and with the fidelity to her teaching.

All of us, bishops and priests, strive to live out our priesthood in unity and joy, to bring about the will of our Father: "that all may be one . . . so that the world may believe." In fact, one of the best expressions of our identity is to work for priestly vocations, so that young people will always hear the call of the Lord.

IV. To Seminarians

Dear seminarians, you have publicly committed yourselves to becoming priests and have entrusted yourselves to the God who calls you to mission. We are grateful for your strong faith, idealism and generosity, and we encourage you to surrender ever more completely

to the Lord's plans, like the Virgin of Nazareth chosen to be the Mother of our Saviour.

In humbly accepting the truth which comes from God, you have said yes to Him for the first time. Hold on to this truth with all your strength so that you can pass it on to others. However you must bear in mind that priestly formation continues all through life.

To live in the seminary, which is a school of the Gospel, means to follow Christ as the Apostles did. You are led by Christ into the service of God the Father and of all people, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus you become more like Christ the Good Shepherd to better serve the Church and the world as a priest. In preparing for the priesthood we learn how to respond from the heart to Christ's basic question: "Do you love me?" (Jn 12:15). For the future priest the answer can only mean total self-giving.

All through this Synod we have been conscious of the gifts which Jesus Christ has showered upon us, in enabling us to participate in the paschal mystery of His priesthood. We have tried to spell out how we can live this more adequately and deeply. We encourage you to accept it as a gift beyond human power, with a divine capacity to produce much fruit in the Church and in the world.

V. To Young People

Finally we would like to say a word to you young people, the hope of the Church. We recognize your generosity and idealism and ask you to reflect with us on the vocation of priesthood. A priestly vocation comes from God, a gift which He offers to young men whom He trusts to imitate Jesus Christ in serving God and mankind.

We can assure you, from our experience, that it is worthwhile to give one's life and strength as a priest in the service of the People of God. In spite of every difficulty, such a life can always bring joy and happiness. Christ Himself has promised us that "he who loses his life for my sake will find it."

The Church and the world need good shepherds, priests ready to serve God and the People of God with free hearts and free hands.

We know that it is not easy to answer God's call to priesthood. But we trust, dear brothers, that with God's help many young men will answer such a call.

During the discussions in the Synod we have heard the welcome news that priestly vocations in some countries are numerous, while other countries experience a growing shortage of priests. It is clear many young people find it hard to commit themselves to life-long priesthood, to give up the possibility of marriage and setting up a family, and to choose a life in the spirit of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.

But priests should be free from ties of marriage and family, not attached to possessions and comfort, not demanding complete personal autonomy. This is a high ideal. Yet in every age, including our own, we have seen marvelous examples of this heroism, with some even suffering martyrdom for their vocation.

Therefore, we ask you, young people, with your parishes, to pray with us that the Lord of the harvest send labourers into the harvest. The entire People of God needs priests. So we hope and pray that your families, your friends and your communities come to understand the importance of the call to priesthood and better support those of you who choose this path.

VI. Conclusion

We now come to the end of the Eighth General Assembly of the Synod. These four weeks have been a time filled with grace, allowing us to reflect on our vocation as bishops, priests and religious. Together with the Holy Father we have realized once more the value of God's calling us to be priests and giving us the courage to respond.

We thank all who have contributed to the success of this Synod through prayer, work and sacrifice.

We send our greetings from the Tomb of St. Peter to the whole People of God, confident of the love and protection of Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of all priests. We pray that the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

HOLY FATHER'S EVALUATION OF THE SYNOD*

Synod is "indirectly deliberative"

These are the main points made by the Pope in his address to the Synod:

— *In comparison to a Council the competence of a Synod is more limited. It is consultative by nature; yet the Pope, whose authority it is to confirm synodal decisions, can confer on it deliberative power.*

— *This synod was a breath of hope and encouragement following the decades of priestly defections.*

— *The lack of priests is a sad concern which must be met with faith in the work of the Holy Spirit.*

— *The possibility of reverting to "viri propati" is too often evoked within the framework of systematic propaganda hostile to celibacy in which some of the media is an accomplice. The vocations problem must be solved in other ways, according to the Pope.*

Dear Brother Bishops,

Together with you I joyfully carry out my duty to thank the Lord, above all for the institution of the Synod itself, and next for the proceedings and the work of this VIII Ordinary General Assembly.

1. Indeed, 25 years have passed since my Predecessor of venerable memory, Pope Paul VI, made the decision during the final session of the Second Vatican Council to establish the Synod of

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Bishops, this decision was truly a Providential act. In the quarter century which has transpired, we have experienced its effectiveness and appreciated its qualities.

The Synod of Bishops responds to the needs of the Church when the Successor of Peter, with the aid of his brother Bishops, has carry out tasks which emerge from his apostolic mandate as Universal Shepherd, amid complex circumstances which are subject to continuing change. In this way the Synod constitutes a realization and illustration of the collegial nature of the order of Bishops (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 22-23; and *Nota Praevia, Christus Dominus*, nn. 4-10), of which the Second Vatican Council has, so to speak, come to a renewed awareness.

Whit respect to the duties of a Council, those of a Synod are more limited by their very nature. But counterbalancing that is the Synod's more flexible structure. The current world situation at times demands a presence and action by members of the College which, as the successor of the College of the Apostles, has received the mission to teach and govern in the Church. The Synod is capable of supplying as answer to these needs.

Everyone – and the Pope first of all - is in fact aware that it is thanks of the Synod that a certain number of crucial problems have been faced and have found a collegial answer on which the Church herself, in her universal dimension, has made her voice heard.

On the other hand, in the varying circumstances in which Christ's Church carries out her mission today, the Synod is at the service of the unity of the Church, the mystery of the communion, reflecting within herself the Trinitarian mystery of God Himself.

The Synod constitutes a unique experience on a universal basis of episcopal communion, which strengthens the sense of the universal Church and the sense of responsibility of the Bishops towards the universal Church and her mission, in affective and effective communion around Peter.

Thanks to the Synod it is possible at regular intervals to make the voice of the various particular Churches heard and to hear the experiences of brother Bishops, as happened during this Synod when for the first time representatives of some Eastern European countries participated.

2. By its nature the Synod carries out a consultative role. Still, in certain circumstances, a deliberative power can be conferred on it by the Sovereign Pontiff, who must ratify its decisions (cf. *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, and *CIC* can. 343). The experience of previous Synods makes clear the meaning of this distinction between consultative and deliberative. The extensive consultation which the Synod structure allows for during every assembly has never failed to yield results and decisions as well. Given the way they function, Synods are never able to immediately publish a document which takes on a deliberative form. That notwithstanding, the post-Synodal document takes its inspiration from and, one might say, contains what was planned out in common. It therefore can be asserted that a Synod's *proposals* indirectly assume the importance of *decisions*. For, when following the Synod the Sovereign Pontiff publishes the corresponding document, he takes great care to express the full wealth of the reflections and discussion which led up to the synodal *propositiones*, as well as the views of the Synodal Assembly, as much as possible.

3. During the work of this VIII Ordinary General Assembly of the World Synod of Bishops, the Holy Spirit has permitted us to serve a cause of very great importance for the life of the whole Church: *priestly formation*. That is the second reason which impels us to give thanks.

This year's topic is a response to the request which arose from the 1987 Synod on the vocation and mission of the laity. In fact, certain lay people present at the Synod, and a very well-known layman, Patrick Keenan, whom God afterwards called to Himself, asserted the intrinsic connection between the topic of 1987 and that of this year. The more the lay apostolate develops, the more strongly is felt the need to have priests - and priests who are formed well. Thus the very life of the People of God manifests the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning the relationship between the common priesthood and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood. For within the mystery of the Church the hierarchy has a ministerial character (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 10).

The more the laity's own sense of vocation in deepened, the more what is proper to the priest stands out.

4. Thus it is the very life of the Church which points the way out of the crisis of *priestly identity*. This crisis was born in the years im-

mediately following the Council. It was based on an erroneous understanding of – and sometimes even conscious bias against – the doctrine of Conciliar Magisterium. Herein lies undoubtedly one of the reasons for the great number of defections experienced then by the Church, losses which did serious harm to pastoral ministry and priestly vocations, especially missionary vocations.

It is as though the 1990 Synod, rediscovering by means of the many statements which we heard in this hall the full depth of priestly identity, has striven to instill hope following these sad losses. These statements showed an awareness of the specific ontology which unites the priesthood to Christ, the High Priest and Good Shepherd. This identity is built upon the type of formation which must be provided for priesthood, and therefore last throughout the priest's entire life. This was the very aim of the Synod.

5. But, before going further into this point, I would like to pause to address a problem which must be given our full attention, since the future depends to a great extent upon it: I am speaking of the issue of vocations. During the Synod, the Curia Department directly concerned with vocations took the floor to enlighten us on this issue.

We must face the problem in its totality, in an analytical way and in a synthetic way, seeking help, if that is the case, from scientific research.

Yes, we can assert that in their totality there has been a certain increase in vocations. But their distribution is very varied: some places suffer from a dramatic lack of vocations, while others have them in abundance. From this some questions emerge: What is it that characterizes a vocation? Where do they come from? What factors determine them? What are young men seeking in the priesthood?

Many Synod Fathers and certain auditors stated the urgent need for vocations ministry; others told us of encouraging results they have obtained.

But the first answer which the Church gives lies in a total act of faith in the Holy Spirit. We are deeply convinced that this trusting abandonment will not disappoint if we remain faithful to the graces we have received. We must never stop asking for these graces, insistently, as Christ taught: "Ask the master of the harvest" (Mt 9:38). Prayer for vocations must be constantly encouraged and intensified.

All God's People must feel committed to it. The lack of priests is certainly a sadness for any Church. But is it not also an invitation to an examination of conscience? We must ask ourselves: is this not perhaps tied to the fact that, on our part, we have saddened the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph 4:30)?

5. It is true that other questions, serious ones, are raised whenever the lack of priests is felt in a tragic fashion, as, for example, when we find ourselves confronted with the agonizing phenomenon of the offensive mounted by some sects.

In such circumstances, some people have wondered whether it is not the case to consider ordaining *virī probati*. This solution must not be taken into consideration; other responses must be found to this problem. As you now, the suggestion of turning to *virī probati* is too often evoked within the framework of systematic propaganda which is hostile to celibacy. Such propaganda finds support and complicity in some of the *mass media*.

Therefore we must seek without delay other solutions to this agonizing pastoral problem. Should not every Bishop, and with him his whole diocese, perhaps become more deeply aware of the *common mission* which in him is the evangelization of the whole world? The Second Vatican Council, following *Fidei Donum*, recalled the need for "the universal communication of charity" (*Lumen Gentium*, 23).

Therefore, the intensification of help which dioceses richer in priests will give to those experiencing a lack will be encouraging in this regard. Before the great threat which some of the sects represent, one will have to be attentive that the communities of the faithful where Mass cannot be celebrated at this time due to a lack of a sufficient number of available priests may be able to experience and to draw strength from the hearing of the Word of God, the reception of Holy Communion, prayer and fraternal unity.

7. The Synod has confirmed, without the possibility of being misunderstood, the option of celibacy which belongs to the Latin Rite.

The choice, which has its origin in a distant past, reveals a deep spiritual and theological insight which locates in the sacramental consecration to ministerial priesthood the source of a gift, a charism freely received and authenticated by the Church: the gift of chastity

in celibacy in view of an exclusive and joyful gift of self by the person of the priest to his ministry of service and to his vocation as witness to God's Kingdom. Is it not significant that in this regard many Synod Fathers saw the commitment of celibacy as going hand-in-hand with the practice of the other evangelical counsels?

By reaffirming clearly its fidelity to priestly celibacy, and by studying more deeply the reasons for it, the Synod, in the name of the entire Church, has made a great act of faith in the grace given by the Holy Spirit. We know, in fact, that it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Church.

8. The Synod, therefore, looked attentively at problems relating to formation, both formation to priesthood and that which should be part of the priest's entire life (ongoing formation). The Synod's reflections have led to a number of valuable suggestions.

Thus was stressed the need for integral formation of a type that leaves none of these aspects out: human, doctrinal, spiritual and pastoral formation, taking into account the circumstances, often-times difficult, in which ministry must be carried out. The witness of the pastors of the Churches which have recently undergone a long persecution contributed by giving the debates a tone of seriousness but also of trust in God's Providence: that glimmer of hope is certainly one of the graces of this Synod. In adversity and in extreme privation, God does not abandon His Church.

A kind of noteworthy unanimity was formed regarding the need for solid spiritual formation. Alongside that, the need for good formation of formators was stressed, beginning with spiritual directors. We must add that along with spiritual formation, doctrinal formation must be the object of the Bishop's concern. Theology professors have the task of teaching the doctrine of the faith, which is the faith of the Church. He himself must be a man of faith who preaches by example. He must communicate to the youth who are entrusted to him a love for the Church, which is herself a mystery of faith, and the docile acceptance of Magisterial teaching.

9. Examination of both the excessive loneliness of some priests and the need for ongoing formation was an opportunity for meditating on a teaching which the Second Vatican Council had highlighted, the teaching about the *presbyterium* (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 28;

Presbyterorum Ordinis, nn. 7-8). An invitation was addressed to Bishops and priests to live out this reality which is the source of a rich spirituality and of fruitful pastoral activity.

10. The problems just mentioned involve the universal Church. Consideration must continue and be followed up on, according to the guidelines set down by the Synod Assembly, in view of their application to the various situations of the local Churches. This continuation of the work is part and parcel of the normal flow of Synod activity. The Synod will yield all its results only through further work, inspired and guided by the Synod.

Tomorrow during the Eucharistic celebration we will entrust the hoped-for results of the Synod's work to the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. We will pray God to give further results to this work in the life of the entire Church and of all the Churches on the earth. For it is from God and from God alone, the Father of Light, that "every good and perfect gift" comes (Jas 1:17).

LITURGICAL SPIRITUALITY OF PRIESTS

1. Christian spirituality

a. LG 39: "All in the church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared by it, are called to holiness, according to the apostle's saying: For this is the will of God, your sanctification."

b. LG 41: "The forms and tasks of life are many but holiness is one."

"The forms and tasks of life are many," that is, each one must faithfully and fully perform the duties demanded by one's state in life.

"But holiness is one," that is, it consists basically of the love which God has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. LG 42: "Love, as the bond of perfection and fullness of the law, governs, gives meaning to, and perfects all the means of sanctification. Hence, the true disciple of Christ is marked by love both of God and of one's neighbor."

2. Elements of Christian spirituality

a. LG 42: "The faithful must willingly hear the word of God and carry out his will with deeds, with the help of his grace; they must frequently partake of the sacraments, especially the eucharist, and take part in the liturgy; they must constantly apply themselves to prayer, self-denial, active brotherly service, and the practice of all virtues."

b. Hence, the chief elements of Christian spirituality are the word of God and the celebration of the liturgy, particularly the sacraments among which the eucharist stands out. The dynamism of

the word of God and the sacraments is such that the faithful will apply themselves to self-denial, active brotherly service and the practice of all virtues. As an ancient prayer expresses this in a lapidary manner: "ut sacramentum vivendo teneant."

c. In other words, the celebration of the liturgy is what constitute Christian spirituality. As SC 10 teaches: "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows." And again: "From the liturgy, therefore, as from a fount, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of people in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way."

d. These conciliar texts do not exclude the existence of particular forms of spirituality in the church, such as the Ignatian and the Carmelite. The church has always fostered diverse expressions of spirituality. And SC 12 reminds us that "the spiritual life is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy". All are invited to pray to the Father in secret; popular devotions are highly commended.

e. Nevertheless, the liturgy is the "summit and fount" of every particular form of spirituality in the church. Each form of spirituality must be founded on and nourished by the celebration of the word of God and the sacraments, especially the eucharist. Pluralism does not mean a variety of summits and founts - for the liturgy alone is the summit and fount of all forms of spirituality - but of the concrete expressions of the one summit and fount, according to the particular mission and charism of groups and individuals.

3. Priestly spirituality

a. If spirituality means that each one must faithfully perform the duties demanded by one's vocation in life; if spirituality means of love of God and of one's neighbor; if spirituality means a face-to-face encounter with Christ; if spirituality means that its summit and fount is the celebration of the liturgy: it follows that the spirituality of the priest centers on his role as the president of liturgical assemblies. In other words, he lives out his own spirituality as he presides at the liturgy of the word, as he presides at the altar, as he administers the sacraments, as he blesses the dead, as he prays the liturgy of the hours.

b. To rush through the liturgical celebrations in order to have time for spiritual reading and private prayer is to miss the whole point about priestly spirituality, is to divide the person between his personal life and his priestly ministry. Spiritual reading and private prayer should not be lacking in the daily life of the priest. However, they prepare for, lead to, and derive their efficacy from his priestly role of presiding at liturgical celebrations. It is in the very act of presiding that the priest performs his sublime duty as minister of the word and the sacraments, that he expresses his love for God and his neighbors, that he encounters the face of Christ, that he reaches the summit of his priestly ministry: in short, it is in the exercise of his role as president of the assembly that the priest lives his spiritual life.

4. Some elements of priestly spirituality

a. The element of "here and now." This means that as he presides at the reading of God's word, recites the prayers, and administers the sacraments, the priest should concentrate on what he says and does and, above all, mean them.

b. The word of God, SC 33 teaches that "in the liturgy God speaks to his people and Christ still proclaims his gospel." Priestly spirituality is nourished by the word of which he is the minister. In the celebration of the liturgy which always includes a reading from Scriptures, however brief it may be, the priest should be constantly aware of the power of God's word: like the sacrament, it can effect what it says, sometimes despite ourselves. Though he does not hear the human voice of Christ as he preached in the synagogues, on the hillsides, and at the shore, the priest accepts in faith that every time the word of God is read in the liturgy, it is Christ who personally speaks to him and to the assembly.

c. The sacraments. The liturgical prayer of the church for the faithful who receive the sacraments of baptism, penance, anointing of the sick, and marriage should become also the priest's personal prayer for them. The sacramental formulas he recites should become an expression of his faith that what he performs as minister is in reality the efficacious saving act of Christ: this is my body, this is the cup of my blood, I baptize you, I absolved you . . . The priest does not witness the event at the last supper when Christ took the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, but daily as he takes the bread, breaks it, and shares it among the faithful, he can in truth say with

St. Ambrose: "Facie ad faciem te mihi, Christe, demonstrasti; in tuis te invenio sacramentis."

d. The psalms. The psalmody occupies a fairly large place in the prayer life and ministry of the priest. Psalms are used in practically all the liturgical celebrations, particularly in the liturgy of the hours. Based on Christ's own declaration that "everything written about me in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms has to be fulfilled," the church interprets the psalms as referring to Christ and his church. When the priest prays the words of the psalms, he puts on Christ, he puts on the church. He may personally be experiencing joy when he recites a psalm of sorrow, but since he recites it in the name of Christ and the church, he can always find reason to be sad, following the admonition of St. Paul: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and be sad with those in sorrow." In the world and in the church there is always reason for joy or sorrow. Thus the psalms become for the priest a school where he learns to identify himself with all, where he learns to forget himself for the sake of others. Through the psalms he opens himself to others, he becomes all things to everyone.

e. The church. Liturgical spirituality is ecclesial. It means that the priest, who presides in "persona Christi," does so with the church and for the church. With the church: that is, he presides in communion with the church whose local head is the bishop. As St. Ignatius of Antioch said: "Where the bishop is, there let the people be; as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church." "Sentire cum Ecclesia" is an essential quality of spirituality. For the church, that is, the priest presides in worship for the sake of the church. His prayers of praise and petitions are those of the church spread all over the world. He appears before God with the concerns of the church. As St. Theresa of Avila used to say: "When the world is on fire, we cannot pray for little things." "Sentire esse Ecclesiam" is another essential quality of spirituality.

5. Conclusion

a. The spirituality of the minister of God's word and sacraments centers on his role as president of the liturgical assembly. The office of presiding, even in a perfect condition of prayerful atmosphere, carries with it an amount of distraction and anxiety. In situations where the surrounding contributes to the lessening of recollection and awareness of the presence of the mystery being celebrated, we

priests may find ourselves competing with outside and inside noise (the cries of babies, the persistent sound of the horn coming from vehicles), and be tempted to rush through the celebration in order to escape the noise, the heat, and the dust.

b. Sometimes too we priests may experience the low tide or the cold chill of the spirit, and lose the ardor of the love of Christ. Have we not so often felt humbled, when we went through the eucharistic prayer and failed miserably to see the cross and the resurrection through the veil of the sacramental words? When we absolved a penitent and not experienced the joy of the Father who welcomes his lost son? When we buried the dead and had tears neither in our eyes nor in our hearts? Have we not sometimes felt the anguish of realizing that while we lead the faithful to Christ, we find ourselves lagging behind?

c. And yet Christ loves us, his priests. When discouragement overpowers us and we turn away from our ministry, he joins us and walks with us on the road. In the evening of this world we can always turn to him with confidence: "Stay with us, Lord," stay with us and dispel our fears, dispel our doubts and insecurity. He explains the Scriptures to us, that we may announce it to his other brothers and sisters. He breaks the bread, that we may learn to share it with others; he breaks the bread, that we may learn to be broken for others, as he himself has done. And in the course of life's ebb and flow, through the changes and chances of this world, we his priests can always look back to the many times he walked with us on the road, and stayed with us, and broke the bread with us. "Were not our hearts burning within us, as he spoke to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" As we sat at table with him did we not recognize him in the breaking of the bread? And so we retrace our steps toward the Jerusalem of our priestly ministry, as each of us ask again and again: why does he love me so much?

ANSCAR J. CHUPUNGO, OSB

COMMUNICATION AND PRIESTLY FORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FABC*

On November 28, 1990, Fr. Nim Gonzales, SJ sent a letter informing me about the Asia Region World Association for Christian Communication's (ARWACC) plan to hold a live-in seminar on communication in theological formation. He requested if I could serve as one of the resource persons. He asked me to talk on Communication and Priestly Formation in the context of the FABC. At first, I hesitated because my field is more of theology rather than communication; but after some time I thought I could try putting into some order all that have been discussed during the meetings of Asian formators in the last three years. This could serve as a contribution to the projected live-in seminar. Specifically, this brief paper will help realize the first objective of this undertaking, i.e., "to exchange information, experiences and resources on communication initiative in theological formation."

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences of Asia (FABC) according to its statutes is a voluntary association of episcopal conferences in South and East Asia, established with the approval of the Holy See. Its purpose is to foster among its members solidarity and co-responsibility for the welfare of the church and society in Asia. While the decisions of the federation is not juridically binding, the acceptance however of the same is an expression of collegial responsibility.

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences of Asia has six sub-offices. One of these is the Office on Communication. This office strives to make the communications apostolate an integral part of the

*Talk delivered during the Seminar Workshop on Communication in Theological Formation [Jan. 15-20, 1991] sponsored by World Assoc. for Christian Communication, La Consolacion Conv., San Juan, Metro Manila.

Christian life throughout Asia by animating Bishops and clergy. This office also takes care of the proper management of Radio Veritas Asia.

The FABC has another section taking care of the aspect of education. Particularly this is called Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy. The formation of seminarians falls under this office.

The Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy (OESC) has been instrumental in the holding of three meetings of Asian formators: a) the First Congress of Rectors of Asian Seminaries in 1988; b) the First Congress of Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries in 1989; c) the First Joint Colloquium of Rectors and Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries in 1990. These meetings were all held in the Philippines.

During the three gatherings, the subject on mass media was constantly an object of concern. It seems that if the formation of future priests should be properly done, it has to take into consideration the means of communication.

The congress of rectors was attended by fourteen countries. The congress discussed general topics on formation, mission, justice, inter-religious dialogue, inculturation, seminary classrooms, and mass media.

No less than Fr. James Reuter, SJ, an institution himself in the field of stage, print, radio, and television media, a recipient of the Magsaysay Award on Journalism and of the Catholic Award on Drama and Social Communication, conducted the discussion on mass media and seminary formation. Fr. Reuter was helped by a team of religious and lay men and women. The contribution of Fr. Reuter was not without great impact in the rectors so much so that later he was invited to give the same talk to other Asian formators and seminarians.

The description of the topic given to Fr. Reuter was: "elaboration on the need to initiate seminarians to the use of the mass media; hopefully the formation in media will help hasten and facilitate the preaching of the word of God." The team was able to effectively deliver the message.

At the end of the congress the delegates decided to compose a statement:

"As less than 1% of all the people of Asia is reached from our pulpits media education is essential to the mission of the Church. Our seminarians should be trained to use the media positively, and also critically, so as to avoid its negative impact."

The delegates went home with determined mind to put into realization the statement. Fr. Arnold Heredia, S.A.M. of Pakistan reported two years later what had been done in their seminary: A beginning has been made in introducing the students to the role and importance of mass media. A former rector, who is now in this field, has encouraged the students to prepare programs for Radio Veritas. One of our professors who is proficient in this field, has conducted a workshop. Three students have been commissioned to prepare slides and video programs on the priestly ministry. Students review documented videos, which are to be out by the end of February 1990."

The congress of the spiritual directors followed a year later upon the inspiration of His Eminence, Jaime Card. Sin, D.D. Archbishop of Manila. FABC happily endorsed the holding of the first congress of spiritual directors of Asian seminaries.

The gathering of the spiritual formators was a realization of the suggestion of the rectors of Asia. They recommended that in view of the preeminent importance of spiritual formation an intensive spiritual formation program for all spiritual directors be facilitated. This practical suggestion flow from the conviction of the rectors regarding spiritual formation: "As a mature response to God's call to holiness is fundamental to the Christian vocation, and a hunger for God is basic to the spirituality of the Asian soul, the Congress wished to stress the primacy of the spiritual formation of seminarians in the search for God. For unless seminarians have a deep personal experience of God no vocational discernment is possible. All personnel in the formation process must be aware that they are models for those being formed, and must witness to the personal, cultural and spiritual qualities which are set as goals before those in formation. As the spiritual director will plan an essential role in the integration of all these factors within the spiritual life of the seminarian it is imperative that the formation of spiritual directors for seminaries be given high priority."

The congress of spiritual directors was attended by the delegates coming from twelve countries. The topics discussed surrounded

around missionary dimension of spiritual formation, discernment, convergence of eastern and western spirituality, work, spiritual direction, unity, person of spiritual director, kenosis and chastity.

At the end of the gathering the delegates included this recommendation in their official statement: "We recommend that the following aspects be integrated into the spiritual formation program for spiritual directors, as well as for formation in the seminaries - a) inculturation within the context of each local Church; b) adaptation of spiritual formation to the Asian condition of poverty and suffering leading to a life of biblical kenosis, c) convergence of inter-religious spiritualities leading toward inter-faith dialogue; d) the positive use of media for formation purposes; and e) the integration of all components of formation towards interiorization and not merely external compliance."

The spiritual directors knew the importance of the positive use of mass media. Since their job is more on the integration of the elements of formation, they need to have acquaintance with the means of interiorization. The media is not only for communication; it is also for interiorization.

One of the suggestions coming from the congress of the spiritual directors was the idea of holding a joint meeting of the formators. FABC was willing to support. Fr. Edward Malone wrote to the members of the committee helping in the preparation and the holding of the two previous congresses: "If you think FABC can be of some help to develop what has already begun, I am sure that we could be of assistance. Please let us know."

FABC is positively responding to the desire of the delegates who attended the rectors congress: 1) the need for a faculty development programme for Asian seminaries is strongly felt, particularly in view of the complex contemporary issue facing the Church and seminary formation in Asia. Where such faculty development programmes exist we appeal to FABC to support and reinforce them as a priority within the diocesan programme. 2) We ask that provision be made for the appropriate training and education of the staff (of the seminaries) in order that aspects of formation of seminarians may flow from the religious, social, political, and cultural context of the Church in which they will work."

Bishop Anthony Lobo, Chairman of the Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy, after attending the International Eucharistic Congress in Korea in October 1989 and after a meeting of the central committee of the FABC, passed by Manila to request if we can help in the preparation of another meeting of formators of Asian seminaries. He suggested the following theme for a meeting to be attended by rectors and spiritual directors: Priestly Formation: Interiorization and Integration.

The speakers of this meeting, officially called as the First Joint Colloquium of Rectors and Spiritual Directors of Asian Seminaries, focused on general orientation on priestly formation, growth in holiness, interiorization, methods of interiorization and integral formation of a person. His Eminence Cardinal J. Tomko, D.D. of the Congregation of Evangelization of Peoples sent a representative in the person of Fr. Constant Bouchaud. This congregation has taken lately an interest on the formation of priest. The congregation has given a recognition of the previous congresses of the formators.

The Joint Colloquium while focusing on integration and interiorization as its twofold theme, did not fail to recognize the importance of the formation in mass media. Among those addressed by the final statement made by the delegates were the seminarians "We understand formation as a journey of interiorization and integration, Therefore, we exhort you to cultivate silence, which creates a space for God in your life where you listen to his Word and speak to him. This journey towards freedom requires discipline. A special area of our concern is the discriminating use of the mass media (television, radio, magazines, etc.)."

The point to be underscored here is the concern for the *discriminating use of mass media*. Hence, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education issued the Guideline for the Formation of the Future Priests in the Use of the Means of Social Communication.

The three meetings served as a remote preparation of the 8th Synod of Bishops which dealt on the Formation of the Clergy in the Circumstances of the Present Time. But the proximate preparation took place during the 5th Plenary Assembly of the FABC held in Bandung, Indonesia last July 1990. There were over one hundred delegates coming from all over Asia. There were also observers coming from Europe, Canada, United States and Australia.

The delegates dedicated two plenary sessions and two workshops for the formation of the future priests in Asia. Resulting from these activities were recommendations to be channeled thru to the official delegates of each country to the Synod. Some of the bishops included in their synodal privilege speech points coming from the discussions made during the last FABC assembly.

A very clear reference related to mass media was included in the set of recommendations of the FABC Assembly: "The formators must be trained in the use of mass media. They should help seminarians to understand the positive and negative effects of mass media on modern society."

With all these references made regarding the importance of formation and communication in the meetings held under the auspices of the Office of Education of FABC, it is up to the local church to find out the state of the conducting of the courses on communication. Fr. Robert White, S. J. has studied the Philippine case. He made a recent study on communication education in the Philippine Seminaries. He has a list of his findings (Cfr. Catholic Seminaries in the Philippines Adapt to New Communication demands).

It is good to note the general observation stated in the above mentioned reference. "In most cases academic deans are planning to strengthen communication education, and one or two seminaries have sent personnel for specialized training in order to introduce such courses. Within the next five years communication education in seminaries of the Philippines should be considerable improved. A major problem is that skills courses are not well-related to the general vision of spiritual, pastoral and academic formation. For example, professors of systematic and pastoral theology have almost no idea of what is being taught in communication courses of the seminary."

If this is the case then we see the need for the holding of the updating communication courses in theological schools. Maybe we can learn from the experience of Africa. On September 10-15, 1990 a symposium was held in Harare\Zimbabwe with this theme: Communication in Theological Education. The program designed by the African Church has five modules which can be adapted by the Philippines Church and by the other members of the FABC.

The five modules carry the following headings: 1. Basic Human Communication; 2. Communication and Culture; 3. Communication

and Community 4. Pastoral Communication; and 5. Communication and Its Mass Media; 6. Communication Planning and Policy.

Contacts with international organization specializing on mass communication is a must for local Churches. There are two catholic international groups with national branches. These are the OCIC (International Catholic Association for Cinema) and UNDA (International Catholic Association for Radio and Television). Recently a World Congress was held in Thailand sponsored by OCIC and UNDA. The delegates petitioned the Holy Father thru Arch. John F. Foley of the Pontifical Council for Social Communication that the next synod of Bishops shall deal on Communication. *

The FABC's Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy sees the importance of education in communication not only in the seminaries but also in other catholic educational enterprises (schools, institutes, colleges, universities and in any parish agency that promotes catholic education). I wish to recommend to the officials of our office the following reading of the predicament of the present educational beneficiaries: "Never before has the importance of media communication been given more importance as in the present educational setting. Educators have underscored its importance in developing a judicious and analytic mentality among the people who are beneficiaries of the recent technological advances in the field of communication. Educommunication, as communication education is referred to these days, aims to impress upon the minds of the different people the effects of playing an active and critical role in the world of audio and visuals through media messages." Any catholic education, may it be in a seminary or any school, will only be worth, relevant, and effective, it takes into consideration this reading of contemporary beneficiaries of education.

Going back to the formation of the seminaries in mass media, we can not but refer finally to the last Synod of Bishops. According to Archbishop Foley "the Synod of Bishops which just concluded in Rome emphasized the importance of making future priests not only critical consumers of the media, able to offer educated counsel to their people on fruitful use of the media, but also and especially judicious and imaginative users of the media in all forms in the proclamation of the Gospel message." Yes, indeed, this is the reason why we are present in this live in seminar.

FR. VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.

MESSAGE FOR THE XXVIII WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Dear Brother Bishops,

Dear Brothers and Sisters throughout the world!

1. Recognizing that every vocation is a gift from God which must be implored by prayer and merited by the witness of a holy life, again this year I invite the great family of Catholics to take part spiritually in the *XXVIII World Day of Prayer for Vocations* which we will celebrate on 21 April 1991.

For some time now, this Day has become a special occasion for reflection not only on the vocation to the priesthood and to the consecrated life, but also on the duty of the entire Christian community to foster the birth of these vocations and to cooperate in the awareness, discernment and maturing of God's interior call (cf. *Optatam Totius*, 2).

This year I wish to draw your attention to *catechesis*, which is so essential a part of the religious experience of every Christian. Catechesis is basic to any authentic and free *dialogue about vocation* with God our Heavenly Father. In her catechesis, the Church helps the faithful, through a journey of faith and conversion, to hear God's word with an attitude of responsibility and of generous willingness to embrace its intrinsic demands. In this way, the Church wishes to stimulate a personal encounter with God by forming attentive disciples of the Lord and sharers in her universal mission. Catechesis thus appears as the appropriate way not only of discovering God's overall saving plan and the ultimate meaning of existence and history, but also of discovering the particular plan which God has for each individual in view of the coming of his Kingdom into the world.

"Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's word, so that the whole of a person's humanity is impregnated by that word. Changed by the

working of grace into a new creature, the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ, and learns more and more within the Church to think like him, to judge like him, to act in conformity with his commandments, and to hope as he invites us to" (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 20).

2. Catechesis fulfills one of its essential aims when it becomes a *school of prayer*, thus enabling individuals to undertake a loving *dialogue with God* our Creator and Father, with Jesus Christ our Teacher and Saviour, and *with the Holy Spirit* the giver of life. Thanks to such a dialogue, what is heard and learned remains not only in the mind but wins over the heart and seeks to be translated into action. For catechesis cannot be content with proclaiming the truths of the faith, but must also aim at evoking a response, so that each person will assume his or her own role in God's plan of salvation and will become open to offering his or her own life for the mission of the Church. This may well involve a readiness to follow Christ more closely in the ministerial priesthood or in the consecrated life.

Believers, especially young people, should be helped to understand that the Christian life is above all a response to God's call. Within this perspective, they should also be helped to recognize the special character and the importance for God's Kingdom of vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life, and missionary service, as well as the vocation to the consecrated life in the world.

3. In this context, *catechists* must realize their *responsibility* to the Church and to those who hear the message. Their teaching, which seeks to lead the people of today to a discovery of the God of Love as Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, will lead children and young people to think about every Christian's duty to help the Church fulfil her mission. This mission can only be carried out through the various ministries and charisms which the Church has received from the Holy Spirit. Catechesis will seek to help young people to discover that the ministerial priesthood is a magnificent and totally free gift, given by God to the Church, through a more deeply rooted communion in the priesthood of Jesus Christ himself (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 10). Catechetical teaching will also place in its proper light the value of virginity and ecclesiastical celibacy as ways of life inspired by the Gospel which lead to a total consecration to God and to the Church and which make Christian spiritual love even more fruitful (cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, 12).

Those responsible for catechesis should always respect the proclamation of the Gospel in its fullness, which includes the call to follow Christ even more closely. They should wisely do what my predecessor Pope Paul VI asked in his last Message for the World Day of Prayer: "Make these realities known, teach these truths, make them easy to understand, stimulating and attractive, as Jesus the Teacher and Shepherd did. Let no one be ignorant, through our fault, of what he or she should know in order to give a different and better direction to his or her life" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 13 April 1978, p. 4).

4. I wish my words to reach all those whom the Holy Spirit calls to cooperate with him: *Christian parents, priests, religious and the many lay people* involved in education. I especially desire that this exhortation should reach the hearts and minds of the many catechists who generally collaborate with the Church's Pastors in all the particular Churches in the great work of evangelizing each new generation.

Dear *Catechists*, how important and delicate your mission is! The children and young people entrusted to you depend on your service for their growth and development as Christians. In the Church, catechesis is needed so that the word of God, the Sacraments, the Liturgy and the duties proper to the Christian life may be properly known. But there is also a need, especially at certain moments of young people's development, for a catechesis *which offers guidance in choosing a state of life*. For only in the light of faith and of prayer can we grasp the meaning and the power of God's individual calls.

May your ministry as catechists be carried out in faith, nourished by prayer and sustained by genuine Christian living. May you become experts in speaking to today's young people, and may you be effective and credible teachers in presenting the Gospel ideal as a universal vocation and in shedding light on the meaning and value of the various vocations to the consecrated life.

I ask *Bishops and Priests* to stress the vocational dimension of catechesis, and in particular to provide for the spiritual and cultural training of catechists and to support their work for vocations with the powerful witness of lives rich in pastoral holiness.

I appeal to *Religious Families, both men and women*, to devote the best part of their resources and their abilities to the specific work

of catechesis, and to play their part in ensuring that catechesis is not an isolated endeavour but part of a full and well-organized pastoral plan. God's Providence has always abundantly repaid efforts spent on catechesis with the gift of new and holy vocations. I especially encourage those Religious who teach in and administer Catholic schools to highlight within their general educational programme the value of a vocation to the priesthood, religious life and missionary work.

I urge parents to cooperate with catechists by providing a family environment rooted in faith and prayer, so as to guide their children's whole lives in accordance with the demands of the Christian vocation. Each particular vocation is, in fact, a great gift of God which comes into their home.

Finally, the entire Christian community, with authentic missionary fervour, should recognize the seeds of vocation which the Holy Spirit never ceases to sow in human hearts, and it should strive to create, especially by unrelenting and trusting prayer, a climate which will help adolescents and young people to hear God's voice and respond to it with generosity and courage.

"O Jesus, Good Shepherd of the Church, we entrust our catechists to you. Under the guidance of the Bishops and priests, may they help those entrusted to them to discover the true meaning of the Christian life as a vocation, so that, open and attentive to your voice, they may follow you generously.

Bless our parishes. Make them living communities where prayer and liturgical life, attentive and faith-filled hearing of your word and generous and fruitful charity may become the fertile field for an abundant harvest of vocations.

O Mary, Queen of the Apostles, bless our young people. Help them to share in your own openness to God's voice. Help them to imitate you in saying their own generous and unconditional "yes" to the mystery of love and divine election to which the Lord calls them."

From the Vatican, on 4 October, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, in the year 1990, the twelfth of my Pontificate.

IOANNES PAULUS P.P. II

DISCOURSE GIVEN BY THE HOLY FATHER TO A GROUP OF PHILIPPINE BISHOPS WHO WERE MAKING THEIR AD LIMINA VISIT*

*"The Bishop, spiritual and moral guide of the People of God,
must educate and stimulate consciences to responsibility."*

Your Eminence,
Dear Brother Bishops,

1. I am happy that your visit to Rome gives us the occasion to meet in the spirit of ecclesial unity and love which must always be a characteristic of those who have been called to shepherd the Lord's Church, taking the place of the Apostles (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 20). As pastors of the Church in the Philippines, your presence is a sign of the apostolic faith which lives in the hearts of that portion of God's beloved people which has been entrusted to your ministry. In you, I greet the priests, religious and laity of your Dioceses, commending them to the prayerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary whose protection Filipinos have always invoked in the dramatic as well as the ordinary circumstances of their earthly pilgrimage.

On this occasion, I would refer you to the words I spoke to a previous group of Bishops from your country on their ad Limina visit in April of this year. I was concerned to point out that in the specific circumstances of Filipino society, faced with many serious economic, political and social problems, you, the Bishops, have a special charge to draw attention to the moral and religious dimensions of the questions which concern the well-being of your people. It is your task

*On 18 September 1990 at Castel Gandolfo, John Paul II receive in audience a group of Philippine Bishops who were making their Ad Limina led by His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila. The following is the text of the discourse given by the Holy Father.

to preach the Word of God in all its purity and power. You are witnesses of Jesus Christ and of the truths and values of his Kingdom. Yours, therefore, is an eminently spiritual and moral leadership which aims above all at educating and challenging the consciences of your fellow citizens to responsibility before God and before their brothers and sisters. Without conversion of conscience to the commandments of God and the truths of the Beatitudes, there can be no progress in the ways of justice, peace and human development. And in particular there can be no true Christian holiness of life and selfless service to others.

2. An enlightened and committed living of the faith by the Filipino laity is all the more urgent when standards and values that are essential to Christian living are being undermined by the practical materialism sweeping society. The family in particular suffers the onslaught of a "new" culture which speaks the language of progress, liberation, modernity, but which bears the seeds of a social, moral and religious subjectivism which deprives many - youth especially - of the noble ideals and sense of responsibility needed to direct behavior to goodness and truth. Certain trends which are also penetrating some sectors of Philippine society are in contrast with the great values of traditional Filipino culture. Your pastoral mission therefore goes to the heart of Philippine society, seeking to strengthen its cohesion with the life-giving truth of the Gospel and leading it to ever greater heights of nobility and humaneness through your constant appeal to moral responsibility and effective solidarity with all, especially the poor and the suffering.

Catholic lay men and women, especially parents, educators and those active in public life and in the communications media, must be helped and encouraged in their efforts to bring the social and moral teaching of the Church into play in meeting the challenges of the present moment of Philippine history. The Church in your country is charged with presenting a supremely valid message of reconciliation and integral development to society, and with effectively serving the spiritual and other needs of the peoples to which she is sent. That is her nature. She is not another structure of humanitarian concern or political organization, but the very "mystery" of the Father's love made incarnate in Jesus Christ and always present through the work of the Holy Spirit. Of this "mystery" you are stewards and ambassadors (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1; 2 Cor. 5:20).

3. The Church has been sent to announce the Good News of redemption in Jesus Christ to all the nations of the earth (cf. Mt. 28:19). In my recent Letter to the Fifth Plenary Meeting of Asian Bishops' Conferences, I recalled that "on the eve of the Third Christian Millennium, an ever greater commitment to evangelization is imperative for all the local Churches in Asia. ... Today, Christian lay people in ever greater numbers wish to share in this mission and to do so with ever greater commitment. ... 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 its temporal realities" (l.c., 23 June 1990, Nos. 4 and 5). In this great enterprise, in which the Church cannot fail her divine Lord, the Bishops have a unique role and primary responsibility. To you, together with your priests, applies the counsel expressed in the above-mentioned Letter, that "freed from many administrative tasks undertaken to meet supplementary needs, the clergy can be models of a deep spirituality, witnesses to the transcendent values expressed in prayer and deep contemplation, and ever attentive to the presence of God in the lives of those whom they serve" (l.c., 5).

4. In the Liturgy of the Hours of the Twenty-fourth Sunday, we read a part of Saint Augustine's reflection on his own position as a member of the Church called to shepherd other members of the Church: "I, besides being a Christian, and for this having to render an account of my life, am a leader also, and for this shall render to God an account of my ministry" (Sermon, 46:2). As Bishops, ours is a service of love, made up of innumerable acts of selfless dedication to others, for which we are constantly called to give account before our own conscience and before the Lord of heaven and earth. It is a ministry of solicitude for all Christ's brother and sisters, indeed, for the whole world, before which we must stand as authentic witness of the Gospel of Christ, crucified and risen. Our hope and confidence lie not in ourselves, but in him who called us to this task. He gives the increase (cf. 1 Cor. 3:7).

Dear Brother, with affection in the Lord I wish to encourage you to be faithful, wise and vigilant guides. Be assured of my remembrance of you and your people before the Lord, just as I commend my ministry to your prayers. May your present visit to Rome give you added incentive and support in the great responsibilities which are yours in the one country in Asia where the majority of the people are

sons and daughters of the Church. This is your special grace, and also your special challenge. I am confident that such initiatives as the National Catechetical Year which you are now celebrating and the forthcoming special grace for all the faithful, bringing a deeper understanding of their part in the church's mission. May God's abundant blessings be with you all.

(During the audience Cardinal Sin addressed the Holy Father with the following words of greetings and thanksgiving:)

Your Holiness:

With sincere humility, we your Bishops from the Philippines, would like to thank you for receiving us today. We bring with us the love and respect of our people and we wish to renew our pledge of fidelity once again to the Successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ.

Speak to us, Most Holy Father, for your servants listen.

APPOINTMENT OF MONS. OBALDO PADILLA AS APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN PANAMA

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (18 December) today received official announcement from the Apostolic Nunciature that His Holiness, John Paul II, has appointed the Very Reverend Monsignor Osbaldo Padilla as Apostolic Nuncio in Panama while at the same time elevating him as Archbishop to the Titular See of Pia.

Monsignor Padilla was born in Sogod, Cebu in 1942, the third of thirteen children of Dr. Tiburcio Padilla and Conseca Montecillo.

He took up his ecclesiastical studies at the Seminario Menor de San Carlos in Cebu, the Seminario Mayor de San Carlos likewise in Cebu, the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila, at the Pontificio Collegio Filipino in Rome, and at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum) also in Rome. He was ordained priest in Rome in 1966 and was incardinated to the Archdiocese in Cebu. In 1975, he was named Papal Chaplain, and in 1985, Honorary Prelate. The Nuncio-elect holds a Doctorate in Sacred Theology "magna cum laude" from the Angelicum, a Doctorate in canon law "summa cum laude" from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and is a graduate of International Studies and Diplomacy from the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. Monsignor Padilla worked for some years in the Archdiocesan Chancery of Cebu after which he served in various capacities in the Apostolic Nunciatures of Sri Lanka, Haiti, Nigeria, Ireland, Mexico, and France. He has represented the Holy See in various International Assemblies, the last three this year being the United Nations Conference on Less Developed Countries, the IX General Assembly of the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, and the Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and of Governments at the Conference for European Security and Cooperation. Archbishop-elect Padilla speaks English, Spanish, Italian, French, and German.

The Philippine Church has reason to rejoice and be grateful for this singular honor that the Holy Father has bestowed upon it.

TOMB OF FIRST FILIPINO BISHOP FOUND IN ROME

Eighty-one years after his unexpected death in Rome, the final resting place of the first Filipino bishop, Monsignor Jorge Barlin of Nueva Caceres (Naga) has been located.

A Native of Baao, Camarines Sur, Bishop Barlin died on September 4, 1909, at the College of the Spanish Dominicans at Via Condotti, Rome, near the Spanish steps. He received special Apostolic Blessings from Pope Pius X, who was later canonized a saint. The funeral ceremonies for the bishop, who was a Dominican tertiary, were held at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Spanish College and presided over by the Dominican Master General. The latter was assisted by the bishop's secretary, Father Santiago Sancho who later became Archbishop of Vigan.

Barlin was buried on September 7, 1909, at the Dominican Chapel at the Campo Verano Cemetery in the outskirts of Rome. His bones were later deposited in the common grave of the order in the same chapel. While his death and burial records are well-preserved, his tombstone is now missing.

The Filipino bishops, the Pontifical Filipino College and the Filipino Community in Rome are planning to put commemorative plaques at the bishop's place of death and burial. They will also commemorate his birth and death anniversaries annually with masses and wreath-laying.

The search team was composed of Dr. Luciano Santiago, a scholar of the Toyota Foundation and Father Mario Gaite of Baao, a townmate of the late bishop, Rev. Delfin Felipe of the Filipino College, and Mr. Benedict Ballesteros of Sorsogon. The Archdiocese of Manila commissioned Dr. Santiago to conduct the search.

*Pontificio Collegio Filipino
Rome 05 December 1990*

MARIAN MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY CROSS*

WHEREAS, On January 6, 1990, the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Institute of Apostolic Life through the Office of the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines issued a Decree directing the re-organization of the Suppressed Association of the Anointed of Mary - Youth Marian Crusade into a Pious Association in preparation for its eventual recognition as a Religious Institute;*

WHEREAS, Upon the recommendation of the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, and in obedience to the Holy See, I, Most Rev. Camilo D. Gregorio, D.D., Bishop of Bacolod, accepted the group of Brothers affiliated with Mrs. Letty T. Albert on May 29, 1990;

WHEREAS, In response to the request of the said group of Brothers, the Holy See, in the said Decree issued on January 6, 1990, further gave the directive that "the original charism and main apostolate of the Anointed of Mary shall be preserved in the New Association now known as the Pious Association of the MARIAN MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY CROSS, and prepare it for its eventual recognition as a Religious Institute";

WHEREAS, In God's great love and magnanimity, and Our Lady's maternal and loving care, the Pious Association of the Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross has been favored with the blessings of the Holy See;

LET IT BE KNOWN THEREFORE BY ALL that the Pious Association of the Marian Missionaries of the Holy Cross which is

*See Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas, Vol. LXVI, Nos. 722-723, January-February 1990, pp. 81-82.

presently composed of 16 Active Brothers, 10 Contemplative Brothers, 7 Novices and 8 Postulants, are under my jurisdiction. Their individual names appear in a supplementary directory;

I, Camilo D. Gregorio, D.D., Bishop of Bacolod, the duly appointed head of the newly-organized MARIAN MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY CROSS do hereby enjoin all my Brother-Bishops and members of the Clergy in the Philippines, and the Faithful, to help me assist these Brothers attain their mission and objectives for the benefit of Holy Mother and Church and God's people. With all my deepest sentiments of gratitude, I remain.

Devotedly In the Lord,

+ CAMILO D. GREGORIO, D.D.
Bishop of Bacolod

Supplementary Directory

**BROTHERS OF THE MARIAN MISSIONARIES
OF THE HOLY CROSS**

A. Theologians and Philosophers (Active Brothers)

1. Rev. Francis Mark Maria Garbo
2. Bro. Pius Noel Maria Pareja
3. Bro. Paul Raul Maria Gatbonton
4. Bro. Philip Honorio Maria De la Cruz
5. Bro. Benedict Dennis Noel Maria Burca
6. Bro. Raphael Tomas Maria Babano
7. Bro. Raymond Vicente Maria Decipeda
8. Bro. Blaise Jose Maria Garcia
9. Bro. John C. Ernesto Maria Cordero
10. Bro. Gregory Francis Maria Salcedo
11. Bro. Matthew Frederick Maria Fernandez
12. Bro. Edward Anthony Maria Divinagracia

13. Bro. Basil Ramon Maria Caray
14. Bro. Bernard Michael Maria Tena
15. Bro. Denis Augusto Maria De Leon
16. Bro. Timothy Gerry Maria Reyes

B. Contemplative Brothers

1. Bro. Jerome Cesar Maria Aguilar
2. Bro. Anthony George Maria Villarosa
3. Bro. Januarius Conrado Maria Tomas
4. Bro. Andrew Napoleon Maria Almonte
5. Bro. Gabriel Jaime Maria Ciron III
6. Bro. Justin Adolfo Maria Sison
7. Bro. Bonaventure Alvin Maria Buenaventura
8. Bro. Alselm Gerald Maria Tan
9. Bro. Daniel Hassen Maria Divinagracia
10. Bro. Ambrose Marco Maria Almonte

C. Novices

1. Augustine Arnold Maria Aldana
2. Mark Arnold Maria Pediongco
3. Charles Giovanni Maria Desiderio
4. Michael Armando Maria Pasaque
5. Beda Jose Maria Echague
6. Alphonsus Louisito Maria Mora
7. Cyril Victor Maria Eriarte

D. Postulants

1. Mauro Mallorca
2. Socrates Guillarte
3. Frederick Asia
4. Bernard Danganan
5. John Manalo
6. Michael Potian
7. Exequiel Banjao
8. Erwin Ilao

CENSURES ABSOLVED BY CHAPLAINS

Paul, a priest was several times warned by his Bishop to refrain from frequenting a show not becoming to priests and was threatened with suspension a divinis in case he would persist in it. Since he did not heed several admonitions, the Bishop suspended him. The suspended priest made his confession to the chaplain of a hospital, who absolved him from the suspension. May I inquire whether the priest could be absolved by the Chaplain from the suspension, according to canon 566, § 2?

A Priest

Canon 566, § 2 reads as follows: "Besides, the Chaplain of Hospitals, jails and in sea trips enjoys the faculty, to be used only on those places, to absolve from automatic censures which are not reserved nor declared, observing what is prescribed in can. 976."

The question to be clarified is: Is the suspension mentioned in the case an *automatic penalty, reserved or declared, or not*? If the suspension was automatically incurred by committing the offense and was not reserved nor had been declared, the suspension could be absolved by the Chaplain; but if the suspension was inflicted by the Bishop upon the commission of the offense, it could not be absolved by the Chaplain, according to canon 566, § 2.

The censure mentioned in the case is undoubtedly the one mentioned in canon 1356, i.e., one inflicted *through a precept* given by an ecclesiastical Superior other than the Apostolic See. This kind of penalties can be absolved, according to the said canon, by the Ordinary of the place where the offender stays; and when the penalty has been inflicted or declared, it can also be absolved by the Ordinary who started the process to inflict or declare the penalty or by the one

who through a decree inflicted or declared it by himself or by somebody else.

The suspension at hand was inflicted by the Bishop after warning the offender repeatedly. Consequently, the suspension is not an automatic penalty, established by law, but it has been inflicted by the Bishop upon the offender himself. No law existed imposing such penalty. The Bishop had only threatened the priest with suspension.

Hence, the suspension mentioned in the case cannot be absolved by the Chaplain of a hospital. A Chaplain of a hospital, jail or in a sea trip can only absolve from *automatic censures which are not reserved nor have been declared* (can. 566, § 2); not from censures inflicted by the Superior.

THE BREAKING OF THE HOST

Some time ago I heard that a priest uses to break the host before the consecration, following "ad pedem litterae" what is recited in saying the Mass: "Before He was given to up to death, a death He freely accepted He took bread and gave You thanks. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said. . ." I did not believe it when I was told about it. But there are several persons who have seen the priest doing it. Is there any basis for doing so?

A Priest

The proper manner to celebrate the Holy Mass is given in detail in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Ordinary of the Mass*. The rubrics to be observed are explained clearly. Let us quote whatever is established on the matter.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says in n. 56 (c): "*Breaking of the Bread*: in apostolic times this gesture of Christ at the last supper gave the entire eucharistic action its name. This rite is not simply functional, but it is a sign that in sharing in the one bread of life which is Christ we, who are many, are made one body (see I Cor. 10:17)." Then, after the rite of the peace, n. 113 of the same *General Instruction* says: "the priest then takes the eucharistic bread and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the chalice, saying softly . . ."

Likewise, the *Ordinary of the Mass*, dealing with the Communion rite, under the sub-title *Breaking of the Bread* has a rubric saying: "Meanwhile, he takes the host and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the chalice, saying inaudibly . . ."

Neither the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* nor the *Ordinary of the Mass*, dealing with the consecration say anything about the breaking of the bread at that point.

What can be the reason for the priest mentioned in the case for not following the above quoted rubrics, we don't know. Perhaps he believes that to follow "*ad pedem litterae*" what he recites in saying the Mass is the correct way. If so, he could as well distribute the pieces of the bread not yet consecrated to the congregation, since we say in the Mass: "He broke the bread, *gave it to His disciples* and said. . . ." Let us hope that he will change his mind and follow the Church's law. Meanwhile his attention should be called by the proper authority telling him to follow the rubrics.

CUMMULATIVE JURISDICTION

In your case on *Parishes Committed to Religious* (Bol. Eccles. March-April, 1990) you say that "the new Codex reaffirms clearly in canon 678 that religious (pastors) are under the authority of the Bishop, whom they are obliged to follow with devout compliance and reverence in matters concerning the care of souls, the public worship and other works of apostolate. And in the exercise of external apostolate, the religious are also under their own Superior." It seems to me that there is a useless overlapping of authority over the religious pastors. The diocesan Bishop should be the only authority over the performance of the parochial ministry and apostolate, and the religious Superior the only authority over the religious discipline.

The same should hold for the administration of the goods belonging to the parish. This administration should fall only under the jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop. The religious Superior should have nothing to do with it.

This duplicity of authority over the exercise of external apostolate and administration of the parish property of religious pastors will create conflicts between the diocesan Bishop and the religious Superior. At any rate the poor religious pastors will become victims of their possible misunderstandings.

A Religious Parish Priest

I can see that the consultant religious parish priest is a little afraid of becoming "victim" of some hypothetical misunderstanding between the diocesan Bishop and his religious Superior. I shall try my best to dissipate his fear by explaining the Church legislation on the matter. Canon 678, mentioned by our consultant, reads as follows:

“§ 1. The religious are under the jurisdiction of Bishops, whom they are obliged to follow with devout compliance and reverence, in matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate.

§ 2. In the exercise of external apostolate, the religious are under their own Superiors and they must remain faithful to the discipline of the Institute; which obligation the Bishops themselves, if the case arises, should not fail to enforce.

§ 3. In directing the apostolic works of religious, diocesan Bishops and religious Superiors should proceed by way of mutual consultation.”

The contents of the foregoing canon 678 apply obviously to all external apostolate exercised by religious, whether they are pastors of souls or not. Whatever is related to the care of souls: preaching, catechetical instruction, use of means of social communication, public worship, particularly in the liturgical celebrations, and any apostolate work, is under the immediate jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop. When exercised by religious, its *performance* is also under the vigilance of the religious Superior of the one who performs the apostolic work. A religious is always a subject of his religious Superior by virtue of the vow of obedience. Notice, however, that it is only the *performance* of pastoral ministry subject to the vigilance of the religious Superior, the *regulation* of the apostolate itself is under the diocesan Bishop alone.

The two-fold dependence of the religious should not hinder the efficacy of his apostolic undertaking, rather it should be a guarantee of success. So convinced is the legislator of the efficacy of the apostolate of religious loyal to his vocation that Bishops are entreated to urge this compliance with religious discipline (§ 2). This implies that both the Bishop and Superior consider the double religious dependence as the best means to carry out successfully the mission of the Church in building up the Mystical Body of Christ.

The new Codex in dealing with the office of parish priest does not mention this cumulative jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop and of the religious Superior over religious priests, because the legislator is concerned with pointing out what pertains to the office of a parish priest as such. The norm contained in canon 678 is a general principle

given for all religious exercising external apostolate, whether they be pastors or not. It is applicable to all.

With regard to the administration of property belonging to the parish the same thing occurs. Such administration belongs to the parish priest under the direct jurisdiction of the diocesan Bishop. The religious Superior has no direct hand in the administration, but his vigilance over its *performance* is undeniable. If he calls the attention of the religious parish priest to some anomalies, the latter cannot disregard his Superior's advise and correction. His being administrator of the parish property does not deprive him of his own religious condition, and his vows of poverty and obedience fall under the Superior's vigilance.

The cumulative competence in the foregoing cases is understandable. A religious parish priest is always a religious. Whenever he were to break Church legislation, universal or local, he would be subject to his Superior's advise and correction by virtue of his vow of obedience. Thus, although the religious Superior has no competence in establishing rules and laws concerning pastoral apostolate or administration of the parish property, he can, however, urge his religious subjects to observe the existing laws, universal or local, concerning these matters. He can watch over their religious life including the things covered by the observance of the Church laws.

The possibility of some kind of misunderstanding between the diocesan Bishop and religious Superior does not lessen or alter the principle of cumulative competence. That is why the legislator says that both "the Bishop and Superior should proceed by way of mutual consultation." At any rate, both have the right of recourse to the Holy See should any conflict arise. In fact this very seldom occurs.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

MEDITATIONS FOR HOLY DAYS

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 5, 1991

Readings: Ac 10:25-48
1 Jn 4:7-10
Jn 15:9-17

On the Love of God, Neighbor and Self

If we pause for a while and briefly meditate on the liturgy of every Sunday's Mass, we shall soon realize that, as a rule, in the two readings and in the Gospel there is a dominant, unifying idea, which brings together passages from the different books of the Old or New Testament.

The predominant and unifying idea that clearly and unmistakably surfaces in the liturgy of the Mass on the sixth Sunday after Easter is none other than LOVE.

Following the spirit and the letter of today's liturgical readings, we deal in this homily with the topic LOVE. And we do this gladly knowing fully that we cannot live without loving.

* * *

There are three kinds of love: love of God, love of neighbor and love of self. The last two may bring us closer to God or lead us away from Him. It all depends on how genuinely and intensely we love God, for in Him the three are intimately connected. "Love God with all your soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself," we are told in the first Commandment. And St. Augustine comments: "Love God and do whatever you like," because he knew that if God is the main

object of your love, we would be very careful not to offend him in any manner.

The kind of love that has God as its sole and end is called *charity*. However, the word *love*, taken in general, can have other meanings which involve a relationship which has creatures as its end resulting in our separation from God, our ultimate end. But he who loves God above everything and everything for His sake, practices the virtue of charity, thus fulfilling the first Commandment.

On the other hand, he who loves creatures more than God or as much as does God, becomes guilty of a serious offense against Him. Yet, the one who loves creatures less than God, but in a disorderly manner, commits a venial sin. The solution therefore, lies in loving creatures always for the sake of God, or, in other words: "Through Him, with Him and in Him," as we say in the eucharistic doxology.

And now, let us move on and speak of love of neighbor. As human we are a composite body and soul, and this means that as long as we live we cannot live on Divine love alone. We need a measure of human love also because we are social beings. We depend on others as others depend on us. However, this interdependence presupposes love which is faithful to the Divine precept: "Love one another as I have loved you." This means that our love for our fellow human must come from God and directed toward God. Thus, He ought to be the main motivation and primary purpose of all our actions.

But, how often, ignoring the Divine Commandment and the voice of our conscience, we find ourselves involved in animosities, antipathies and even hatred towards our fellow human. And so we find ourselves far from imitating our Lord and Redeemer who forgave His persecutors and prayed to His heavenly Father for those who so cruelly tortured Him. He truly gave us the greatest proof of love by laying down His life for his tormentors! "I have given you an example, so that as I have done you do also."

The third kind of love that we should mention here in order to round off this homily is love of self, which is often used in the pejorative sense as self-love or selfishness. Seen from this perspective, it is sinful or leading to sin. However, it may not always be so, since as God's creatures we are bound to take care of ourselves and of our affairs, but on condition that in doing so we follow the dictates

of right reason enlightened by faith. There is nothing wrong in looking after one's bodily well being, mental improvement and good financial standing. What is wrong is to pay so much attention to our own interests as to exclude those of others and our obligation to God Himself.

* * *

Self love, seen in this light, is disordered and wrong. Its opposite is self-giving or, a readiness to place ourselves at the service of others.

Both extremes find their expression in the parable of the Good Samaritan and in the early Christian Tradition, when the non-believers seeing how well the followers of Christ looked after the welfare of their brothers in faith used to exclaim: "Behold how much they love one another." And Tertullian, commenting on this passage and applying it to the pagans, adds: "Behold, how much they hate one another."

Let us examine ourselves in the light of the Gospel, Christian Tradition, the countless examples of the saints, and the actual conditions of society and, from it all, we may see to which side we belong!

FR. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

ASCENSION SUNDAY

May 12, 1991

Readings: Ac 1:1-11
Ep 1:17-23
Mk 16:15-20

Ascension: Source of Confidence and Hope

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus into heaven mark the two last stages of his glorious life on earth. Both mysteries are so closely related that the Ascension is the culmination of the various apparitions of the Lord following his Resurrection.

St. Luke tells us, at the end of his Gospel, how Jesus was raised above the ground, up over the heads of his Apostles, until finally he

disappeared into the heavens (Lk 24:50-52). The same story is told at the beginning of the Book of Acts as a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Ac 1:9-11).

The biblical presentation of Jesus ascending into heaven takes a particular form or pattern based on human imagination. We might be easily led to think that Jesus went up into the atmosphere, crossed the skies, and finally arrived at the portals of heaven. Such graphic and colorful description should not deprive us of the real meaning and significance of the mystery of Ascension.

* * *

The real meaning behind this event is that the Lord Jesus -- as man has been exalted into heaven having completed his salvific mission in behalf of all men. The Holy Scripture describes this marvelous happenings simply by saying: "He is sitted at the right hand of the Father." St. Paul becomes more specific when he affirms: "The Father has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation" (Ep 1:23).

After Jesus' Ascension, he was not seen visibly anymore by his disciples. Would this imply that the Lord has broken his connection with his followers, with his Church, with man's history? Far from it. While considering this matter we should look attentively into the words of the Lord before he departed: "I shall be with you until the end of time." And he added: "I go to prepare a place for you (Jn 14:2) . . . It is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come, but if I go, I will send him to you" (Jn 16:7).

In view of this promise the presence of the Holy Spirit has taken the place of the human figure of the Lord Jesus. By the love of the Holy Spirit all Christ's followers are now more closely united with him than when he was here on earth. The Lord's presence is at present time more vivid, more penetrating than when Jesus walked on this world. Human heart can discover Jesus' presence in his Church, in the Sacraments, in the Holy Scriptures, in man's sufferings and joys, in the events of human history no matter how difficult and mysterious these may be. "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8).

* * *

The Feast of the Ascension is a source of confidence and hope to all of us. We hear the Lord saying: "In my Father's house there are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, you also may be (Jn 14:2-3). That is the reward held out to everyone who sincerely endeavors to die to sin and live unto God in Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Ascension is a further source of hope as we see Christ praying and interceding for us, that we may one day reach the heavenly city where he dwells. "We have an Advocate with the Father (Jn 2:1). "He lives to make intercession for us" (Hbr 7:25).

In the hour of sorrow and trial, let us raise up our hearts to the reward that is to come. "Our present affliction, which is for the moment, prepares us for the eternal weight of glory that is beyond all measure" (2 Co 4, 17).

St. Francis in his Exhortation gives his children the following advice: "We have promised great things; still greater things are promised to us, let us observe the former and arrive after the latter. Pleasure is short, punishment is everlasting. Suffering is slight, glory is infinite."

FR. PEDRO G. TEJERO, O.P.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 19, 1991

Readings: Ac 2:1-11
I Co 12:3-13
Jn 20:19-23

The Power of the Spirit

Few years back the words "cursillo" and cursillista" were the topic in sermons, lectures, homilies, retreats, and, the comment of our newspapers. Hundreds of men and women, young and old, joined the movement in search for a new way of living their christian life, and their christian commitment. Many of them were able to find that way.

Today there is another word which has become as popular and as appealing as the word cursillo, and that word is "charismatic." Few

years after the II Vatican Council when everything seemed bleak, with a number of priests and sisters leaving the fold, because of problems in the church, with great dissatisfaction from the church among the young, the Lord began to pour forth His Spirit in outstanding ways. The powers of the early church long covered over, were released suddenly for large number of people around the world. These people began to experience prayer, use spiritual gifts, and come together regularly to praise God. A new Pentecost was experienced by a great number of people the world over.

* * *

The first Pentecost took place during the celebration of a Jewish festival by the same name. Today's first reading (Acts 2:1-11), gives us in detail, the Pentecost event. What originally was a harvest festival, an agricultural festival, and with the time, a religious celebration in commemoration of the covenant and revelation of the Law on Sinai, became for every christian, that eventful day when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles and the disciples gathered together in the Upper Room.

St. Augustine designated the day of Pentecost as the "dies natalis" of the holy Spirit. We read, that, at the dawn of human history, God the Father visited earth for the purpose of man's creation. Several millenniums later came another celestial visitor, this time in the person of the Son, to accomplish man's redemption. On the day of Pentecost, the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, came to earth to achieve man's regeneration, and, to fit him for a life as child of God.

When speaking about the coming down of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost day, we have to avoid the danger of thinking, that, the Holy Spirit came into existence at that time. We know that God is eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Pentecost account given to us by St. Luke is actually composed in the light of the subsequent awareness of the universal mission of the church, and its extension to the gentiles. The account, then, sums up, in a single event, the work of the first generation of the church, the Spirit which inspired and moved it, and the fruits of the Spirit working in the church. Luke reserves this particular event for the Holy Spirit, separating it from the original unit of the Paschal experience. In other words, what originally was a unit, that is,

resurrection, ascension or exaltation, and the outpouring of the Spirit, as we can see in other parts of the Gospel, Luke separates the event of Pentecost, as he also separated the event of the ascension of the Lord.

Luke makes pentecost the birthday of the universal church. While the church doubtless, had its origin or genesis where the two disciples left John the Baptist and followed Jesus, it was not until the day of Pentecost that it became an organic unity. The church exists only from the day of Pentecost. The statement, that, the church was founded at Pentecost, has to be understood in this way, that Jesus decided and prepared the essential elements, but in its concrete realization, it is primarily the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit.

Through the outpouring of the Spirit the church is empowered to address herself to all nations and to be understood by them. The discourse to all nations in their own tongue, seen in this event, is actually fulfilled in the mission of the apostolic group to the people of the world. The three thousand men who were converted after the sermon of Peter, is the symbol of the universality of the church meant to be the church of all nations and for all nations, without distinction of color, race, or nationality.

The Christian community of Corinth has experiencing the effects of charismatic group among them. In the Second Reading (1 Co 12:3-13), Paul could see the Spirit working in that community, but since this group was the origin of divisions, by considering those who did not share or did not participate in their activities, as second class christians, Paul stresses that the outpouring of the Spirit must build up the body of Christ nor tear it apart.

The gifts were bestowed not for self-aggrandizement of the recipient, or as evidence of a special endowment of the Spirit, but for the profit and edification of the body of Christ. The possessor is only the instrument and, not the receiver of the glory. The gift is for the ministry to others. The nature of the gifts indicates, that, they are for the most part, gifts of service.

Distinction must be made or observed between the gift of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit. The former was bestowed on the church in answer to the prayer of Jesus, and, in fulfillment of the promise of the Father. The latter are bestowed on individual believers, and, when the Spirit, in His sovereignty pleases.

The gift of the Spirit is for every christian, for every member of the body of Christ (each received the Holy Spirit), without discrimination, while gifts of the Spirit are special and bestowed individually. The gift is absolute and for ever, while the gifts may be lost or may atrophy for lack of use. Every man has some gift. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyman. This does not mean, however, that, everyone is exercising the gift or the gifts with which the Spirit has endowed him. Nor does anyone necessarily know what his gift is. But it is clear, that, every christian had been allotted, at least, one gift to be exercised for the upbuilding of the Church. Each member is indispensable to the full functioning of the whole body. The most obscure church member is as necessary as the most prominent. Each has a distinct and separate ministry for which the Spirit has gifted him. All gifts are to be evaluated in the light of the common good. Unity is the result of the work of the Spirit, both in the church, and, in the individual member. Where there are divisions, the Spirit is not there.

* * *

In the Gospel (Jn 20:19-23), John has his own version of the Pentecost event, of the giving of the Spirit to the christian community of Jerusalem, the church. For John the resurrection of Christ, His ascension or glorification, and, the outpouring of the Spirit are aspects of one and the same saving episode. When Christ came to his disciples in the evening of the first Sunday, he came in the fullness of His glory and his power. He breathed on them, and, bestowed upon them the gift of gifts, namely, the divine Holy Spirit, the very power of God acting or active in the world, bringing about the manifold results of God's saving love, Jesus confers on his disciples the Spirit of truth who leads the church into the fullness of the truth disclosed by Himself.

But, the particular dimension of the power of the Spirit, according to John is, the forgiveness of sins. Until now the forgiving power of the Spirit was active in Christ only (Mk 2:5-10). Now, of His fullness the church receives a share, and, in the person of the disciples, he gives the community the power of forgiving sins. Jesus shares His forgiving power. When John stresses the forgiving power of God's Spirit, he actualizes the thought of the prophets: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean." The clean water that God sprinkled is the cleansing Spirit of God that leads to repentance, and,

to the gift of forgiveness. Jeremiah said: "I will forgive their iniquity, and, their sin will I remember no more."

From now on the forgiving spirit is a gift given to the community, the gift that works through the community as it did through Christ, and is administered by the community as it was administered by Christ. Jesus breathing on the disciples the Spirit, is full of symbolism. God breathed the spirit of life into Adam, and, he became a living being. By breathing the spirit of life into Adam, God gave him a share of His own life. By breathing upon the disciples, Christ shares with them something which is personally His, namely, the Holy Spirit, who in this case, conveys Christ's forgiving power. This forgiving power is administered by the community through its representatives. The community was given the power to retain or to forgive the sins of man (Mt., 18:18; I Co., 5:4).

Jesus sends out His disciples, He sends out His church. The church becomes Jesus' messenger and Jesus instrument in communicating to man His message. But, the church must be fully aware that, she must never be out to propagate her message, she must be out to propagate the message of Christ. She must never be out to follow man-made policies, she must be out to follow the will of Christ.

The church fails whenever she tries to solve some problems in her own wisdom and strength, and, leaves out of account the will and guidance of Jesus Christ. If Jesus needs the church, the church needs Jesus and without Him she has no message to convey.

FR. JESUS MANCEBO, O.P.

TRINITY SUNDAY

May 26, 1991

Readings: Dt 4:32-40
Rm 8:14-17
Mt 28:16-20

Loving Self-Dedication

God is love. "God is love", St. John writes in one of his letters. If God is love, we can only understand *who* God is if we try to understand *what love is*. Once we have clarified what love is, we will have a better idea of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, for the fact that God is love, explains a lot about our belief that God is *Three Persons*, yet *One God*.

Married Love. Unfortunately, we have abused the word love so much that many people do not know anymore what the word really means. People love one another in many ways. One basic form of love is the love which binds a man and a woman in marriage. What is characteristic of married love?

Acceptance of the Other. When a man and a woman get married, the priest who solemnizes the marriage asks them several questions. He asks the bride: Do you accept this man, your bridegroom, as your husband? And he asks the groom: Do you accept this woman, your bride, as your wife? If the bride and groom answer the question with an unconditional, Yes, they confirm thereby that they truly love one another, for love consists in the *total acceptance* of the beloved.

Total Selfgift. The priest also asks the couple whether they give themselves to one another as husband and wife. This is as essential to true love as the acceptance of the other. Unless bride and groom commit themselves totally to one another, they do not enter into a conjugal partnership of life and love.

Indissoluble Bond. Finally, it is understood in the exchange of marriage vows that the mutual gift of self and the acceptance of the other is unconditional. Unless the bride and groom bind themselves for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death parts them, there can be no marriage bond between them.

One-ness of Life. What induces a couple to make such a solemn and far-reaching commitment to another? When a man and a woman love one another so much that they decide to get married, they have come to the conclusion that their lives would be meaningless without the other. Their wish is to share life with one another, and to share it fully. After bride and groom have exchanged their wedding vows they therefore ask God together: Make us one heart and one soul. The heart and the soul are both principles of life. If bride and groom express the wish to be one heart and one soul, they actually ask God to make them so one that they will have, as it were, only one life between the two of them.

Fruitful Love. A man and a woman who truly love one another as husband and wife eventually wish to have a child. The child of a loving couple is the living expression of the bond between them and personifies it, as it were. In their child they truly become "one flesh".

Trinity: Plurality of Persons. Let us go back to the revelation of St. John. God is love, John writes. But love as we find it between husband and wife is a *union of persons* who are bound together so closely and so intimately that they wish to have only one life between them. We also know that married love finds its crown in a *third person*, the child, which gives concrete expression to the bond of love and become the personification thereof. The Mystery of the Holy Trinity reveals us this very thing: there are three persons in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are bound in a bond of love which is personified in the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, who is also called Bond, Love.

Oneness of Life. Husband and wife may ask to be so one that they have as it were only one life between them, but in fact they remain two individuals who are capable of going their own way. However much they may wish to be "one heart and one soul," once and for all, in fact they have to reconfirm their oneness again and again. In God this oneness of life is not an ideal, but a fact. In God, the Three Persons truly share one life between them, the one divine life, which makes them truly inseparable, and so one that we can confess that they are one God.

* * *

Reflection of the Divine Love. The love between husband and wife is sacred, for in the personal bond which binds them something of the divine life is reflected. In fact, when a Christian couple truly love one another, they are given in their mutual personal commitment a privileged participation in the divine life as it is a life of love between the Divine Persons forever bound in an insolluble oneness of life. But every form of loving selfdedication to others helps us to understand something of the mystery of God as God is love.

FR. FREDERIK FERMIN, O.P.

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST June 2, 1991

Readings: Ex 24:3-8
Heb 9:11-15
Mk 14:12-26

Sealed by the Blood of the Son

By the 8th century, a third Mass was being celebrated by the Roman church on Holy Thursday in commemoration of the Last Supper during which the Eucharist was instituted (vid. *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*). But, even as early as the 4th century, in the Africa of Augustine, there was already a *Commemoratio Coenae Domini* (vid. Synod of Hippo, 393), and in Gaul, authors, like Avitus of Vienne and Ps. Eligius of Noyon, referred to the *Natalis Calicis*. All of which show that even in early Christian times the Eucharist was already honoured, in the context, however, of its institution and the Paschal Mystery of which it is the sacramental sign.

In the 13th century, through the efforts of Juliana of Retinnes (1192-1258), the visionary augustinian nun of Mont Cornillon, a special feast in honour of the Blessed Sacrament was introduced for the first time in Liege, Belgium. When James Pantaleon, archdeacon of Liege and a confidant of Juliana, became Pope Urban IV (1261-1264), he extended the feast to the universal Church in 1264 and called it *Festum Sacratissimi Corporis D.N. Iesu Christi*.

* * *

At its introduction in the 13th century, the feast of the *Corpus Christi* somehow reflected the mood, mentality and needs of the times. There was a strong desire for a more intense devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, which was due to several factors: the natural and expected respect for the Blessed Sacrament developed increasingly into a cult, a cult which consisted greatly in external manifestations of adoration; the penitential discipline was too severe and restrictive that many faithful could not approach, much less partake of, the Eucharist in communion; for many, too, gazing at or looking upon the Host at the elevation after the consecration was the only way of a personally fulfilling participation in the Eucharist; and there was a need for the Church to assert the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist against those who denied or doubted it.

Corpus Christi, as a solemn feast in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, is over 700 years old. That alone should have been a strong argument for its retention in the calendar of feasts of the Roman rite. And indeed, its Mass and Office, which have been traditionally attributed to Thomas Aquinas, have been retained unchanged in the reformed Liturgy of Vatican II.

Now, the liturgical books of the reformed Liturgy carry a slight but significant change in the title of the feast: *Sollemnitatis Corporis et Sanguinis D.N. Iesu Christi* (vid. the Calendar in the *Lectionarium*, editio typica, 1970, *Liturgia Horarum*, editio typica, 1974 and *Missale Romanum*, editio typica altera, 1975).

Corpus et Sanguis Christi are actually taken from pertinent *loci* in the New Testament: the account of the Last Supper during which the Eucharist was instituted: "This is my *body* . . . This is my *blood*, the *blood* of the covenant. . ."; the Johannine discourse on the Bread of Life: "Anyone who eats my *flesh* and drinks my *blood* has eternal life" (Jn 6:54). *Corpus et Sanguis*, therefore, express more explicitly and precisely the reality of the Body and Blood of Christ signified by the sign of the Eucharist. And the specific addition of the *Sanguis* in the title of the feast places the emphasis equally on the two elements of the bread and the wine of the eucharistic sign, causing "a fuller light to shine" on the latter and "the will by which the new and everlasting covenant is ratified in the blood of the Lord and of the relationship of the eucharistic banquet to the eschatological banquet in the Father's kingdom" to be more clearly expressed (cf. Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 1967, n. 32, *GIRM*, 4th ed., 1975).

* * *

The readings (Cycle B) for the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ have one common theme: the new covenant which is ratified by the sacrifice and blood of Christ.

Moses told the people of Israel "all the words and ordinances of the Lord", which he also wrote down in the book of the covenant. During the sacrifice Moses read these once more to the people. And Israel accepted the Lord's words and ordinances, saying: "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do". Thus, the covenant between the Lord and Israel was forged.

The covenant was subsequently ratified by the sacrifice of young bulls and the sprinkling of the animal blood on the altar which represented the Lord and on the people. The result: life-ties which joined Israel with the Lord, because blood for ancient peoples signified life.

In the first part of the Gospel reading, Mark demonstrates that the Last Supper celebrated by Christ with his disciples was a

Passover meal. The Paschal meal was the ritual meal which represented the sacrifice of the covenant of the first exodus.

In the narrative of the institution of the Eucharist, which forms the second part of the Gospel reading, Mark relates the very first celebration of the Eucharist, the rite of the new covenant. The words pronounced over the cup: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out on behalf of many" are evidently to be understood in relation to the blood of the sacrifice of the first covenant. For, the new covenant between God and mankind was being forged and ratified by God's Son in the sacrifice of his life and his own blood.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews shows in this reading how inadequate and wanting were the old temple, the old covenant, the sacrifices of the old law, which consisted of animal and blood offerings.

Christ alone now makes up for the inadequacy of the Old Testament with a new sanctuary, a new covenant, a new and most excellent sacrifice, the sacrifice of himself and his own blood.

Like the old covenant, the new covenant was sealed by blood. With this difference, however, that unlike the animal sacrifice and animal blood which ratified the old covenant, Christ's sacrifice of himself and his own blood ratified the new covenant between God and mankind.

* * *

Contracts, agreements are entered into by modern man. Pacts, treaties, by nations and governments. Signatures affixed to documents or instruments of agreement, or even just one's word, are sufficient to ratify and render binding such contracts, pacts and treaties.

Ironically, the same modern man and societies of men, as simply and sometimes, as easily as they make such agreements, also just as often and as easily violate these agreements. From the Second World War to the Gulf War, one hears of the Geneva Convention, but only because of violations committed against it. No sooner are treaties on disarmament, on endangered animal species, on the environment signed than they are violated. On the local scene, the bases agree-

ment, for all its periodic revision and updating, has always been the subject of gross violations.

If modern man, who enters into these agreements, seems to have such little or no regard for them, how can he understand and appreciate the pact forged by God and men? How can he understand and appreciate the sanctity and gravity of this pact sealed by the life and blood of God's own Son?

Perhaps modern man should glance back into antiquity and consider primitive man's idea of honour and obligation, his idea of life symbolized by such primitive signs of an animal sacrifice and of animal blood. Then, modern man might just begin to comprehend and appreciate the new covenant of which he is a partner with God, no less.

This is the covenant represented and signified by the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Man's partaking of the Eucharist should elevate him above the common and prevalent attitude of men with regards pacts and agreements and make him grow each day in the awareness of bringing that covenant to its fulfillment.

FR. POMPEYO DE MESA, O.P.

TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 9, 1991

Readings: Gn 3:9-15
2 Co 4:13-15:1
Mk 3:20-35

What Is Sin Today

What is sin today? To many, there is no such thing as sin. Everybody is free to do his "own thing" and is everybody is free to forget about what he does. Nobody is at fault when he does his business. If there is bad and serious consequences for the things one does, well, that is just too bad!

One of the very great consolation of the Bible is that the good news cuts through all the complexities of life to the reality of two fundamental principles: Christ or Satan, good or evil, obedience to God or obedience to Satan, for Christ or against Christ, for light or darkness. This is the message of today's liturgical readings.

* * *

Adam and Eve were told by God that they could eat the fruits of the garden's trees; but God forbade them to eat the fruit of the tree in the center of the garden: "You may eat freely from every tree in the garden; but do not eat from the tree of knowing good and evil; for the day you eat from that tree you will certainly die."

Adam and Eve disobeyed. And with their disobedience they lost their human dignity. Both the man and his wife were naked in the garden and they felt no shame in each other's nakedness, in each other's presence. After they disobeyed, after they sinned they felt ashamed of their nakedness. When Adam and Eve heard the Lord God walking in the garden, they hid among the tree of the garden.

"Where are you?" And they answered: "We heard your sound in the garden but we were afraid because we are naked; so we hid ourselves." They had lost their full human dignity. Sin had stripped them naked of their native dignity as a man and a woman capable of approaching and loving God. This is what sin does to every sinner, to you and to me. We feel ashamed and naked when we sin until we are clothed again with God's grace.

The sin Adam and Eve made them blame everybody except themselves. Your sin and my sin make us blame everybody but ourselves. Adam blame the woman and the woman blamed the serpent: "Who made you know that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I forbade you to eat?" The man said, "The woman you gave me for a companion, she gave me from the tree and I ate." When the Lord said to the woman, "Just what have you done?" The woman answered, "The serpent tricked me and I ate." This is very typical of sin. We are never at fault; we never want to take the blame for our mistakes. Nobody wants to be responsible for "doing his own thing."

In today's Gospel Jesus is accused of using the power of Beelzebub, the chief of demons, to drive out demons. "He expels demons with the help of the prince of demons." And Jesus replies, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a country divides itself into groups that fight each

other that country will fall apart, if a household is divided against itself, that household can not last . . .”

The Gospel, which has no intention of expounding political principles, explains what is happening all around us. If a country divides against itself according to loyalties, that country cannot stand. We all know what is happening in our country. If communists fight the army, if muslims fight christians, if rightists fight the duly constituted government, if we fight against each other, we as a people will fall apart. The country or the world is divided because there is much evil and much darkness.

* * *

Adam started this world of hatred and evil with his sin of disobedience to God. This hatred and the evil of the world grows with each sinner contributing his share to this evil.

But we also know that the kingdom of God has come, and it is a kingdom that stands in diametrical opposition to everything that is of the devil, it is a kingdom of love, peace and justice, it is a kingdom of goodness. We have, therefore, the world of good, the world of God, and the world of evil, the world of Satan. We have the world of light and the world of darkness. We have the world of obedience to God and the world of disobedience to him. We have the world of Christ and the world which is against Christ.

To which one of these worlds do you and I belong? At a certain point in today's Gospel the relatives of Christ arrived on the scene. When Christ was told that they were outside asking for him, Christ looked at those sitting around him in a circle and said, "See. My mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God, that one is my brother and sister and mother."

* * *

How can we know whether we belong to the world of light or to the world of evil? How can we know to which world we belong? How can we know whether we belong to Christ or to Satan? How can we know whether you and I are brother, or a sister or a mother of Christ?

The test is very simple. The test is obedience to the will of God. That is why our Lord's entire life was a life dominated by obedience

to his Father. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and finish the work he gave me to do" (Jn 4:34). "Here I am, O God, to do what you want me to do" (Heb 10:9).

Does not Christ make life very simple? Obey the will of my Father and be with me; disobey the will of my Father and be against me.

FR. MAXIMO MARINA, O.P.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

June 16, 1991

Readings: Ezk 17:22-24
2 Co 5:6-10
Mk 4:26-34

Growing in Silence

A kind of 'instant mentality' is prevalent in us nowadays. People search for 'instant products' and quick solutions to their problems. This attitude pervades in almost all aspects of human life.

This happens in the socio-economic and political spheres. The 1986 EDSA revolution brought to a sudden end the old regime and installed in haste new leaders. People expected overnight changes and instant cures to the countless woes of the country. Thus, after five years, many are restless over the slow turn of events. Can the Philippines not move faster to catch up with the newly industrialized countries of Asia?

Impatience, however, did more harm than good. The nation is still reeling from the paralyzing effect of several failed coup d'etats. It is now clear that what Filipinos need most to tackle the arduous task of nation-rebuilding is the virtue of patience.

The realm of spirituality is not spared by this 'instant mentality'. The attraction to instant conversions which are sensational but often dubious, is not uncommon. Few perhaps can sustain a gradual steady growth in the spiritual life, which is the natural and normal process.

Jesus' parables of the growing mustard seed shed light on what attitudes a Christian must adopt to curb this 'instant mentality'.

* * *

In these parables, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a seed, with humble beginnings, growth and definitive harvest. This portrayal disappointed the grandiose expectations of his countrymen for a revival of the Davidic glory through a powerful divine intervention. It departed from the common understanding of his Jewish audience. For the Jews, the Messianic kingdom was political and triumphalistic in nature, typical of the majestic empire of their Roman subjugators.

The early Christians, having adopted the teaching of Christ, surely did not share this Jewish belief. As far as they were concerned, these parables had another application relative to their situation then. The disciples at that time were troubled with persecutions and anxieties about the growth of the Church. And these parables served to rationalize their situation. Just as the seed sown on the ground promises to grow, though silently and amidst difficulties, to become a full grown tree, so will the kingdom of God. Harvest was assured in the end.

The disciple's role and limitations are clear. He can only sow the seed, water and fertilize the soil, but the rest is left to God. Like the seed, the kingdom does not come abruptly but grows imperceptibly; ultimately, God is responsible for its growth and fruition. All that is asked of the Christians is to do his share. The little that he can accomplish, if done according to God's will, contributes to the flourishing of the kingdom.

These parables therefore greatly inspired the persecuted disciples to be patient and persevering.

* * *

The kingdom inaugurated by Jesus is still in the process of growing. And until it reaches its eschatological stage, each individual will be involved in its growth through the day to day doing of simple and humble tasks assigned by providence. The clergy do their share through their daily pastoral activities, continuing Christ's sanctifying, teaching and governing ministry. The laity, by virtue of their baptism, share the task of promoting God's kingdom in areas most fitted to their profession and state. The Second Plenary Council of the

Philippines challenges them to be more committed to their renewed Christian calling -- that is to be more just and loving.

The growth of the Kingdom of God includes the rebuilding of society, no matter how slow and arduous it may be. This is indeed a challenge to a Christian country like the Philippines which is undergoing enormous growth pains after the EDSA revolution. The Filipinos, like the early Christians, could therefore look to these parables for strength and inspiration.

In the last analysis, the growth of the kingdom will be in the hearts of men. These parables invite every Christian to reflect on the condition of his spiritual life, on how God reigns in his personal life. In the daily acts of loving and sacrificing, the follower of Jesus promotes silently but surely the kingdom of God whose seat is found in his heart.

FR. HILARIO SINGIAN, O.P.

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
June 23, 1991

Readings: Job 38:1, 8-11
II Co 5:14-17
Mk 4:35-41

Jesus, Amidst the Storms of Life

Having spoken at length, Jesus invites his disciples "to cross over to the other side of the lake." Tired and weary for the day's endeavour, he lies down in the stern of the boat and he soon falls asleep. What happens next is not unusual in the Lake of Galilee. The storm comes shattering and battering the boat to the point of sinking.

The lake is once described by a writer: "It is not unusual to see terrible squalls hurl themselves, even when the sky is perfectly clear, upon these waters which are ordinarily so calm." The apostles who were mostly fishermen knew exactly the lake and were liable to encounter such sudden storm. But it must have been far worse than

those they have encountered in the past that they woke Jesus: "Master, we are going down. Do you not care?"

The same question is posed by the disciple of today. The waves shake up the boat, the course of history rages, the problems of life cause tension, doubt and uncertainty, and no one knows how all this is going to end. He is handled roughly from all sides, he is losing his grip and no longer knows to which saint to turn to. The values that are held with high esteem are questioned. There, too, is worry, the greatest enemy of peace. Man worries for himself, about his loved ones, about production to have more consumption and to consume to have more production, about war and its devastating consequences, about the anxieties of every end of the century: what will tomorrow and the unknown future bring? Indeed, our boat, too, just like that of the apostles, is being tossed up and down, being shattered and battered by waves of sorrows, problems and anxieties of life. Are we one of those who consider Jesus a friend in "bad-weather times?" In danger of losing our foothold and in need, do we cry out to Jesus for assistance? Does Jesus, our Lord and Master, care in good times as well as in bad times? The follower poses a challenge to God "to prove him wrong against God." Like the apostles, we have experienced the feelings connected with danger and need due either to lost, separation, betrayal of a loved one; or the catastrophe that war can bring; or the continuing pollution of the air we breathe; or the abuse of mother earth in seeming abandon, and so on. We feel that God does not listen, much more answer we cry for help, as if he is taking a nap.

* * *

Amidst the storms in life, the Gospel reading tells us to realize the presence of Jesus. Like the apostles, when they came to realize the presence of Jesus in their midst the storm died down. Amidst the storm of anxiety, Jesus speaks to us of a loving Father who never tests his children beyond their capacity. Amidst the storm of sorrow, Jesus tells us of his kingdom and the glorious life with him in the next. And Amidst the storm of life's problems, Jesus admonishes us to submit our will to His will in humility. Amidst the storms of life is Jesus listening and caring for us. He is present in "good-weather" times and in "bad weather" times so willing to come to our rescue.

FR. MANUEL ROUX, O.P.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
June 30, 1991

Readings: Ws 1:13-15; 2:23-25
2 Co 8:7,9,13-15
Mk 5:21-43

Trust in and Accessibility of Jesus

One common cause of fight or war is the lack of trust. There is fight in a family because the husband does not trust the wife, and vice versa. The same applies to the relationship of parents and children and vice versa. There is war in the middle east because the Iraqis do not trust the Americans.

Yes, distrust is indeed one common malady of modern times. Once it prevails in the hearts of men and women, expect trouble. It will surely come.

To balance and correct the atmosphere of distrust, we need to hear stories about trust. Listening to stories portraying faith, confidence, and belief will hopefully heal distrusting hearts.

This is the reason why, we think, the Church during this Sunday offers to the faithful two moving stories about Jarius and a sick woman. This trust in Jesus is founded in faith in his divine power.

* * *

The gospel contains accounts about the cure of the daughter of Jarius (5:21-24; 35-41) and the healing of the woman with hemorrhage (5:25-34). The narration reveals the accessibility of Jesus to anyone.

St. Mark is clear in describing the situation. There is a large crowd; and all of a sudden, Jarius comes up to Jesus pleading for a visit: "Do come and lay hands on her to make her better and save her life." Jesus honors the invitation. But upon arrival a wailing crowd meet him. It is hard for the crowd to take His word: "The child is not dead, but asleep." The unbelieving people laugh at him.

"Talitha, Kum!" This means "Little child, I tell you get up." That is what is needed to restore the health of the twelve year old daughter of Jarius who has accepted the word of Jesus: "Do not be afraid, only have faith."

If we are to go to a deeper level of early Christian catechesis, the child is not only cured, but presumably restored to enjoy eternal life.

The story of the woman with hemorrhage is equally moving: "After long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any better for it, in fact she was getting worse." She tries hard to have access to Jesus and touches his clothes. Result: she was restored to health. How she has longed: "If I can touch even his clothed, I shall be healed."

Commentators tell us that "the woman's demeanor, as that of Jarius, is presented as a paradigm of access to Christ in faith."

* * *

We know that Jesus is still accessible to us today, not as a historical person, but as God present in the world in many ways. We do not see his physical body, but we experience His presence in the daily events of life, in the words of the scripture, in the sacraments, etc.

He is accessible to us in time of personal difficulties: trouble in the family, failure in business, misfortune in illness, frustration in life, and so forth. During this times of difficulties, do we not find His holy word guide to our path? Do we not experience strength when we partake his body during communion? Do we not find sweet consolation in invoking His name in time of sorrow? Guidance, strength, and consolation are our happy experiences because of our trust in Jesus. And, faith in Jesus is the foundation of trust.

During the time when nations are warring against one another, we still hope that Jesus can make himself accessible and bring peace to all nations, but, under this one condition: all peoples must keep that trustful disposition of Jarius and the woman.

May one day all will sing the psalm:

*Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice
With fairness you rule the peoples
You guide the nations on earth.*

FR. VICENTE CAJILIG, O.P.

OFF THE PRESS

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