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(July-August 1991)

THE UNIVERSITY AS A COMMUNITY

The issuance of the Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities serves as an occasion for us to spend some time reflecting on the effectiveness of the Catholic educational institutions in our country, and more so, after the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines which emphasized the role of education in the transformation of our society which goes hand in hand with the transformation of the Church.

The Apostolic Constitution underscores the task of our institutions to integrate faith with all the other aspects of man who finds himself belonging to a definite time and specific culture. The Church continues to fulfill its mission through the instrumentality of Catholic Universities.

Let us never forget that a university is a community. The Apostolic Constitution states that:

A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the Spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character. As a result of this inspiration, the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of the individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons; in turn, everyone in the community helps in promoting unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, contributes towards decisions which affect the community, and also towards maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic character of the Institution.

Not only universities but all other Catholic schools should become authentic Christian communities. The teachers, the students together with the administrators should put this as the main concern over all others.

More and more lay men and women are given the opportunities to help lead Catholic universities. They must be encouraged and properly formed so that their participation in the community life of a university becomes truly an evangelizing undertaking of people dedicated for the service of the lord.

FR. VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.

Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II on Catholic Universities

INTRODUCTION

1. Born from the heart of the Church, a Catholic University is located in that course of tradition which may be traced back to the very origin of the University as an institution. It has always been recognized as an incomparable center of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity. By vocation, the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium* is dedicated to research, to teaching and to the education of students who freely associate with their teachers in a common love of knowledge.¹ With every other University it shares that *gaudium de veritate*, so precious to Saint Augustine, which is that joy of searching for, discovering and communicating truth² in every field of knowledge. A Catholic University's privileged task is "to unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality that too frequently tend to be placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth".³

¹Cf. The letter of Pope Alexander IV to the University of Paris, 14 April 1255, Introduction: *Bullarium Diplomatum* . . . , vol. III, Turin 1858, p. 602.

²SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confes.* X, xxiii, 33: "In fact, the blessed life consists in the joy that comes from the truth, since this joy comes from You who are Truth, God my light, salvation of my face, my God". PL 32, 793-794. Cf. SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Malo*, IX, 1: "It is actually natural to man to strive for knowledge of the truth".

³JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the "Institut Catholique de Paris", 1 June 1980: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. III/1 (1980), p.1581.

2. For many years I myself was deeply enriched by the beneficial experience of university life: the ardent search for truth and its unselfish transmission to youth and to all those learning to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better.

Therefore, I desire to share with everyone my profound respect for Catholic Universities, and to express my great appreciation for the work that is being done in them in the various spheres of knowledge. In a particular way, I wish to manifest my joy at the numerous meetings which the Lord has permitted me to have in the course of my apostolic journeys with the Catholic University communities of various continents. They are for me a lively and promising sign of the fecundity of the Christian mind in the heart of every culture. They give me a well-founded hope for a new flowering of Christian culture in the rich and varied context of our changing times, which certainly face serious challenges but which also bear so much promise under the action of the Spirit of truth and of love.

It is also my desire to express my pleasure and gratitude to the very many Catholic scholars engaged in teaching and research in non-Catholic Universities. Their task as academics and scientists, lived out in the light of the Christian faith, is to be considered precious for the good of the Universities in which they teach. Their presence in fact, is a continuous stimulus to the selfless search for truth and for the wisdom that comes from above.

3. Since the beginning of this Pontificate, I have shared these ideas and sentiments with my closest collaborators, the Cardinals, with the Congregation for Catholic Education, and with men and women of culture throughout the world. In fact, the dialogue of the Church with the cultures of our times is that vital area where "the future of the Church and of the world is being played out as we conclude the twentieth century".⁴ There is only one culture: that of man, by man and for man.⁵ And thanks to her Catholic Universities and their humanistic and scientific inheritance, the Church, expert in humanity, as my predecessor, Paul VI, expressed it at the United

⁴JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the Cardinals, 10 November 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. II/2 (1979), p. 1096; cf. Discourse to UNESCO, Paris, 2 June 1980: AAS 72 (1980), pp. 735-752.

⁵Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Discourse to the University of Coimbra, 15 May 1982: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. V/2 (1982), p. 1692.

Nations,⁶ explores the mysteries of humanity and of the world, clarifying them in the light of Revelation.

4. It is the honor and responsibility of a Catholic University to consecrate itself without reserve to *the cause of truth*. This is its way of serving at one and the same time both the dignity of man and the good of the Church, which has "an intimate conviction that truth is (its) real ally... and that knowledge and reason are sure ministers to faith".⁷ Without in any way neglecting the acquisition of useful knowledge, a Catholic University is distinguished by its free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God. The present age is in urgent need of this kind of disinterested service, namely of *proclaiming the meaning of truth*, that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished. By means of a kind of universal humanism a Catholic University is completely dedicated to the research of all aspects of truth in their essential connection with the supreme Truth, who is God. It does this without fear but rather with enthusiasm, dedicating itself to every path of knowledge, aware of being preceded by him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life",⁸ the *Logos*, whose Spirit of intelligence and love enables the human person with his or her own intelligence to find the ultimate reality of which he is the source and end and who alone is capable of giving fully that Wisdom without which the future of the world would be in danger.

5. It is in the context of the impartial search for truth that the relationship between faith and reason is brought to light and meaning. The invitation of Saint Augustine, "*Intellege ut credas; crede ut intellegas*",⁹ is relevant to Catholic Universities that are called to explore courageously the riches of Revelation and of nature so that the united endeavor of intelligence and faith will enable people to come to the full measure of their humanity, created in the image and likeness of God, renewed even more marvelously, after sin, in Christ, and called to shine forth in the light of the Spirit.

⁶PAUL VI, Allocution to Representatives of States, 4 October 1965: *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, Vol. III (1965), p. 508.

⁷JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN, *The Idea of a University*, London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1931, p.XI.

⁸Jn 14:6.

⁹Cf. SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Serm.* 43, 9: PL 38, 258. Cf also SAINT ANSELM, *Proslogion*, chap. I: PL 158, 227.

6. Through the encounter which it establishes between the unfathomable richness of the salvific message of the Gospel and the variety and immensity of the fields of knowledge in which that richness is incarnated by it, a Catholic University enables the Church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture. Man's life is given dignity by culture, and, while he finds his fullness in Christ, there can be no doubt that the Gospel which reaches and renews him in every dimension is also fruitful for the culture in which he lives.

7. In the world today, characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic University assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary *search for meaning* in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole. If it is the responsibility of every University to search for such meaning, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.

In this context, Catholic Universities are called to a continuous renewal, both as "Universities" and as "Catholic". For, "What is at stake is the *very meaning of scientific and technological research, of social life and of culture*, but, on an even more profound level, what is at stake is *the very meaning of the human person*".¹⁰ Such renewal requires a clear awareness that, by its Catholic character, a University is made more capable of conducting an *impartial* search for truth, a search that is neither subordinated to nor conditioned by particular interests of any kind.

8. Having already dedicated the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* to Ecclesiastical Faculties and Universities,¹¹ I

¹⁰Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Allocation to the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 April 1989, n. 3: AAS 18 (1989), p. 1218.

¹¹JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* concerning the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, 15 April 1979: AAS 71 (1979), pp. 469-521.

then felt obliged to propose an analogous Document for Catholic Universities as a sort of "magna carta", enriched by the long and fruitful experience of the Church in the realm of Universities and open to the promise of future achievements that will require courageous creativity and rigorous fidelity.

9. The present Document is addressed especially to those who conduct Catholic Universities, to the respective academic communities, to all those who have an interest in them, particularly the Bishops, Religious Congregations and ecclesial *Institutions*, and to the numerous laity who are committed to the great mission of higher education. Its purpose is that "the Christian mind may achieve, as it were, a public, persistent and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture and that the students of these institutions become people outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world".¹²

10. In addition to Catholic Universities, I also turn to the many Catholic Institutions of higher education. According to their nature and proper objectives, they share some or all of the characteristics of a University and they offer their own contribution to the Church and to society, whether through research, education or professional training. While this document specifically concerns Catholic Universities, it is also meant to include all Catholic Institutions of higher education engaged in instilling the Gospel message of Christ in souls and cultures.

Therefore, it is with great trust and hope that I invite all Catholic Universities to pursue their irreplaceable task. Their mission appears increasingly necessary for the encounter of the Church with the development of the sciences and with the cultures of our age.

Together with all my brother Bishops who share pastoral responsibility with me, I would like to manifest my deep conviction that a Catholic University is without any doubt one of the best instruments that the Church offers to our age which is searching for certainty and wisdom. Having the mission of bringing the Good News to everyone, the Church should never fail to interest herself in this Institution. By research and teaching, Catholic Universities assist

¹²VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737.

the Church in the manner most appropriate to modern times to find cultural treasures both old and new, "*nova et vetera*", according to the words of Jesus.¹³

11. Finally, I turn to the whole Church, convinced that Catholic Universities are essential to her growth and to the development of Christian culture and human progress. For this reason, the entire ecclesial Community is invited to give its support to Catholic Institutions of higher education and to assist them in their process of development and renewal. It is invited in a special way to guard the rights and freedom of these Institutions in civil society, and to offer them economic aid, especially in those countries where they have more urgent need of it, and to furnish assistance in founding new Catholic Universities wherever this might be necessary.

My hope is that these prescriptions, based on the teaching Vatican Council II and the directives of the Code of Canon Law, will enable Catholic Universities and other Institutes of higher studies to fulfil their indispensable mission in the new advent of grace that is opening up to the new Millennium.

PART I

IDENTITY AND MISSION

A. THE IDENTITY OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

1. *Nature and Objectives*

12. Every Catholic University, *as a university*, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities.¹⁴ It possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively

¹³Mt 13:52.

¹⁴Cf. *The Magna Carta of the European Universities*, Bologna, Italy, 18 September 1988, "Fundamental Principles".

and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.¹⁵

13. Since the objective of a Catholic University is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture,¹⁶ every Catholic University, as *Catholic*, must have the following *essential characteristics*:

1. a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;

¹⁵Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080; Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737. "Institutional autonomy" means that the governance of an academic institution is and remains internal to the institution; "academic freedom" is the guarantee given to those involved in teaching and research that, within their specific specialized branch of knowledge, and according to the methods proper to that specific area, they may search for the truth wherever analysis and evidence leads them and may teach and publish the results of this search, keeping in mind the cited criteria, that is, safeguarding the rights of the individual and of society within the confines of the truth and the common good.

¹⁶There is a two-fold notion of *culture* used in this document: the *humanistic* and the *socio-historical*. "The word 'culture' in its general sense indicates all those factors by which man refines and unfolds his manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means his effort to bring the world itself under his control by his knowledge and his labor. It includes the fact that by improving customs and institutions he renders social life more human both within the family and in the civic community. Finally, it is a feature of culture that throughout the course of time man expresses, communicates, and conserves in his works great spiritual experiences and desires, so that these may be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family. Hence it follows that human culture necessarily has a historical and social aspect and that the word 'culture' often takes on a sociological and ethnological sense". VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 53: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1075.

4. an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life."¹⁷

14. "In the light of these four characteristics, it is evident that besides the teaching, research and services common to all Universities, a Catholic University, *by institutional commitment*, brings to its task the inspiration and light of the *Christian message*. In a Catholic University, therefore, Catholic ideals, attitudes and principles penetrate and inform university activities in accordance with the proper nature and autonomy of these activities. In a word, being both a University and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative"¹⁸

15. A Catholic University, therefore, is a place of research, where scholars *scrutinize reality* with the methods proper to each academic discipline, and so contribute to the treasury of human knowledge. Each individual discipline is studied in a systematic manner; moreover, the various disciplines are brought into dialogue for their mutual enhancement.

In addition to assisting men and women in their continuing quest for the truth, this research provides an effective witness, especially necessary today, to the Church's belief in the intrinsic value of knowledge and research.

In a Catholic University, research necessarily includes (a) the search for an integration of knowledge, (b) a dialogue between faith and reason, (c) an ethical concern, and (d) *a theological perspective*.

16. *Integration of knowledge* is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, "has to be a living union' of individual organisms dedicated to the search for truth... It is necessary *to work towards a higher*

¹⁷*L'Universite' Catholique' dans le monde moderne. Document final du 2éme Congrès des Délégués des Universités Catholiques, Rome, 20-29 November 1972, § 1.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

synthesis of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person".¹⁹ Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos*, as the centre of creation and of human history.

17. In promoting this integration of knowledge, a specific part of a Catholic University's task is to promote *dialogue between faith and reason*, so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth. While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that "methodical research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God".²⁰ A vital interaction of two distinct levels of coming to know the one truth leads to a greater love for truth itself, and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of human life and of the purpose of God's creation.

18. Because knowledge is meant to serve the human person, research in a Catholic University is always carried out with a concern for the *ethical* and *moral implications* both of its methods and of its discoveries. This concern, while it must be present in all research, is

¹⁹JOHN PAUL II, Allocution to the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 April 1989, n. 4: AAS 81 (1989), p. 1219. Cf. also VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 61: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1081-1082. Cardinal Newman observes that a University "professes to assign to each study which it receives, its proper place and its just boundaries; to define the rights, to establish the mutual relations and to effect the intercommunion of one and all". *Op. Cit.* p. 457.

²⁰VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 36: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1054. To a group of scientists I pointed out that "while reason and faith surely represent two distinct orders of knowledge, each autonomous with regard to its own methods, the two must finally converge in the discovery of a single whole reality which has its origin in God". (JOHN PAUL II, *Address at the Meeting on Galileo*, 9 May 1983, n. 3: AAS 75 (1983), p. 690.

particularly important in the areas of science and technology. "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience. Men and women of science will truly aid humanity only if they preserve 'the sense of the transcendence of the human person over the world and of God over the human person'".²¹

19. *Theology* plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason. It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs. Because of its specific importance among the academic disciplines, every Catholic University should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology.²²

20. Given the close connection between research and teaching, the research qualities indicated above will have their influence on all teaching. While each discipline is taught systematically and according to its own methods, *interdisciplinary studies*, assisted by a careful and thorough study of philosophy and theology, enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress. In the communication of knowledge, emphasis is then placed on how *human reason in its reflection* opens to increasingly broader questions, and how the complete answer to them can only come from above through faith. Furthermore, the *moral implications* that are present in each discipline are examined as an integral part of the teaching of that discipline so that the entire educative process be directed towards the whole development of the person. Finally, Catholic theology, taught

²¹JOHN PAUL II, Address at UNESCO, 2 June 1980, n. 22: AAS 72 (1980), p. 750. The last part of the quotation uses words directed to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 10 November 1979: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol. II/2 (1979), p. 1109.

²²Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737.

in a manner faithful to Scripture, Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium, provides an awareness of the Gospel principles which will enrich the meaning of human life and give it a new dignity.

Through research and teaching the students are educated in the various disciplines so as to become truly competent in the specific sectors in which they will devote themselves to the service of society and of the Church, but at the same time prepared to give the witness of their faith to the world.

2. The University Community

21. A Catholic University pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community animated by the spirit of Christ. The source of its unity springs from a common dedication to the truth, a common vision of the dignity of the human person and, ultimately, the person and message of Christ which gives the Institution its distinctive character. As a result of this inspiration, the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons; in turn, everyone in the community helps in promoting unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, contributes towards decisions which affect the community, and also towards maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic character of the Institution.

22. *University teachers* should seek to improve their competence and endeavor to set the content, objectives, methods, and results of research in an individual discipline within the framework of a coherent world vision. Christians among the teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences an attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. All teachers are to be inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life.

23. *Students* are challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training. Most especially, they are challenged to continue the search for truth and for meaning throughout their lives, since "the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to

contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense".²³ This enables them to acquire or, if they have already done so, to deepen a Christian way of life that is authentic. They should realize the responsibility of their professional life, the enthusiasm of being the trained 'leaders' of tomorrow, of being witnesses to Christ in whatever place they may exercise their profession.

24. *Directors and administrators* in a Catholic University promote the constant growth of the University and its community through a leadership of service; the dedication and witness of the *non-academic staff* are vital for the identity and life of the University.

25. Many Catholic Universities were founded by Religious Congregations, and continue to depend on their support; those Religious Congregations dedicated to the apostolate of higher education are urged to assist these Institutions in the renewal of their commitment, and to continue to prepare religious men and women who can positively contribute to the mission of a Catholic University.

Lay people have found in university activities a means by which they too could exercise an important apostolic role in the Church and, in most Catholic Universities today, the academic community is largely composed of laity; in increasing numbers, lay men and women are assuming important functions and responsibilities for the direction of these Institutions. These lay Catholics are responding to the Church's call "to be present, as signs of courage and intellectual creativity, in the privileged places of culture, that is, the world of education – school and University".²⁴ The future of Catholic Universities depends to a great extent on the competent and dedicated service of lay Catholics. The Church sees their developing presence in these institutions both as a sign of hope and as a confirmation of the irreplaceable lay vocation in the Church and in the world, confident that lay people will, in the exercise of their own distinctive

²³VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080. Cardinal Newman describes the ideal to be sought in this way: "A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom". *Op. cit.*, pp. 101-102).

²⁴JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation* *Christifideles Laici*, 30 December 1988, n. 44: AAS 81 (1989), p. 479.

role, "illumine and organize these (temporal) affairs in such a way that they always start out, develop, and continue according to Christ's mind, to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer".²⁵

26. The university community of many Catholic institutions includes member of other Churches, ecclesial communities and religions, and also those who profess no religious belief. These men and women offer their training and experience in furthering the various academic disciplines or other university tasks.

3. The Catholic University in the Church

27. Every Catholic University, without ceasing to be a University, has a relationship to the Church that is essential to its institutional identity. As such, it participates most directly in the life of the local Church in which it is situated; at the same time, because it is an academic institution and therefore a part of the intentional community of scholarship and inquiry, each institution participates in and contributes to the life and the mission of the universal Church, assuming consequently a special bond with the Holy See by reason of the service to unity which it is called to render to the whole Church. One consequence of its essential relationship to the Church is that the *institutional* fidelity of the University to the Christian message includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals. Catholic members of the university community are also called to a personal fidelity to the Church with all that this implies. Non-Catholic members are required to respect the Catholic character of the University; while the University in turn respects their religious liberty.²⁶

28. Bishops have a particular responsibility to promote Catholic Universities, and especially to promote and assist in the preservation and strengthening of their Catholic identity, including the protection of their Catholic identity in relation to civil authorities. This will be achieved more effectively if close personal and pastoral

²⁵VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, n. 31: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 37-38. Cf. Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, *passim*: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 837ff. Cf. also *Gaudium et Spes*, 43: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1061-1064.

²⁶Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 2: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 930-931.

relationships exist between University and Church authorities, characterized by mutual trust, close and consistent cooperation and continuing dialogue. Even when they do not enter directly into the internal governance of the University, Bishop "should be seen not as external agents but as participants in the life of the Catholic University".²⁷

29. The Church, accepting "the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences," recognizes the academic freedom of scholars in each discipline in accordance with each one principles and proper methods,²⁸ and within the confines of the truth and the common good.

Theology has its legitimate place in the University alongside other disciplines. It has proper principles and methods which define it as a branch of knowledge. Theologians enjoy this same freedom so long as they are faithful to these principle and methods.

Bishops should encourage the creative work of theologians. They serve the Church through research done in a way that respects theological method. They seek to understand better, further develop and more effectively communicate the meaning of Christian Revelation as transmitted in Scripture and Tradition and in the Church's Magisterium. They also investigate the ways in which theology can shed light on specific questions raised by contemporary Culture. At the same time, since theology seeks an understanding of revealed truth whose authentic interpretation is entrusted to the Bishops of the Church,²⁹ it is intrinsic to the principles and methods of their research and teaching in their academic discipline that theologians respect the authority of the Bishops, and assent to Catholic doctrine according to the degree of authority with which it is taught.³⁰ Because

²⁷JOHN PAUL II, Address to Catholic Higher Education, Xavier University of Louisiana, U.S.A., 12 September 1987, n. 4: AAS 80 (1988), p.764.

²⁸VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p.1080.

²⁹Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, nn. 8-10: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 820-822.

³⁰Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 29-31.

of their interrelated roles, dialogue between Bishops and theologians is essential; this is especially true today, when the results of research are so quickly and so widely communicated through the media.³¹

B. THE MISSION OF SERVICE OF A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

30. The basic mission of a University is a continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society. A Catholic University participates in this mission with its own specific characteristics and purposes.

1. *Service to Church and Society*

31. Through teaching and research, a Catholic University offers an indispensable contribution to the Church. In fact, it prepares men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church. More over, by offering the results of its scientific research, a Catholic University will be able to help the Church respond to the problems and needs of this age.

32. A Catholic University, as any University, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of *serious contemporary problems* in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. University research will seek to discover the roots and causes of the serious problems of our time, paying special attention to their ethical and religious dimensions.

³¹Cf. "Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian" of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of 24 May 1990.

If need be, a Catholic University must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.

A specific priority is the need to examine and evaluate the predominant values and norms of modern society and culture in a Christian perspective, and the responsibility to try to communicate to society those *ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human life*. In this way a University can contribute further to the development of a true Christian anthropology, founded on the person of Christ, which will bring the dynamism of the creation and redemption to bear on reality and on the correct solution to the problems of life.

34. The Christian spirit of service to others for the *promotion of social justice* is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students. The Church is firmly committed to the integral growth of all men and women.³² The Gospel, interpreted in the social teachings of the Church, is an urgent call to promote "the development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases, and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfillment".³³ Every Catholic University feels responsible to contribute concretely to the progress of the society within which it works: for example it will be capable of searching for ways to make university education accessible to all those who are able to benefit from it, especially the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it. A Catholic University also has the responsibility, to the degree that it is able, to help to promote the development of the emerging nations.

35. In its attempts to resolve these complex issues that touch on so many different dimensions of human life and of society, a Catholic University will insist on cooperation among the different academic disciplines, each offering its distinct contribution in the

³²Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nn. 27-34: AAS 80 (1988), pp 547-560.

³³PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, n. 1: AAS 59 (1967), p. 257.

search for solutions; moreover, since the economic and personal resources of a single Institution are limited, cooperation in *common research projects* among Catholic Universities, as well as with other private and governmental institutions, is imperative. In this regard, and also in what pertains to the other fields of the specific activity of a Catholic University, the role played by various national and international associations of Catholic Universities is to be emphasized. Among these associations the mission of *The International Federation of Catholic Universities*, founded by the Holy See,³⁴ is particularly to be remembered. The Holy See anticipates further fruitful collaboration with this Federation.

36. Through programmes of *continuing education* offered to the wider community, by making its scholars available for consulting services, by taking advantage of modern means of communication, and in a variety of other ways, a Catholic University can assist in making the growing body of human knowledge and a developing understanding of the faith available to a wider public, thus expanding university services beyond its own academic community.

37. In its service to society, a Catholic University *will relate especially to the academic, cultural and scientific world* of the region in which it is located. Original forms of dialogue and collaboration are to be encouraged between the Catholic Universities and the other Universities of a nation on behalf of development, of understanding between cultures, and of the defence of nature in accordance with an awareness of the international ecological situation.

Catholic Universities join other private and public Institutions in serving the public interest through higher education and research; they are one among the necessary for the free expression of cultural diversity, and they are committed to the promotion of solidarity and its meaning in society and in the world. Therefore they have the full

³⁴"Therefore, in that there has been a pleasing multiplication of centres of higher learning, it has become apparent that it would be opportune for the faculty and the alumni to unite in common association which, working in reciprocal understanding and close collaboration, and based upon the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, as father and universal doctor, they might more efficaciously spread and extend the light of Christ". (PIUS XII, Apostolic Letter *Catholicas Studiorum Universitates*, with which the International Federation of Catholic Universities was established: AAS 42 (1950), p. 386.

right to expect that civil society and public authorities will recognize and defend their institutional autonomy and academic freedom; moreover, they have the right to the financial support that is necessary for their continued existence and development.

2. Pastoral Ministry

38. Pastoral ministry is that activity of the University which offers the members of the University community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their academic study and non-academic activities, *thus integrating faith with life*. It is part of the mission of the Church within the University, and is also a constitutive element of a Catholic University itself, both in its structure and in its life. A university community concerned with promoting the Institution's Catholic character will be conscious of this pastoral dimension and sensitive to the ways in which it can have an influence on all university activities.

39. As a natural expression of the Catholic identity of the University, the university community *should give a practical demonstration of its faith in its daily activity*, with important moments of reflection and of prayer. Catholic members of this community will be offered opportunities to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives and will be encouraged to participate in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist as the most perfect act of community worship. When the academic community includes members of other Churches, ecclesial communities or religions, their initiatives for reflection and prayer in accordance with their own beliefs are to be respected.

40. Those involved in pastoral ministry will encourage teachers and students to become more aware of their responsibility towards those who are suffering physically or spiritually. Following the example of Christ, they will be particularly attentive to the poorest and to those who suffer economic, social, cultural or religious injustice. This responsibility begins within the academic community, but it also finds application beyond it.

41. Pastoral ministry is an indispensable means by which Catholic students can, in fulfillment of their baptism, *be prepared for active participation in the life of the Church*; it can assist in developing and nurturing the value of marriage and family life, fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life, stimulating the Chris-

tian commitment of the laity and imbuing every activity with the spirit of the Gospel. Close cooperation between pastoral ministry in a Catholic University and the other activities within the local Church, under the guidance or with the approval of the diocesan Bishop, will contribute to their mutual growth.³⁵

42. Various associations or movements of spiritual and apostolic life, especially those developed specifically for students, can be of great assistance in developing the pastoral aspects of university life.

3. Cultural Dialogue

43. By its very nature, a University develops culture through its research, helps to transmit the local culture to each succeeding generation through its teaching, and assists cultural activities through its educational services. It is open to all human experience and is ready to dialogue with and learn from any culture. A Catholic University shares in this, offering the rich experience of the Church's own culture. In addition, a Catholic University, aware that human culture is open to Revelation and transcendence, is also a primary and privileged place for a *fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture*.

44. Through this dialogue a Catholic University assist the Church, enabling it to come to a better knowledge of diverse cultures, discern their positive and negative aspects, to receive their authentically human contributions, and to develop means by which it can make the faith better understood by the men and women of a particular culture.³⁶ While it is true that the Gospel cannot be identified with any particular culture and transcends all cultures, it is also true that "the Kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by

³⁵The Code of Canon Law indicates the general responsibility of the Bishop toward university students: "The diocesan bishop is to have serious pastoral concern for students by erecting a parish for them or by assigning priests for this purpose on a stable basis; he is also to provide for Catholic university centers at universities, even non-Catholic ones, to give assistance, especially spiritual to young people". (CIC, can. 813).

³⁶"Living in various circumstances during the course of time, the Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebrations and in the life of the diversified community of the faithful". (VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58: AAS (1966), p. 1079.

men and women who are profoundly linked to a culture and the building up of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures".³⁷ "A faith that places itself on the margin of what is human, of what is therefore culture, would be a faith *unfaithful to the fullness of what the Work of God manifests and reveals*, a decapitated faith worse still, a faith in the process of self-annihilation".³⁸

45. A Catholic University must become *more attentive to the cultures of the world of today, and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church* in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society. Among the criteria that characterize the values of a culture are above all, *the meaning of the human person, his or her liberty, dignity, sense of responsibility, and openness to the transcendent*. To a respect for persons is joined *the preeminent value of the family*, the primary unit of every human culture.

Catholic University will seek to discern and evaluate both the aspirations and the contradictions of modern culture, in order to make it more suited to the total development of individuals and peoples. In particular, it is recommended that by means of appropriate studies, the impact of modern technology and especially of the mass media on persons, the family, and the institutions and whole of modern culture be studied deeply. Traditional cultures are to be defended in their identity, helping them to receive modern values without sacrificing their own heritage, which is a wealth for the whole of the human family. Universities, situated within the ambience of these cultures, will seek to harmonize local cultures with the positive contributions of modern cultures.

46. An area that particularly interests a Catholic University is *the dialogue between Christian thought and the modern sciences*. This task requires persons particularly well versed in the individual

³⁷PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 20: AAS 68 (1976), p. 18. Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1079.

³⁸JOHN PAUL II, Address to Intellectuals, to Students and to University Personnel at Medellín, Colombia, 5 July 1986, n. AAS 79 (1987), p. 99. Cf. also VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58: AAS 58 (1966) p. 1079.

disciplines and who are at same time adequately prepared theologically, and who are capable of confronting epistemological questions at the level of the relationship between faith and reason. Such dialogue concerns the natural sciences as much as the human sciences which posit new and complex philosophical and ethical problems. The Christian researcher should demonstrate the way in which human intelligence is enriched by the higher truth that comes from the Gospel: "The intelligence is never diminished, rather, it is stimulated and reinforced by that interior fount of deep understanding that is the Word of God, and by the hierarchy of values that results from it... In its unique manner, the Catholic University helps to manifest the superiority of the spirit, that can never, without the risk of losing its very self, be placed at the service of something other than the search for truth".³⁹

47. Besides cultural dialogue, a Catholic University, in accordance with its specific ends, and keeping in mind the various religious-cultural contexts, following the directives promulgated by competent ecclesiastical authority, can offer a contribution to ecumenical dialogue. It does so to further the search for unity among all Christians. In inter-religious dialogue it will assist in discerning the spiritual values that are present in the different religions.

4. *Evangelization*

48. The primary mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel in such a way that a relationship between faith and life is established in each individual and in the socio-cultural context in which individual live and act and communicate with one another. Evangelization means "bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new... It is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and, as it were, upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, humanity's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation".⁴⁰

³⁹PAUL VI, to the Delegates of The International Federation of Catholic Universities, 27 November 1972: AAS 64 (1972), p. 770.

⁴⁰PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nn. 18ff.: AAS 68 (1976), pp. 17-18.

49. By its very nature, each Catholic University makes an important contribution to the Church's work of evangelization. It is a living *institutional* witness to Christ and his message, so vitally important in cultures marked by secularism, or where Christ and his message are still virtually unknown. Moreover, all the basic academic activities of a Catholic University are connected with and in harmony with the evangelizing mission of the Church: research carried out in the light of the Christian message which puts new human discoveries at the service of individuals and society; education offered in a faith-context that forms men and women capable of rational and critical judgment and conscious of the transcendent dignity of the human person; professional training that incorporates ethical values and a sense of service to individuals and to society; the dialogue with culture that makes the faith better understood and the theological research that translates the faith into contemporary language. "Precisely because it is more and more conscious of its salvific mission in this world, the Church wants to have these centres closely connected with it; it wants to have them present and operative in spreading the authentic message of Christ".⁴¹

PART II

GENERAL NORMS

Article 1. *The Nature of these General Norms*

§1. These General Norms are based on, and are a further development of, the Code of Canon Law⁴² and the complementary Church legislation, without prejudice to the right of the Holy See to intervene should this become necessary. They are valid for all Catholic Universities and other Catholic Institutes of Higher Studies throughout the world.

⁴¹PAUL VI, Address to Presidents and Rectors of the Universities of the Society of Jesus, 6 August 1975, n. 2: AAS 67 (1975), p. 533. Speaking to the participants of the International Congress on Catholic Universities, 25 April 1989, I added (n.5): "Within a Catholic University the evangelical mission of the Church and the mission of research and teaching become *interrelated and coordinated*". Cf. AAS 81 (1989), p. 1220.

⁴²Cf. in particular the Chapter of the Code: "Catholic Universities and other Institute of Higher Studies: (CIC, can. 807-814).

§2. The General Norms are to be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by Episcopal Conferences and other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy⁴³ in conformity with the Code of Canon Law and complementary Church legislation, taking into account the Statutes of each University or Institute and, as far as possible and appropriate, civil law. After review by the Holy See,⁴⁴ these local or regional "Ordinances" will be valid for all Catholic Universities and other Catholic Institutes of Higher Studies in the region, except for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. These latter Institutions, including Ecclesiastical Faculties which are part of a Catholic University, are governed by the norms of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*.⁴⁵

§3. A University established or approved by the Holy See, by an Episcopal Conference or another Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy, or by a diocesan Bishop is to incorporate these General Norms and their local and regional applications into its governing documents, and conform its existing Statutes both to the General Norms and to their applications, and submit them for approval to the competent ecclesiastical Authority. It is contemplated that other Catholic Universities, that is, those not established or approved in any of the above ways, with the agreement of the local ecclesiastical Authority, will make their own the General Norms and their local and regional applications, internalizing them into their governing documents, and, as far as possible, will conform their existing Statutes both to these General Norms and to their applications.

Article 2. *The Nature of a Catholic University*

§1. A Catholic University, like every university, is a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge. It is dedicated to research, to teaching, and to various kinds of service in accordance with its cultural mission.

⁴³Episcopal Conferences were established in the Latin Rite. Other Rites have other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy.

⁴⁴Cf. *CIC*, Can. 455, §2.

⁴⁵Cf. *Sapientia Christiana*: AAS 71 (1979), pp. 469-521. Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are those that have the right to confer academic degrees by the authority of the Holy See.

§2. A Catholic University, as Catholic, informs and carries out its research, teaching, and all other activities with Catholic ideals, principles and attitudes. It is linked with the Church either by a formal, constitutive and statutory bond or by reason of and institutional commitment made by those responsible for it.

§3. Every Catholic University is to make known its Catholic identity, either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document, unless authorized otherwise by the competent ecclesiastical Authority. The University, particularly through its structure and its regulations, is to provide means which will guarantee the expression and the preservation of this identity in a manner consistent with §2.

§4. Catholic teaching and discipline are to influence all university activities, while the freedom of conscience of each person is to be fully respected.⁴⁶ Any official action or commitment of the University is to be in accord with its Catholic identity.

§5. A Catholic University possesses the autonomy necessary to develop its distinctive identity and pursue its proper mission. Freedom in research and teaching is recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good.⁴⁷

Article 3. *The Establishment of a Catholic University*

§1. A Catholic University may be established or approved by the Holy See, by an Episcopal Conference or another Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy, or by a diocesan Bishop.

§2. With the consent of the diocesan Bishop, a Catholic University may also be established by a Religious institute or other public juridical person.

⁴⁶Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 2: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 930-931.

⁴⁷Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 57 and 59: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1077-1080; *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737.

§3. A Catholic University may also be established by other ecclesiastical or lay persons; such a University may refer to itself as a Catholic University only with the consent of the competent ecclesiastical Authority, in accordance with the conditions upon which both parties shall agree.⁴⁸

§4. In the cases of § §1 and 2, the Statutes must be approved by the competent ecclesiastical Authority.

Article 4. *The University Community*

§1. The responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic identity of the University rests primarily with the University itself. While this responsibility is entrusted principally to university authorities (including, when the positions exist, the Chancellor and/or a Board of Trustees or equivalent body), it is shared in varying degrees by all members of the university community, and therefore calls for the recruitment of adequate university personnel, especially teachers and administrators, who are both willing and able to promote that identity. The identity of a Catholic University is essentially linked to the quality of its teachers and to respect for Catholic doctrine. It is the responsibility of the competent Authority to watch over these two fundamental needs in accordance with what is indicated in Canon Law.⁴⁹

§2. All teachers and all administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of the Institution and its implications, and about their responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that identity.

⁴⁸Both the establishment of such a university and the conditions by which it may refer to itself as a Catholic University are to be in accordance with the prescriptions issued by the Holy See, Episcopal Conference or other Assembly of Catholic Hierarchy.

⁴⁹Canon 810 of CIC, specifies the responsibility of the competent Authorities in this area: § "It is the responsibility of the authority who is competent in accord with the statutes to provide for the appointment of teachers to Catholic universities who, besides their scientific and pedagogical suitability, are also outstanding in their integrity of doctrine and probity of life; when those requisite qualities are lacking they are to be removed from their positions in accord with the procedure set forth in the statutes. §2 The conference of bishops and the diocesan bishops concerned have the duty and right of being vigilant that in these universities the principles of Catholic doctrine are faithfully observed". Cf. also Article 5, 2 ahead in these "Norms".

§3. In ways appropriate to the different academic disciplines, all Catholic teachers are to be faithful to, and all other teachers are to respect, Catholic doctrine and morals in their research and teaching. In particular, Catholic theologians, aware that they fulfil a mandate received from the Church are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.⁵⁰

§4. Those university teachers and administrators who belong to other Churches, ecclesial communities, or religions, as well as those who profess no religious belief, and also all students, are to recognize and respect the distinctive Catholic identity of the University. In order not to endanger the Catholic identity of the University or Institute of Higher Studies, the number of non-Catholic teachers should not be allowed to constitute a majority within the Institution, which is and must remain Catholic.

§5. The education of students is to combine academic and professional development with formation in moral and religious principles and the social teachings of the Church; the programme of studies for each of the various professions is to include an appropriate ethical formation in that profession. Courses in Catholic doctrine are to be made available to all students.⁵¹

Article 5. *The Catholic University within the Church*

§1. Every Catholic University is to maintain communion with the universal Church and the Holy See; it is to be in close communion with the local Church and in particular with the diocesan Bishops of the region or nation in which it is located. In ways consistent with its nature as a University, a Catholic University will contribute to the Church's work of evangelization.

§2. Each Bishop has a responsibility to promote the welfare of the Catholic Universities in his diocese and has the right and duty to watch over the preservation and strengthening of their Catholic

⁵⁰VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25: AAS 57 (1965), p. 29; *Dei Verbum*, nn. 8-10: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 820-822; Cf. *CIC* can. 812: "It is necessary that those who teach theological disciplines in any institute of higher studies have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority".

⁵¹Cf. *CIC*, can 811 §2.

character. If problems should arise concerning this Catholic character, the local Bishop is to take the initiatives necessary to resolve the matter, working with the competent university authorities in accordance with established procedures⁵² and, if necessary, with the help of the Holy See.

§3. Periodically, each Catholic University, to which Article 3 §§ 1 and 2 refers, is to communicate relevant information about the University and its activities to the competent ecclesiastical Authority. Other Catholic Universities are to communicate this information to the Bishop of the diocese in which the principal seat of the Institution is located.

Article 6. *Pastoral Ministry*

§1. A Catholic University is to promote the pastoral care of all members of the university community, and to be especially attentive to the spiritual development of those who are Catholics. Priority is to be given to those means which will facilitate the integration of human and professional education with religious values in the light of Catholic doctrine, in order to unite intellectual learning with the religious dimension of life.

§2. A sufficient number of qualified people-priests, religious, and lay persons-are to be appointed to provide pastoral ministry for the university community, carried on in harmony and cooperation with the pastoral activities of the local Church under the guidance or with the approval of the diocesan Bishop. All members of the University community are to be invited to assist the work of a pastoral ministry, and to collaborate in its activities.

Article 7. *Cooperation*

§1. In order better to confront the complex problems facing modern society, and in order to strengthen the Catholic identity of the Institutions, regional, national and International cooperation is to be promoted in research, teaching, and other university activities among

⁵²For Universities to which Article 3 §§ 1 and 2 refer, these procedures are to be established in the university statutes approved by the competent ecclesiastical Authority; for other Catholic Universities, they are to be determined by Episcopal Conferences or other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy.

all Catholic Universities, including Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties.⁵³ Such cooperation is also to be promoted between Catholic Universities and other Universities, and with other research and educational Institutions, both private and governmental.

§2. Catholic Universities will, when possible and accord with Catholic principles and doctrine, cooperate with government programmes and the programmes of other national and international Organizations on behalf of justice, development of progress.

TRANSITIONAL NORMS

Art. 8. The present Constitution will come into effect on the first day to the academic year 1991.

Art. 9. The application of the Constitution is committed to the Congregation for Catholic Education, which has the duty to promulgate the necessary directives that will serve towards that end.

Art. 10. It will be the competence of the Congregation for Catholic Education, when with the passage of time circumstances require it, to propose changes to be made in the present Constitution in order that it may be adapted continuously to the needs of Catholic Universities.

Art. 11. Any particular laws or customs presently in effect that are contrary to this constitution are abolished. Also, any privileges granted up to this day by the Holy See whether to physical or moral persons that are contrary to this present Constitution are abolished.

CONCLUSION

The mission that the Church, with great hope, entrusts to Catholic Universities holds a cultural and religious meaning of vital importance because it concerns the very future of humanity. The

⁵³Cf. CIC, can. 820. Cf. also *Sapientia Christiana*, Norms of Application, Article 49: AAS 71 (1979), p. 512.

renewal requested of Catholic Universities will make them better able to respond to the task of bringing the message of Christ to man, to society, to the various cultures: "Every human reality, both individual and social has been liberated by Christ: persons, as well as the activities of men and women, of which culture is the highest and incarnate expression. The salvific action of the Church on cultures is achieved, first of all, by means of persons, families and educators... Jesus Christ, our Savior, offers his light and his hope to all those who promote the sciences, the arts, letters and the numerous fields developed by modern culture. Therefore, all the sons and daughters of the Church should become aware of their mission and discover how the strength of the Gospel can penetrate and regenerate the mentalities and dominant values that inspire individual cultures, as well as the opinions and mental attitudes that are derived from it".⁵⁴

It is with fervent hope that I address this Document to all the men and women engaged in various ways in the significant mission of Catholic higher education.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, my encouragement and my trust go with you in your weighty daily task that becomes ever more important, more urgent and necessary on behalf of Evangelization for the future of culture and of all cultures. The Church and the world have great need of your witness and of your capable, free, and responsible contribution.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 15 August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, in the year 1990, the twelfth of the Pontificate.

JOANNES PAULUS II

⁵⁴JOHN PAUL II, to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 13 January 1989, n. AAS 81 (1989), pp. 857-858.

Values Education and Christian Moral Formation*

Introduction

In recent years a lot of emphasis has been given to "values" by contemporary philosophy, behavioral sciences and education, including religious education. Reflections and researches on the nature, features, categories and motivational role of values in human life and behavior have mushroomed all over the world. The Philippines has produced several experts. Among them, Dr. Tomas D. Andres, Fr. Leonardo N. Mercado, SVD and Fr. Dionisio M. Miranda, SVD, are undoubtedly among the undisputed authorities in our country, particularly in the area of Filipino values.

In the educational field, the recourse to values in the formation of the youth has intensified, with the competent school authorities taking the necessary steps towards promoting a systematic "value inspired" or "value-centered" education. The integration of value education in all subject matters in the Elementary School level has been going on since 1983. We have now the DECS orientation that values be taught as a separate subject matter, following the issuance of DECS Order No. 6, s. 1988, entitled "The DECS Values Education Program."¹

The reaction to such a move has not been unanimous. Some have applauded, others have frowned. Some have attempted to "integrate" values education with religious instruction, while others appear to have drawn the conclusion that value education classes make the teaching of religion redundant and unnecessary.

* Reprinted from *Docete*, April/June 1990.

¹See the letter of former Secretary of Education L. Quisumbing, introducing the "DECS Values Education Program," in the "Documentation" section of *Docete*, April/June 1990 p. 27.

This article intends to focus on such a questionable position. It will make some necessary clarifications and will offer some pertinent conclusions. It is not my purpose therefore, to subject the DECS "Values Education Program" to a critical evaluation,² nor to consider how the values proposed by the DECS can be integrated in a syllabus for religious education in High School. Such a praiseworthy effort has been made by Sr. Aida Josefa A. Bautista, SPC, in her masteral thesis defended and published in 1989.³ The purpose of this article is to objectively compare the DECS Values Education Framework with the basic content of a Catholic moral education program, in order to see whether the former makes the latter redundant as claimed by some.

The DECS Values Education Framework

The DECS Values Education Framework consists of *seven* "core values" and of some *forty* "related values" which range from physical fitness to international understanding and cooperation.⁴

The seven "core values" are: *Health, Truth, Love, Spirituality, Social responsibility, Economic efficiency and Nationalism/ Global solidarity*.⁵

Each of these values corresponds to a different "dimension" of the human person, four of which (physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual) refer to the "person as self," while the remaining three (social, economic and political) refer to the "person in community." The two figures below should help clarify this relationship.

²Such a critical evaluation has already been made in reference to same points by F. Joseph L. Roche, S.J., in his article *Value Education/ Moral Recovery and the Catholic Educator*." *DOCETE* XII, 57(April/June 1989), pp. 24-30.

³See: Aida Josefa A. Bautista, SPC, *Values Education in Religious Education*, Manila, Rex Book Store, 1989.

⁴See "DECS Values Education Program." in *Docete*, April/June 1990, p. 53.

⁵*Ibid.* p. 50.

Figure 1. *The Dimensions of the Human Person*

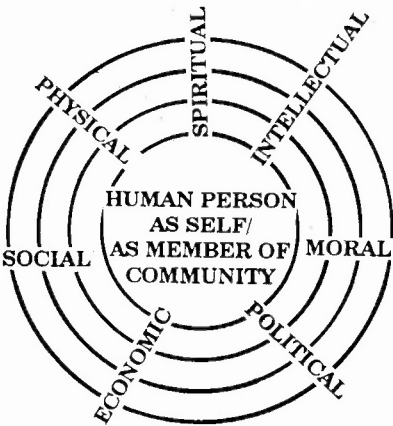
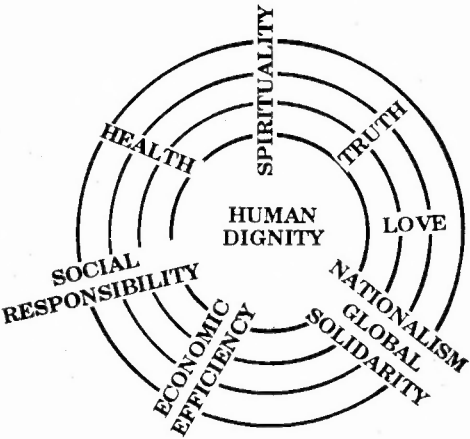


Figure 2. *The Core Values*



The Underlying "Philosophy"

Such a framework of values with the corresponding "dimensions" of the human person is obviously based on a certain philosophy or concept of man considered as shared by all Filipinos. All these elements which are the "Filipino expression of universal values"⁶ constitute a sort of "*minimum common denominator*" which people of (almost) all philosophical⁷ and religious denominations accept.⁸ In a pluralistic society it is indispensable to identify the common values to be pursued both in education and in legislation, while allowing for individual groups and persuasions to complement this block of "shared values" with values proper to each of them. The DECS Value Framework, in fact, "does not purport to be a complete list of human values."⁹

This approach applies also to the *goal* and *objectives* which the pursuit of such "common values" intends to attain. In fact, no Filipino citizen would disagree with the goal of the DECS Value Framework which is "to provide and promote values education at all three levels of the Educational system for the development of the human person committed to the building of a just and humane society, and an independent and democratic nation."¹⁰

Likewise, the specific objectives which spell out in detail the implications of the general goal are perfectly acceptable to all persuasions as educational objectives for the whole nation. No one, in fact, would object to the statement that "Proper implementation of the program will develop Filipinos who:

1. are self-actualized, integrally developed human beings imbued with a sense of human dignity;

⁶Dra. Marta Mogol, Director of Secondary Education, in her reply to Mo. Marie Javelosa, SPC, reproduced in *Values Education in Religious Education*, p. VII.

⁷Marxism and other atheistic philosophies will not accept in full this Value Framework because it makes clear reference to God and religious faith.

⁸This does not imply that the DECS Values Framework corresponds exactly to their value system.

⁹See "*DECS Values Education Program*" (henceforth indicated as *DVEP*), "Values Conceptual Framework," p. 49.

¹⁰*DVEP*, "Goal, Objectives and Guidelines," p. 48.

2. are social beings with a sense of responsibility for their community and environment;
3. are productive persons and who contribute to the economic security and development of the family and the nation;
4. as citizens, have a deep sense of nationalism, and are committed to the progress of the nation, and as well as of the entire world community, through global solidarity; and
5. manifest in actual life an abiding faith in God as a reflection of his spiritual being."

The acceptance of these educational objectives, however, does not say that every body finds them comprehensive enough. They are accepted for what they are – a set of *minimum common objectives* to be pursued in education for the good of the individual and of the country. These objectives need to be further explicitated and complemented. It will be for the individual authors of textbooks and educational institutions to come up with a more articulate and concrete development of what can be considered included in, or compatible with each of these objectives. In fact, "it is desirable that regions, localities, and institutions construct their own values map, with clearly defined priorities suited to their peculiar context and needs"¹¹

The DECS Values Education Program and the Catholic Religious Formation

The acceptance of the principle that the DECS Values Education Framework is not exhaustive and actually requires further development to be done by particular educational Agencies entitles us to draw some important conclusions:

1. the DECS Values Education Program cannot be fully equated with a (Catholic) Religious Education Program;
2. the DECS Values Education Program should not replace the Religious Education Program on the ground that they are "more or less the same";

¹¹DVEP, "Goal, Objectives and Guidelines," p. 49.

3. the two programs can and should be harmonized so as to avoid duplication of common elements and waste of time.

Each of these conclusions needs to be supported by clear reasons to show their validity and strength. In the remaining part of the article, however, I will limit my reflection to the main reasons which justify the first two conclusions. Conclusion 3 already finds its application in the plan to integrate Values Education in Religious Education, prepared by Sr. Bautista and approved by the DECS. Such a plan can be applied only in private Catholic Schools, since all their students are supposed to be Catholic.

Why the DECS Values Education Program Cannot Be Equated with a (Catholic) Religious Education Program

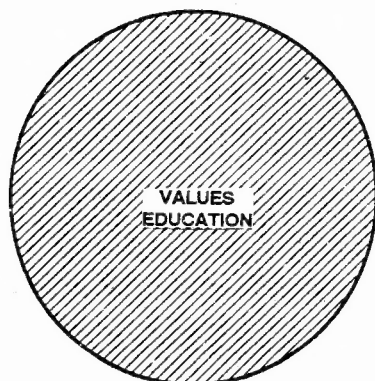
The very first reason for the impossibility of equating the two Programs is the fact that, while the DECS Values Education Program limits itself to the areas of *personal* and *social values*, the Catholic Religious Formation includes not only *moral life*, but also doctrine, worship and sacraments.¹² While both values education and Catholic moral formation cover the *common area of responsible commitment in personal and social life* (moral/ethical sphere), the areas of doctrine, worship and sacraments are totally foreign to the DECS Values Education Framework.

This remark has no disparaging connotation, for no one would reasonably expect that the DECS Values Education Program should also include an explanation of the Creed and of the Sacraments... On the other hand no Catholic would consider a religious education program complete if it did not include a catechesis on the truths of the Catholic faith, worship and the sacraments.

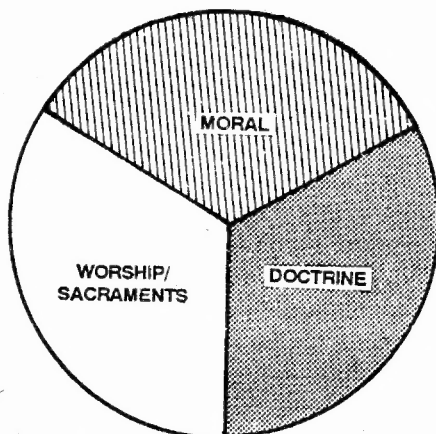
The figures on the following page may help clarify the important point that *Catholic Morality*, or moral formation, *is the only area of the Catholic faith in which a comparison with the DECS Values Education Program can be attempted*. Such a comparison may reveal both *similarities* and *differences*.

¹²See any complete series of religion textbooks. Other aspect, like Salvation History, Church History and Hagiography could also be added.

DECS Values Area



Catholic Formation Areas



A Comparison Between the Contents of the Two Moral Education Programs

How does Catholic moral formation compare with the DECS values education program? Or, to put it in another way, in what are the contents of the two programs similar and in what do they differ?

The first impression may be one of *great similarity*, for all the core values of the DECS "framework" (and even the "derived values") could easily enter a Catholic list of values. Spirituality, truth, love, social responsibility, etc. are definitely universally accepted values. This comes as no surprise, since, as we already saw, the values of the DECS framework are a "minimum common denominator" acceptable to all.

At a closer examination, however, an important difference begins to surface - *even when the same terms are used in both systems, their meaning may not be exactly the same*. If we take, for instance, the value "spirituality" in the DECS framework, we see that it is vaguely equated with religious faith, and a "faith" which is seen exclusively as "surrender" to that "dimension of the infinite, which religious believers call by the name of God."¹³ Now, for us Catholics, the term "faith" has surely a much richer connotation than this. For one thing, faith has not only a "surrender" aspect of "intellectual assent" to a body of truths (faith as "*Trusting*"), but also an aspect of "intellectual assent" to a body of truths (faith as "*believing*") and a "commitment/obedience" aspect (faith as "*doing*").¹⁴ These two other important aspects of "faith", do not seem to be part of the DECS value framework.

The difference between values called by the same name is even more obvious if we consider the common value "LOVE". The DECS framework lists the following as "related values" of love: *integrity/honesty; self worth/self-esteem; personal discipline*. Now, even if we grant that such a list is not intended to be exhaustive, one may justifiably conclude that this understanding of the DECS core value "LOVE" can hardly be equated to the concept of "Christian love," even if we limit it to "love of self" and "love of others," without mentioning "love of God". In Catholic/Christian morality "LOVE" is the most important value and motivation, the one that embodies and gives meaning to all other moral attitudes and actuations, for "love is the fulfillment of the Law" (*Rom 13:10*). All Catholic moral teaching, in fact, can be synthesized in the two commandments, "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (*Mt 22:37-40*).

We should also add that the Catholic value system has another core value - HOPE, which is considered fundamental and which is not classified as such in the DECS values framework. Actually none of the values listed there comes close to the concept of Christian hope.

¹³DVEP, "Related Values," p. 51.

¹⁴See NCPD, nos. 146-148; 149-151; 152-153.

Likewise, many other important Christian moral values, like *humility, mercy, forgiveness, sincerity, truthfulness, purity, chastity, fairness, fidelity, obedience, piety, ...* are nowhere to be found in the DECS framework. Again, one can readily grant that its list of "related values" is not meant to be exhaustive. One would expect, however, that at least some of the above mentioned moral values (=virtues) be included in it.

Difference in Emphasis

Another very important difference between the two value systems lies in the fact that each of them emphasizes different values. Even if we were to grant that the two lists of core and related values coincide (*something that cannot be done, anyway*), the difference in emphasis would still be obvious.

Such a difference of emphasis is by no means marginal. In moral education, in fact, (much more than in other areas), the clear distinction between what is fundamental and essential, from what is just "related" and "marginal" is absolutely indispensable. After all, we are dealing with "values" and we know that there is such a thing as "hierarchy of values." The DECS Value framework clearly distinguishes between "core values" and "related values."

If we are to decide which among the "core values" are emphasized in the DECS framework, it seems that they are *Social Responsibility* and *Nationalism / Patriotism*. Both, in fact, carry a list of eight "related values," as against the one related value listed under *Knowledge / Truth* and *Spirituality*, and the three "related values" questionably listed under *Love*... Clearly, the DECS Values Framework appears to be emphasizing the values related to the person in community, though, surprisingly, "Love" is not one of the core values included in this group!¹⁵

On the other hand, Catholic morality (and any moral system based on the Gospel, for that matter) always emphasizes the *primacy of LOVE*. The two commandments which summarize the whole moral teaching of the Bible are both about love. (*See Mt 22:37-40*). Love is the most essential "core value" of Christian morality.

¹⁵The exclusion of "Love" from the "community area" values is something bewildering, for "Love" is essentially *other-oriented*.

The importance attached to love not only by Jesus Christ,¹⁶ but also by St. Paul¹⁷ and St. John¹⁸ and the whole Christian tradition has identified *Christianity* as "*the religion of love.*" This is surely a conviction that has to be inculcated in Catholic moral formation. Although the DECS document states that, "*The moral nature of man places primacy in the value of love,*" this is all that we find there about it. The value of "love" is not sufficiently emphasized. The "related values" mentioned in connection with it hardly convey the idea of "primacy" and are all related to the "self," rather than to the relationship with others and God, as one would expect.¹⁹

The fact that the DECS framework seems to emphasize instead "Nationalism/Patriotism" and "Social Responsibility" may be due to the *overall perspective* or *vision* within which it views the moral formation of young people.

The "Overall Perspective" or "Vision" Grounding the Two Value Systems

By "overall perspective" or "vision" I mean the concept of man, society and human history; the meaning and "direction" of men's activity, both as individuals and a community. It is only within this "overall perspective" or "vision" that the moral education of a person can be conceptualized and carried out.

Now, what is the "overall perspective" from which the DECS values education framework is derived? We find it synthesized in the section entitled "Philosophy."²⁰ There we read that the Values Education Framework is "grounded on a rational understanding of the Filipino in his historical and cultural context."²¹ The human person (the Filipino) is seen both as "self," an "embodied spirit," with a unique dignity. As a "person in community" he belongs to a family "as well as to a wider and more complex society." As a social being, he "partici-

¹⁶See, for instance, Jn 13:34-35; 15:9-17; 21:15-17.

¹⁷See, for instance, Rom 12:9-21 and 1 Cor 13.

¹⁸See Jn 4:7-21.

¹⁹See DVEP, "Related Values," p. 51.

²⁰See DVEP, "Philosophy," pp. 49-50.

²¹Ibid., p. 49.

pates in defining the goals and destinies of the community and in achieving the common good, social progress and total human liberation and development.”²² Such is the “philosophy of man” enshrined in the Philippine Constitution.

Once again, we have here a case of “*minimum common denominator*” acceptable to all Filipinos. No one would reject it as wrong. But no one with a religious conviction would consider this vision of man and his activity as exhaustive. It is, in fact, very much limited to *this life* (present and immediate future), considered especially in reference to the *natural potentialities of the individual*, the *common good* and *progress* to be achieved in *society*, within this nation, though *with an openness to the rest of mankind*.

Such a vision is clearly “immanentistic,” i.e. it has its beginning, development and *raison d’être* only in man, time and history. Man and his activity are not considered primarily in reference to God and the destiny of mankind spanning beyond the limits of time and history. We do find stated, though, that man’s “personhood is oriented to Almighty God from which derives his spiritual nature.”²³ All in all, however, this reference to God is quite vague and does not seem to have any bearing on the moral behavior of the individual.

Such a vision of man and history is absolutely inadequate to ground the moral education of a Christian. The overall perspective of the moral life of a Christian cannot prescind from God. It cannot be limited to this life. Christian moral life is essentially open to the “Transcendent,” in terms of rootedness, actualization and aspiration. For a follower of Jesus Christ, the moral formation and behavior of a person has to be *rooted in God* and *oriented toward Him* and the *eternal destiny* in which alone man finds total fulfillment. In other words, the moral education and behavior of a Christian believer is essentially related to his/her *faith* and *hope*. It has, likewise, an essential relationship to the dimension of *prayer and worship*.

Christians see themselves not just as “embodied spirits,” but as *a children of God*, created by Him out of love and called to cooperate with love to the fulfillment of His plan which encompasses all humans

²²Ibid. p. 50.

²³Ibid. p. 50.

and will last for all eternity. Christian morality, then, has an inborn *dialogical*, "*invitation-response*" structure whereby every individual is expected to respond in freedom and with love to God's invitation to become the very best one can be by interacting positively with him and members of one's community.

In this process the *person*, *mission* and *message of Jesus Christ* are of paramount importance as a continuous point of reference which throws a unique light on the entire process of moral formation, attitude and behavior of those who recognize him as their Teacher and Savior.

The overall *historical perspective* within which the moral activity of a Christian and of all mankind have to be situated is not just the temporal framework of a person's existence and society, nor simply the series of interactions among nations. Rather, it is the *history of salvation* or the transcendental *reality of the Kingdom*, the "project" of God which is always in the making, and which will find its fulfillment in eternal life.

For us Christians, this is a fundamental aspect of moral education and behavior which simply cannot be left out.

A Comparison Between the Goals and Objectives of the Two Systems

The "overall perspective" or "vision" grounding a value education framework inevitably has a bearing on its *goals* and *objectives*. This is another area which would call for an in-dept exploration. All that can be done here is to recall the goal and objectives of the DECS Values Education Framework, and to compare them with the goal and objectives of the Christian moral formation.

The general goal of the DECS values education thrust has been identified as: "*the development of the human person committed to the building of just and humane society, and an independent democratic nation.*"²⁴

The Objectives spell out in some detail this two-pronged goal. They range from forming "self-actualized, integrally developed human

²⁴See DVEP, "Goals, Objectives and Guidelines," p. 48.

beings imbued with a sense of human dignity," who become "productive persons... and citizens who have a deep sense of nationalism, committed to the progress of the nation as well as of the entire world community;" and end with the manifestation "in actual life of an abiding faith in God."²⁵

These are beautiful and concrete objectives and one would only wish that the Philippine school system might succeed in attaining them. No one concerned with the good of the nation would object to these objectives.

At the same time, it must also be stated unequivocally that for the moral life of a Christian these objectives are not sufficient. He will surely try to attain them all, but he cannot be contented with them. We Christians are expected to "go beyond," by aiming higher and deeper. We are called to become "saints," i.e. Christ-like; or, to put it in the very words of Jesus, we must aim to "become perfect even as our heavenly father is perfect: (*Mt 5:48*).

It is especially in this area of what one should strive to *become* and *do* (objectives of moral life) that the *person, message example and mission of Jesus Christ* have an indispensable and irreplaceable function. The value education and the consequent moral life of a Christian are utterly inadequate (and actually meaning-less) without an explicit and continuous reference to Christ as the *Model* to be imitated. the lofty and challenging *moral ideals* contained in the New Testament and in the teaching/tradition of the Church are no optional elements in the formation objectives to be attained in the life of a Christian.

Even in this area of "objectives" it is immediately obvious that Christian moral life is not just one aspect of the faith, to be considered alongside *doctrine* and *worship*, but is actually *essentially related* to these two other dimensions of the Catholic faith. As such, it has to be integrated with both of them.²⁶ One cannot speak of attaining objectives in Christian moral formation and life without grounding them in the pertinent *truths* of the faith (like creation, man's call to communion with God, sin, Incarnation, Redemption in Christ, etc.);

²⁵Ibid., p. 48.

²⁶See *NCDP*, nos. 5, 68, 78, 166, 167, 171, 172, 252.

and without relating them to *prayer, worship and sacraments*, through which the *grace-filled action of the Holy Spirit* makes our efforts fruitful.

A Comparison Between the Motivational Aspects of the Two Value Systems

These same complementary dimensions of the Catholic faith – *doctrine* and *worship*, have also an indispensable role in the *motivational aspect* of the moral formation and life of the faithful. Everything, in fact, crumbles in the moral life of a person if he/she is not properly motivated.

Looking at the DECS “Values Formation Framework” one fails to find the clear enunciation of *why* a Filipino should treasure those values and practice them. One can, however, derive some basic motivations from the human dignity intrinsic in all men, the history of the nation and the need to build up a better, just and human society.”²⁷

Such “reasons” are surely strong and worthwhile for a person who intends to develop one’s potentialities and be a good citizen from all points of view. But since the overall perspective of a Christian’s moral life is a much more comprehensive one, the ensuing motivations include some of a very deep and challenging character. We may list the following among the main ones:

- * the awareness of being a child of God, personally known and loved by him and destined to share in the life of the Trinity forever;
- * knowing that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life” (*Jn 3:16*);
- * the fact that through baptism we become adopted children of the father, brother/sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit;

²⁷See DVEP, “Goals, Objectives and Guidelines,” p. 48.

- * Jesus example of a life spent for others, loving all “even unto death”;
- * the example of millions of fellow believers who have succeeded in imitating Jesus so well, in spite of the frailty they shared with us;
- * the knowledge of God’s expectation and the certainty of his assistance;
- * the belief in the “Communion of Saints” and the certainty that *all that we do affects others*;
- * the help coming from prayer and a sincere participation in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist . . .

All these can surely be counted among the most powerful motivations which a Catholic can have in living a life worthy of his/her calling. But they should not be taken for granted. Motivations also must be made part of the values education program or moral formation. *Our Catholic students need to be made aware of them and must be helped to appreciate their relevance and strength.*

As is obvious, they will not get all these motivations in Value Education classes, if for no other reason, because these are “Catholic elements” and it would not be fair to impose them on non-Catholics or non-Christians, the only proper place and time when a complete moral formation of our Catholic students can be imparted, doing justice to the topic and avoiding doing injustice to non-Catholic students, is the religion class.

Conclusion

The step taken by the DECS to provide a “Framework” for value formation in all three levels of education is undoubtedly a positive one. Our nation – and especially our youth – need such a comprehensive campaign in order to bring about a “moral recovery.”

Value education given in school represents a positive unifying factor. However, it should not be made to bear more than it can. It must be clear to all that the framework of “shared values” still needs to be properly complemented and integrated with the values that are proper to the various groups that make up our nation.

The teaching of values as a subject matter in its own right should not lead anyone to draw the wrong conclusion that value education makes religion classes redundant. We have good grounds to believe that such has never been the intentions of the DECS.

This article has tried to show why value education and religious instruction cannot be equated. It has also presented some of the elements which are proper to the Catholic faith and which are indispensable for an adequate Christian formation. The DECS Values Education Program does not contain many of these elements, nor can it include them, since it addresses itself to students of different religious denominations.

Both the DECS Values Education Program and Religious Instruction Programs are necessary for the integral formation of our youth. Proper coordination and reference between the two is desirable not only in order to avoid overlapping but also to reinforce common elements.

Difficulties arising from time constraints are not to be solved by eliminating one of the two programs. Given the great importance of value education and religious formation, none of the two should be sacrificed. It is a matter of priorities and vision. Only a new generation with sound moral principles can create a better future.

FR. SALVATORE PUTZU, SDB

Catechesis in the Philippines: Its Goals, Its State, Its Problems, Its Joys*

When we, your Bishops, issued the CBCP Pastoral Letter on the National Catechetical Year last year, foremost in our minds was our desire to form Christians mature in their faith. We believed then, as we still believe now, that catechesis is a fundamental issue of our Christian life and a chief priority of our Church. We wanted that efforts be concerted and exerted "within the Church to help the people believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ" (CT,1).

The *National Catechetical Directory* of the Philippines states that the basic problem of the Church in the Philippines is catechetical in nature. Quoting Pope John Paul II's *Catechesi Tradendae*, it categorizes Philippine catechesis at the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having given him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know Jesus' mystery, the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him (CT, 20).

Much as we want – through catechesis – "to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ" (CT, 5), we also desire that they live "the Christian faith in all its fulness, within the Christian community, in the secular world of today" (NCDP, 78). As our Pastoral Letter put it: "So many Filipinos continue to suffer in dire poverty, unsupported by the Gospel's social

*Address delivered by Most Rev. ONESIMO GORDONCILLO, D.D., Archbishop of Capiz, on the occasion of the Catechetical Year Culmination Activities of the Diocese of Tagbilaran, January 7, 1991.

thrust. The growing modernization and industrialization are too often accompanied by a loss of traditional Filipino Christian spiritual values and family rootedness. So many of our youth . . . grow up in ignorance of even the essentials of our Catholic faith . . . Basic catechetical materials are often still lacking . . . When challenged today to defend their Catholic beliefs and practices, many find they are poorly prepared to give an explanation for their hope. There, too, are the Constitutional provision for religious education in public schools and the DECS' values education program."

We envision catechesis to be Christ-centered, rooted in the Word of God, and Filipino. Why Christ-centered? Because only Christ "can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity" (CT,5). Because "in catechesis it is Christ, the incarnate Word and Son of God, who is taught (CT,6). Because "it is Christ alone who teaches – anyone else teaches to the extent that he is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips" (CT,6). Because Christ's "words, his parables and his arguments are never separable from his life and his very being. Accordingly, the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching; his silence, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love of the people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the cross for the redemption of the world, and his resurrection are the actualization of his word and the fulfillment of the revelation (CT,9).

Why should catechesis be rooted in the Word of God? Because catechesis is but a re-echoing of the Word of God, a continuous actualization of the Word of God to the man of today. The Word of God is the norm for catechesis; *est norma normans et non normata*: it is standard which measures all the ministries of the Church. And the Word of God is contained not just in the Bible, but in Tradition and in the Church's Magisterium.

Why should catechesis be Filipino? Because it has to be inculturated. In the Incarnation the Word himself was made flesh (Jn 1:14). Thus, catechesis has to be incarnational, in context, contextualized, integral yet adapted. Catechesis should "discern in the events, the needs, and the longings which it shares with other men of our time, what may be genuine signs of the presence or of the purpose of God. For faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal which God has set for man, thus guiding the mind towards solutions that are fully human" (GS, 11). The *General Catechetical*

Directory states: "Catechesis begins, therefore, with a more simple presentation of the whole structure of the Christian message and propounds it in a manner suited to the varying cultural and spiritual conditions of those to be catechized" (38). In other words, catechesis has to be faithful to the revelation fully manifested and accomplished in Jesus Christ and has also to be faithful to man, the subject of catechesis. It must shed the light of faith on the Filipino as he is rooted in his concrete historical circumstance.

Our motto for our National Catechetical Year was: "Every Christian, A Catechist!" Edmund Cardinal Szoka, special envoy of Pope John Paul II during the National Catechetical Congress, said that this motto is both a challenge and a prayer. It is a challenge, he said, in as much as it reminds us of our need to renew constantly our relationship with Jesus Christ if we are to catechize in his name. It is a prayer, the Cardinal said, inspiring us to take the steps necessary to foster and deepen our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Meanwhile, in the said Congress, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal averred: "Every Christian, To Be Catechized" as "we look forward to the day when every Christian shall not only be catechized but also be a catechist."

"We have been made aware of the importance of catechesis in our pastoral activity" – the World's Synod of Bishops said in their Message to the People of God in 1977 – "so that, beyond any doubt, it should be accorded first priority."

And catechesis is intertwined with evangelization. For "the Church is the depository of the Good News to be proclaimed . . . not in order to keep it hidden but to communicate it" (*EN*, 5). Fr. Braulio Peña, O.P., maintains that evangelization is the primary stage of the proclamation directed towards the non-believers and is aimed at their conversion, while catechesis is like a follow-up, a proclamation supposing evangelization, and directed towards believers and aimed at the growth and maturing process of faith.

"The entire mission of the Church is concentrated and manifested in evangelization . . . Through evangelization, the Church is built up into a community of faith: more precisely, into a community that confesses the faith in full adherence to the Word of God which is celebrated in the sacraments and lived in charity, the principle of Christian moral existence. In fact, the Good News is directed to stirring a person to conversion of heart and life and clinging to Jesus

Christ as Lord and Savior; to disposing a person to receive Baptism and the Eucharist and to strengthen a person in the prospect and realization of new life according to the Spirit" (CL 33).

For the Church, too, evangelization "means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new" (EN, 18).

You are all familiar with Pope John Paul II's summons for us to embark on a new evangelization as we approach the Third Christian Millennium. "New" evangelization is "new" in its zeal, methods and expressions. Of course, the faith is one; it is always the same. But it needs to be presented newly to contemporary man. (The merchants know how to do this. They present old stuff in a new fashion. They sell the same meat – but in another can, with another label. And there are new buyers.) "New" evangelization should be new in its zeal. The evangelizer's vigor and zeal are to be renewed. There can be no new evangelization unless there is newness of vigor and zeal in the evangelizer. This new zeal will lead him find new methods to present the faith and these new methods will necessarily entail new forms of expressing the faith.

Now, how is the state of catechesis in our country? What are its problems?

When we, your Bishops, reflected as a body in 1982 on the pertinent texts on catechesis drawn from the addresses of Pope John Paul II during his visit to our country, we concertized the needs for catechesis in the Philippines thus: What kind of catechesis? Catechesis about essentials, done in a systematic way, and bearing on our people's culture. Catechesis to whom? Preferentially to the poor, but conscious of the Church's mission to all. How? Use creativity, through the family. What do the catechists need? A catechesis that is Christ-centered. And the catechesis should be faithful to Christ, to his Church and to man.

We, then accepted the following as pastoral priorities in terms of catechesis:

1. That the general and consistent task of all our catechetical efforts should be towards an adequate catechesis as distinct from initial evangelization.

“Reason: This recommendation underlined the need for a catechesis which is provided to the Christian from the ‘cradle to the grave.’ It is meant to correct the unfortunate situation wherein, by and large, systematic and serious programs were available only for the children as they grow and transfer from one stage of life to another. The end result is a Christian who has stopped growing in faith.

“2. That the effective, local materials must be created and made readily available. Particularly urgent are those materials for equipping parents to catechize, i.e., family catechesis (*cf. Familiaris Consortio*, 39). The social doctrines of the Church should be included and presented with clarity in these materials. Furthermore, special emphasis should be given in the use of these materials to the memorization aspect of catechizing (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 5). Finally, a sound Catholic biblical catechesis for different levels should also be especially considered, in view of special pressures in the apostolate. Especially needing this type of catechesis are the poor.

“Reason: The recommendation was proposed as a priority because it meets the most urgent need of those who are called to catechize and those who are to be catechized. The present quality of religious textbooks, by and large, are not effective due to the proliferation of the hastily written, inadequately grounded, and unattractive, pedagogically poorly conceived materials; also adequate materials are almost lacking for particular sectors of the Church, e.g., for teaching public school students.

“3. Due to the irreplaceable character of the family in catechetical activity, adequate programs of equipping the parents in carrying out family catechesis should be prepared.

“Reason: It is generally accepted that parents are primarily responsible for the religious formation of their children; that they should be aware of this responsibility. Unfortunately, however, parents today are generally ill-equipped for the task they are called upon to play. *By equipping* we understand a process of awareness and clarification whereby people learn once more to pose their own questions of faith. Furthermore, they are assisted more particularly in so far as these affect the education in faith of their children.

“4. Due to the big number of those to be catechized in our country, our catechetical efforts should focus on:

- a. training parents, neighborhood associations, basic Christian communities and other similar forms of adult catechesis with the end in view of catechizing themselves and their children.
- b. youth catechesis, with particular emphasis on forming the young to peer catechesis;
- c. local training centers for catechists: these local centers could be staffed by those trained in the national or regional centers;
- d. communications media, particularly Radio Veritas and other local Catholic radio stations, so that catechetical programs for different levels and needs may be included in their regular programs;
- e. public schools, particularly the urging of parents to avail themselves of the right guaranteed by law regarding optional religious instruction of their children in these schools;
- f. Catholic schools, which, during all these centuries have been largely responsible for the religious education of our children, that they may continue and improve the quality of religious education integrated into the education of the pupils (*Ibid*, 69).

"5. Considering that the Bishops are, beyond all others, the ones responsible for catechesis both for the universal Church in the spirit of collegiality and particularly in their respective dioceses, they should make the concern to foster active and effective catechesis yield to no other care whatever in any way (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 63).

"In every urgent way the Bishops are urged to:

- a. bring about and maintain in their respective churches real 'passion' for catechesis (*Ibid.*);
- b. to insure an effective organization, particularly by establishing as soon as possible (where this is not yet a reality) the Diocesan Catechetical Office or its equivalent.
- c. spare nothing in providing the necessary personnel, equipment and financial resources (*Ibid*, 67).

- d. provide a good catechetical training for future priests in the seminary so that they be imbued with the passion for catechetics and be equipped for the task.

"6. That our priests are not only 'instructors in the faith' (*Ibid*, 64), not only 'have the duty to provide catechesis' (*Ibid*); more particularly they should be aware that, at the level of implementation, the efficacy of any catechetical activity depends to a singularly large extent upon their leadership and support.

"The priests, particularly those with pastoral care of souls, should continuously update their knowledge and skills of catechetics, grow in zeal for it. For this reason, care should be given to programs of updating of priests in this all important ministry, v. gr., inclusion of this program in the agenda of the regular monthly meetings of priests, etc. Finally, much attention should be given to catechesis in the setting of the liturgy, particularly sacramental catechesis and the homily; they should take advantage of its practical value for adult catechesis (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 8).

"7. The religious are already engaged in a great variety of apostolic activities for the enrichment of local Churches; they are hereby exhorted to more generously make themselves available in the task of catechesis and joyfully accept the authority and ministry of the local Bishops in this most important work (*To Men Religious*, 5).

"Finally, we observed that in catechesis, which is 'the putting of people not only in touch but in communion . . . with Christ' (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 5), the life witness of the catechist is key to the efficacy of his catechetical efforts.

"Furthermore, there is also the need for an authentic community of faith, for an 'environment where a person can live as fully as possible what he had learned' (*Ibid.*, 24).

"Thus, in carrying out our mission of giving catechesis, we must be aware of acting as living pliant instruments of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit who is 'the principle inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work' (*Ibid.*, 72)."

In 1988, Bishop Manuel Sobreviñas, parish priest of Immaculate Conception Parish in Pasig, Metro Manila, speaking about catechesis in public schools, said: "We finally rejoiced over the

Constitutional Provision (Art. XIV) allowing religion to be taught within regular class hours in public schools. But the rejoicing reverberated a challenge -- how can we maximize this right?

"The parish priest starts counting the number of public schools he has to provide with religious instruction. Other considerations follow, such as: a) the number of catechists actually engaged at the moment, and how many are needed for the larger bulk of Catholic students; b) their training; c) their remuneration, or, simply, decent maintenance; d) the catechetical materials needed, etc.

"NCDP #485: 'Public schools in the Philippines pose an even greater challenge for the catechetical ministry since, with the rising population, a greater percentage of Filipino Catholic children will be public school students. Naturally speaking, the Church has an overwhelming task in this apostolate.

"Art. XIV of the New Constitution created a big challenge and opportunity. Challenge: Public schools opened the doors of their classrooms for religious instruction. It says to the Church: 'Take them away! They are yours during religion hours.'

"But the Church could not provide adequate number of fulltime qualified catechists to meet a million students."

In 1990, in my Archdiocese of Capiz, we had a few professional catechists for our public school students but we had an abundance of volunteer catechists in the persons of all our college seminarians, many religious, many members of laity organizations and movements and some concerned laity.

The delegates of the recently concluded National Catechetical Congress in Manila said in their Message: "In our sharings we realized even more the inadequacy of our material and human resources, the shortage of our funds and personnel to carry out this ministry which the world needs so urgently because it needs Christians mature and joyful in their faith (*John Paul II*). Aware as we are of our poverty, and knowing that we can do nothing when left to ourselves (*Jn 15: 4-8*) we dare to say, "Silver and gold we have none but what we have we give — Jesus of Nazareth, the Savior of the world" (Cf. *Ac 3:6*).

The catechists made these resounding appeals:

"We appeal to you, parents, to fulfill your mission of being the first catechists of your children;

"We appeal to you, young people, to respond generously to the invitation of the Church to offer your energies and enthusiasm for the service of our catechetical needs;

"We appeal to you, who are involved in the media of social communication, to use these media to bring the light of Christ to the multitudes;

"Finally, we appeal to all the members of Christian communities to receive ever anew the life-giving word of God through catechesis and to contribute to the support of catechists. The Church today 'is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material.'"

I would like to conclude this talk by borrowing and paraphrasing the Final Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of FABC last July 1990:

"We catechize, first of all, from a deep sense of gratitude to God, the Father who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing (*Ep* 1:3), and sent the Spirit into our hearts so that we may share in God's own life. God loves us in Christ (*Ro* 8:39), a love which has been poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (*Ro* 5:5).

"We catechize because we are sent into the whole world to make disciples of all nations. The one who sends us is Jesus, who has been sent by the Father, and to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (*Mt* 28:18). He sends us on a mission which is part of the epiphany of God's plan to bring all things together under Christ as head (*Ep* 1:9-10). We cannot fulfill this mission apart from him (*Jn* 19:4-5). But he assures us that he will remain with us all days till the end of time (*Mt* 28:20), and he has sent his Spirit so that we may be his witnesses to the end of the earth (*Ac* 1:8).

"We catechize because we believe in the Lord Jesus. We have received the gift of faith. We have become Christians. The Christian vocation is by its very nature a vocation to the apostolate (AA, 2). That is why Pope Paul VI emphatically states: 'It is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the Kingdom

without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn' (EN, 24).

"We catechize because we have been incorporated by Baptism into the Church, which is missionary by its very nature because it is the result of the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit (*Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, 2). The Church exists in order to evangelize (EN, 14), to catechize, and each member, by virtue of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, has received the right and duty to the apostolate from the Lord himself (*Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 33).

"We catechize because the Gospel is a leaven for the transformation of our country and the world. Our country and the world need the values of the Kingdom and of Christ in order to bring about the development, justice, peace, harmony, and solidarity with God, among peoples and with all creation that we, Filipinos, long for.

"Yes, for us, Filipinos, also we must affirm: 'The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, the center of humankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations' (*Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitutional on the Church in the Modern World*, 45).

"As catechists, we are totally open to Christ. We rejoice because of him. We know that catechesis is his work, not ours, for we are only his instruments. With him, we will never be undaunted. He is our Assurance that we will always be living signs of his love in and through catechesis.

Most Rev. ONESIMO GORDONCILLO, D.D.

Theology and Science

Inevitable Interaction

The interaction between Theology and Science is always of current interest. Test-tube babies, experiments in nuclear physics, the debt problem of the Third World, dangers to the world's ecology – to name but a few – are all current science related issues that are fraught with theology-related questions as well.

Theology (the study of God) and science (understood here as the study of what is measurable and empirically verifiable: economics, biology, physics, chemistry, etc.) cannot but interrelate whenever man, and his relationship with other men and with the world about him, are the object of study. It is important to determine the parameters that ensure a fruitful interrelationship between the two.

Pope John Paul II remarked in this regard: "The Church and the scientific community will inevitably interact; their options do not include isolation. Christians will inevitably assimilate the prevailing ideas of the world, and today these are deeply shaped by science. The only question is whether they will do this critically or unreflectively, with depth and nuance or with a shallowness that debases the Gospel and leaves us ashamed before history.

"Scientists, like all human beings, will make decisions upon what ultimately gives meaning and value to their lives and to their work. This they will do well or poorly, with the reflective depth that theological wisdom can help them attain, or with an unconsidered absolutizing of their results beyond their reasonable and proper limits."¹

¹Letter to Director of Vatican Observatory, *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed.), 14-XI-88, p. 5.

There are two extremes, therefore, that have to be avoided in the interaction between theology and science: first, a shallow and unreflective understanding of the relationship between the two spheres of knowledge – which leads to the debasement of the Gospel; and second, the absolutization of science as the only form of valid knowledge – a position which injures the scientist himself as a person and also the scientific work he cultivates insofar as this work is meant to contribute to the common good of man.

Confusion between Theology and Science

The first extreme stems as a result of not clearly distinguishing the respective spheres of theology and science. As Gilson put it: "The endlessly controverted problem of the relations between science and religion will not even arise if religious answers are not given to scientific questions, and scientific answers to religious ones. Religious wisdom for instance tells us that in the beginning God created heaven and earth; but it does not pretend to give us any scientific account of the progressive formation of the world. Science and religion have their own sphere of competence. Science deals with nature *qua* nature, religious wisdom deals with nature *qua* work of God."²

The temptation to proceed otherwise, however, is as old as it is irresistible. Several eminent thinkers have, at one time or another, attempted such an interaction between theology and science.³ Their attempts have only shown that trying to prove theology using science or science using theology, only ends in discredit. It is like using the wrong key to open the wrong lock: in the end, one only succeeds in damaging both. Greater discredit, however, is brought down on theology than on science. Science, after all, has the advantage of experimental verification, and wholesale revisions of previously accepted theories come as no surprise to anyone: on the contrary, the constant substitution of old scientific hypotheses for more accurate and reliable ones is the rule more than the exception in disciplines based on empirical verification and measurement.

²Etienne Gilson, "Science, Philosophy, and Religious Wisdom" in *A Gilson Reader* (Image Books, New York, 1957), p. 220.

³See the detailed study of S. Jaki: *The Relevance of Physics*, Ch. 10: "Physics and Theology" (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966).

Not so in the case of theology, which studies revealed truth. When science is used to "prove" theology, the moment the scientific hypothesis that had been so employed is revised or discarded, doubt is immediately cast on the credibility of the religious truth it was meant to support. On the other hand, when religion is used to support science, the moment the findings of science are revised or changed, the religious truth that was intended to support it is likewise discredited.⁴

Absolutizing Science

If confusing theology with science is one extreme position, the total separation between the two is the other; and it is just as carefully to be avoided for the injury it brings, this time to the scientist and his work. Knowledge, no doubt is of value in itself, and any increase in the stock of scientific knowledge constitutes a good; but such good is only relative. It would be good absolutely, in all respects, if the scientist himself, not so much as a scientist this time but as a human being, were benefitted by the expense of his intellectual efforts; it would be good unqualifiedly, if this knowledge were truly put to the benefit of mankind as a whole.

Scientific research should contribute to the perfection of the scientist as person. A scientist's professional work should be harmoniously integrated with other facets of his life – his family, his country, his religion. It should also contribute to the upliftment of the culture and genuine human development of the people his dedication to science is meant to serve. For this, scientific work should not be pursued in a vacuum: it must be guided by higher values that alone will enable it to be properly oriented towards the ends we have just mentioned. Theology is the science which provides this orientation.

In a letter to the Director of the Vatican Observatory, Pope John Paul II, stressed the importance of proper theological orientation in scientific work: "Can science benefit from this interchange (of science and religion)? It would seem that it should. For science develops best when its concepts and conclusions are integrated into the broader human culture and its concern for ultimate meaning and value.

⁴See *Ibid.*, and John Henry Card. Newman, "Christianity and Physical Science" in *The Idea of a University*, (Image Books, 1959), pp. 390 ff.

(Scientists) can (then) help others realize more fully the human potentialities of their discoveries. They can also come to appreciate for themselves that these discoveries cannot be a genuine substitute for knowledge of the truly ultimate. Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.”⁵

The Need to Distinguish in Order to Unite

The fruitful collaboration between theology and science hinges on a clear understanding of the differences between the two kinds of knowledge. This understanding leads to the recognition of their relative autonomy, and this, in turn, to the appreciation of the close harmony that not only can but should exist between them. We must distinguish in order to unite.

Theology and Science are different on at least 3 counts: the object, the method of analysis, and the nature of progress proper to each one.

Theology has for its object the truths of revelation. Insofar as the universe is concerned, Revelation deals with the world only inasmuch as it has been created by God, remains dependent on him for its existence, and follows the ordinances of Divine Providence for the greater glory of its Creator. Science, on the other hand, deals with the world only in its phenomenal aspects, i.e., only insofar as it is observable by the senses, and is subject to experimental verification and measurement.

The methods of analysis of theology and science are also different. Theology begins with the data of revelation as contained in Scripture and Tradition. These revealed data do not contain truths about the physical laws governing the universe, but truths about God as origin and end of the work of creation. Through the study of these truths under the guidance of the Magisterium, theology seeks to penetrate more deeply into their meaning, and to determine more clearly their application to the changing cultures and mores of men. In this effort, theology is greatly helped by advances in metaphysics for the technical expression of its concepts.

⁵*L'Osserv. Rom.* (Eng. ed.), 14-XX-88, p. 4.

On the other hand, science begins with the data of observation. It seeks to discover patterns in these data and to express these patterns in the form of scientific laws. Much of its success depends on the accuracy and precision of its experimental tools and research procedures. As these tools improve, better data are obtained, and this naturally leads to the revision and sometimes wholesale overhauling of previous hypotheses.

It is for this reason that progress in science is of a different nature than progress in theology. The former is characterized by the substitution of one theory for another, or at least by the revision of a theory in such a way that the previous way it had been understood is now qualified by the addition of certain parameters or conditions.⁶ In theology, progress always involves a deepening – a penetration into the same truth, which is always understood in the same sense as confirmed and ratified by the Magisterium. It cannot be otherwise for theology, since the truths of Faith which it seeks to understand better never change, being as they are, fruit not of the resourcefulness of human reason but of an explicit revelation of God.⁷

Conclusion

The immediate consequence of these differences is that there can be no confusion between the two disciplines. They each have their own proper spheres of competence. This mutual autonomy, implies that there can be no contradiction between theology and science. If there are apparent contradictions, it is either because non-scientific interpretations are being read into scientific findings or else because people hold a statement to be a religious truth when it is actually not so.

Moreover, just as there can be no contradiction between theology and science, so too, theology cannot be used to directly support a scientific hypothesis, and vice-versa, science cannot be used as direct support for theology. If there appears to be some areas where such support is found, it is either because scientific findings are given a

⁶See Jose Saguinetti, *Logica*, (EUNSA, Pamplona, 1982), Part IV: "El Conocimiento Científico", pp. 145 ff.

⁷Cf, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*, *L'Osserv. Rom.* (Eng. ed.), 2-VII-90.

non-scientific interpretation (i.e., one that is based on the personal philosophy of the scientist), or else, because a religious truth is unduly being used to support scientific findings.⁸

Another consequence of establishing the difference between Theology and Science is that the way is paved for their harmonious interaction. For here we see that theology provides answers to question that science cannot answer. Theology studies revealed truth, and it is from revelation that we draw the most certain answers to questions about ultimate principles and ends. What is the end of man? How is this end to be attained? What bearing do earthly realities have on the attainment of man's ultimate destiny? In this light, scientific research can truly contribute to the personal good of the scientist and the good of mankind as a whole.

Thus the need to distinguish both disciplines from one another. As Pope John Paul II put it: "By encouraging openness between the Church and the scientific communities, we are not envisioning a disciplinary unity between theology and science like that which exists within a given scientific field or within theology proper . . . The unity (between religion and science) that we seek is not identity. The Church does not propose that science should become religion or religion science. On the contrary, unity always presupposes the diversity and integrity of its elements. Each of these members should become not less itself but more itself in a dynamic interchange, for a unity in which one of the elements is reduced to the other is destructive, false in its promises of harmony, and ruinous of the integrity of its components. We are asked to become one. We are not asked to become each other."⁹

FR. CAESAR SANTOS

⁸See S. Jaki, *op. cit.*, and Newman, *op. cit.*

⁹*L'Osserv. Rom.*, 14-XI-88, p.4.

CBCP Statement on the Foreign Debt Problems

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, aware of the serious economic sufferings of our people, presents these reflections on our nation's debt crisis. As spiritual pastors, we wish to offer ethical and evangelical principles to enlighten the moral conscience of our citizens, especially of decision-makers in politics, in the economy and banking circles. Accordingly, our main objective in these pastoral reflections is not to negatively criticize nor to propose economic and political action programmes, but to fulfill our mandate from Christ to shed the light of the Gospel on present-day realities. This we do by offering guidelines based on moral and Gospel values, for we believe that a responsible solution to our debt crisis cannot be reached without respecting human dignity and promoting solidarity.

I. Our Economic Reality: A Crisis Situation

Not so long ago, the scenario of business circles included an optimistic vision of the Philippines as a newly industrializing country by the end of this decade. No longer in these pessimistic times. Our economic planning has gone back to basic fundamentals of survival.

The forecast of our Gross National Product growth has been reviewed downward from 4.8% before the earthquake to around 3.5% - 3.8% while our Gross Domestic Product, which represents our output of goods and services, grew by only 2.69% during the first half of this year. It is estimated that our economy stands to lose about \$253.5 million from overseas remittances due to the Iraq-Kuwait war. The July 16th earthquake alone caused public infrastructure losses of around ₱10.1 billion and around ₱1.19 billion in agricultural loss.

Unfortunately, such depressing statistics do not remain as lifeless reports in a library shelf but are grim indications of the reality of suffering and misery among our people.

We Bishops, especially those of the diocese in Northern Luzon, are daily witnesses to the sufferings among the poor when, in summer, drought turns ricelands into mini-deserts; and in the rainy season, torrential rains inundate these same fields with mud. These months, we continue to receive in our Social Action Centers, hundreds of weary and hungry families who trek for hours to reach relief supplies after their homes were buried by tons of cascading rocks. This is the reality of many of our poor, a reality which no statistics or media report can adequately convey.

II. Our Debt Crisis Is a Moral Issue

We have seen the afflictions caused by Nature. But there are also sufferings that originate from human acts and decisions. While more subtle and hidden in their effects, still, their full impact on human lives could be more extensive and enduring. For the debt crisis is the paramount example of a man-made disaster.

An enormous debt was created at least in part by wrong calculations, wrong investments, wrong decisions of individuals and organizations, and most likely by their wrong moral values as well.

We recognize sincere efforts by the Government to lighten our debt burden but we must nevertheless ask:

1. Is it moral for citizens, especially the poor, who did not participate in these decisions, to pay for their consequences through less jobs, less schools, less hospitals and less shelter?
2. It has been estimated that through most of this decade, our people will be paying an average of \$3.2 billion annually to our foreign creditors. Most of these payments are applied to interest obligations without greatly reducing the principal. We then ask: Is it moral to place our country in a kind of prolonged serfdom, seeing that these massive annual

payments only serve to further weaken our ability to repay our debts?

There is every reason to conclude that the dehumanizing economic situation we find ourselves in, is not the cause but the symptom of a moral disease afflicting both debtor and creditor nations. In this context, the Church has an obligation from Christ to proclaim the truth about God and man which forms the foundation of her teachings about human dignity, freedom, social justice and human solidarity.

III. Ethical Principles

The Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax* published in 1986 a document entitled "At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to International Debt Question." Among its key ethical propositions are the following:

1. *the creation of new forms of solidarity*: the increasing interdependence among countries demands concerted international action, for example on the debt crisis, for the promotion of the common good. There is need for new "expressions of solidarity which respect the equal dignity of all peoples rather than lead to domination by the strongest, to national egoism, to inequalities and injustices."
2. *the acceptance of co-responsibility*: the debt crisis has internal and external causes, those specific to a country's economic and political system but also those originating from the actions and decisions of the developed countries. "Acknowledgement of the sharing of responsibility for the causes will make possible a dialogue which will seek joint means of solution."
3. *the establishment of relations of trust*: the cooperation in search of solutions, between creditor and debtor nations, and between the various agents (government, commercial banks, international organizations) must be based on mutual trust. This prerequisite "nourishes belief in another person's good faith, even when difficulties prevent

that person from respecting his commitments, and makes it possible to continue treating him as a partner." (emphasis added)

4. *by shared efforts and sacrifices:* in order to solve the debt crisis, "the various partners must agree on an equitable sharing of the adjustment efforts and the necessary sacrifices, taking into account the priority to be given to the needs of the most deprived peoples. (emphasis added) It is the responsibility of the countries that are better off to assume a larger share."
5. *by fostering the participation of all:* financial authorities as well as political and economic leaders have the prime responsibility for finding solutions to the debt crisis. Citizens in general should study the complexity of the debt issue and support the implementation of political efforts. It is the duty of the Church "to specify the requirements of social justice and solidarity with respect to the situations of individual countries, seen within an international context."
6. *by identifying emergency and long-term measures:* in some countries, there is need for "immediate solutions in the context of an ethics of survival." This calls for economic and social rehabilitation: recovery of growth rates, productive investments, resource creation, equitable sharing and a reform of financial and monetary institutions.

IV. Biblical Terms on the Debt Issue

Again from reviewing some ethical considerations regarding the debt issue, it will also be useful to recall those biblical themes which in a simplistic or fundamentalist manner, but to discover the essence of their message on debt and its effects.

In the covenant community that was Israel, the idea demanded was that poverty and indebtedness be regularly rectified so that "There must, then, be no poor among you." (Dt. 15:4). For Israel,

poverty among its citizens must not be allowed to persist nor to create a marginalized class of people whose land and labor have been taken over by an elite group. Thus Hebrew law established two institutions: the Sabbatical year (every seventh year) and the Jubilee (every fiftieth year) to provide for the redistribution of wealth within Israel. Debts were to be canceled, persons released from pledges and liberated from slavery. And when slaves were freed, they were to be given livestock, grain and wine so that they could get themselves started in life and not easily slip back into bondage again. (Dt. 15:12-15) This was seen not as a matter of charity, but of setting up a social mechanism to prevent the gap between rich and poor from growing.

The message that this ancient norm carries to our contemporary times is to set limit to what is humanly intolerable. The fact that foreign debt has become unpayable for many countries, thereby reducing them to continuous bondage suggests the need for a new "principle of Jubilee." This would be an application of the ethical principle of "new forms of solidarity."

In the New Testament, we borrow from what the American Bishops have written:

"... Jesus uses stories of how debtors are treated as a means of helping people understand God's mercy and the obligation to reflect that mercy in our dealings with others; and in the daily prayers of Christians, we ask God to treat our debts in light of our treatment of other' debts to us.

These biblical images do not provide either a formula for addressing the complexity of international debts or even clear principles for adjudicating a fair resolution of this major institutional question. However, the biblical imagery does provide a starting point, a way to understand creditor-debtor relations, which a purely empirical assessment of the debt problem will never offer. The biblical lessons reject an interpretation of these issues cast purely in terms of economic gain or power over others. Those who are in debt retain their dignity as well as their basic human rights, which make demands upon creditors; debtors cannot be reduced to a situation of abject poverty in order to pay debts." (USCC Administrative Board's "Statement on Relieving Third World Debt, Nos. 35-36).

The biblical message finds expression in our times in that solidarity which Pope John Paul II defines as the supremely necessary Christian virtue in today's world. Solidarity is nourished by the principle that the goods of this world are destined for all, that the gap between the rich and the poor is a scandal in the light of the Kingdom of God. (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nos. 37, 38, 39).

V. Orientations

In the light of these ethical principles and biblical themes, we propose the following orientations as our contribution to ongoing dialogues and efforts to arrive at a just solution to our debt problem:

1. We must deal with our foreign debt problem within the context of international solidarity. Our nation cannot solve this problem alone or unilaterally. The Vatican Document on the International Debt says, "... avoid any unilateral termination of prior commitments."

We need the understanding and partnership of men and women of good will from the creditor countries. Our destinies are as intimately bound as are the lives of survivors sharing a single lifeboat. Without a global solution based on solidarity, the creditor countries' own welfare can in the final analysis, also suffer.

There have been examples of such solidarity measures. We recall the London Debt agreement of 1952 in which the greatest part of Germany's post-war debts were waived, giving that then impoverished country the chance to employ all its forces for its economic rehabilitation rather than for the repayment of its debts. Thus, the postwar recovery of Europe owes much to the generosity of those early structural adjustment loans. The precedent is there and can therefore be repeated.

In this direction, we are encouraged by the decisions of the governments of Japan and of France to acknowledge the need for debt reduction. In fact, France has written off the debts of the poorest countries in sub-Sahara, Africa.

2. We must consider our debt crisis within the context of the ethics of survival. Our country's economy is in a critical state, as

already described earlier in these reflections. We face an emergency situation that demands urgent measures and immediate solution.

It is apropos to recall here the statement of the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax*, "The immediate needs of countries in such difficulties are a priority ... (II: Action in Emergency Situations). Further, "Debt service cannot be met at the price of the asphyxiation of a country's economy, and no government can morally demand of its people, privations incompatible with human dignity." (Cfr. Presentation).

3. It is necessary to formulate a debt relief strategy "with a human face." Previous adjustment policies have largely neglected the human aspect of development. Therefore, the strategy of an "adjustment with a human face" is one that takes full account of equity, employment and people's needs. It will also protect domestic food supplies and will support investment in human capital formation.

Here we agree with the statement of Bishop Kamphaus, then President of the German Commission *Iustitia et Pax* when he told the European Parliament that even if the demands of creditors may be just, they become unjust if their compliance requires sacrifices from a people that are incompatible with human dignity. Along this line, we should not yield to conditionalities that would further impoverish our people.

4. The question has been raised on whether our people should be made to repay fraudulent debts which were either used for useless prestige projects or which were the results of corruption. Again the Vatican Document on the International Debt (by the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax*) has a relevant remark to the effect that repayment cannot be demanded "when loans have been granted at usurious rates or used to finance projects overpriced through fraudulent complicity." (III.3: Responsibilities of Creditors with respect to Debtors). On this, the Administrative Board of the American Bishops' Conference has itself asked, "Why should the poor in debtor countries, who had nothing to say about accruing the debt and have received little or no benefit from it, have to bear the greater burden of its pay-

ment? (USCC Administrative Board's "Statement on Relieving Third World Debt," No. 11).

5. Our external debt was generated not only by global mechanisms seemingly beyond our control, but also by internal decisions and activities for which persons in our country are responsible.

We would also want to address those who have held or hold economic and political power whether by their actions, decisions and omissions in the past and present, they have not aggravated the economic conditions in our country and lessened our moral leverage in the debt negotiations. What moral leverage do we have during negotiations for the reduction of our debt if it is known that we do not check the practices of graft and corruption within the vital sectors of our society?

6. The search for solutions of the debt problem is a complex task. Thus, the active participation of all our social sectors especially the poor must be sought and they must be informed about the conditions and the programmes adopted to solve the debt crisis. But it should be the paramount concern of all that the proposed solutions should redound to the economic growth of the nation.

VI. Solidarity among the Churches

Finally, we are also greatly encouraged by the role of Churches and Bishops' Conferences in Europe and America to serve as advocates for the poor in the developing countries. For example, the American Bishops in their 1987 Pastoral Letter on "Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy" – have called for remedies which do not penalize the poor. For their part, the German Bishops in 1988 advocated a conditional remission of debts for the poorest countries. Likewise, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches have set up a comprehensive research project to search for concrete policy recommendations for that country's contribution to solving the debt crisis. We pray that more First World Churches will become involved in educating their faithful on the new requirement of development cooperation and in strengthening their solidarity with the Churches and peoples in the Third World.

VII. Prayer

May God Who has willed that all peoples should live as one family, grant us all the grace to approach the solution to the debt problem in a spirit of solidarity and trust and with a deep respect for the dignity of every human being. May God's Kingdom be realized among us through our collective efforts to promote solidarity in the international community.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference
of the Philippines:

+LEONARDO S. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.
Archbishop of Caceres
President, CBCP

Manila, 19 September 1990

Norms Governing the Presence and Activities of the Neo-Catechumenal Way in the Archdiocese of Caceres*

To All Priests and Faithful in the Archdiocese of Caceres

For quite some time the local Church in Caceres has been the setting of the presence and activities of a movement known as the Neo-Catechumenal Way. During this period we have been able to verify cases of personal conversion and fruitful missionary impulse. The Movement offers to the local Church "the announcement of the Gospel, the witnessing in small communities and the eucharistic celebration of the "neo-catechumenal way." In this way it has also served the renewal of the local Church.

On the other hand, its presence and activities within the parish communities, have occasioned several pastoral difficulties. The uneven attention given by the parish priest to the members of the Movement, the neo-catechumenal way of celebrations among others have occasioned polarization within the parish communities, and the feeling of "second class" parishioners among the non-members of the Movement within the parish community. In some cases there has been neglect of providing the proper care and concern for the other charisms within the parish community. In the end the unity of the parish community suffered.

At the level of the Archdiocese, some parishes with neo-catechumenal groups and where the parish priests have been fully engaged to such groups, a break down in coordination between parish and archdiocesan practices and programs has been observed. This is true more particularly in the area of catechetical ministry.

*Circular N° 042, S. 1990 of the Archdiocese of Caceres.

Aware of the important services of the Movement to the renewal of the local Church it is our Archdiocesan policy to welcome the charism of the Neo-catechumenal Way. But we are also cognizant that this neo-catechumenal charism, if it were "to be implemented according to the lines proposed by its initiators, should be lived in the spirit of service to the local Ordinary and in communion with him in the context of the unity of the local Church and the universal Church" (cf. Letter of John Paul II to Archbishop Paul Cordes, August 30, 1990).

For this reason and in order to safeguard the authentic service of the neo-catechumenate in the Archdiocese of Caceres, I hereby establish the following Archdiocesan Norms governing the presence and activities of the Neo-Catechumenal Way in the Archdiocese of Caceres.

1. A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (can. 515).

Accordingly:

- a. The Parish Priest shall care equally for all the members of the parish community.
 - b. He shall encourage all the charisms which the Holy Spirit inspires in his community subject to the pastoral discernment of the competent authority.
 - c. The physical structure of the parish house and that of the church shall not be made in order to exclusively serve the purpose of one particular movement.
2. In exercising his ministry of shepherd the parish priest, knowing that he is and acts as "the visible principle and foundation of unity of the parish community entrusted to him, should always actively concern himself about the unity of his parish and its unity with the diocesan community. Accordingly, no priest may conduct the catechesis of an existing neo-catechumenal community without the

expressed permission of the parish priest where the community exists.

3. It is the stated policy of the Archdiocese to allow the Neo-Catechumenate Movement in our local Church.
4. However, in keeping with the principle established by the Holy Father (cf. op. cit) that is the Movement is meant to be at the service of the local Ordinary and in communion with him in the context of the unity of the local and universal Church," the establishment of a new community shall be the exclusive competence of the Archbishop. Accordingly, the Archbishop reserves the exclusive right to allow creation of a new neo-catechumenal community in the Archdiocese; similarly, in consultation with the parish priest and those responsible of existing neo-catechumenal community shall be the Archbishop's decision.
5. All activities of the Neo-Catechumenate shall be in keeping with the parish program of apostolate and mission. And under general supervision of the Archdiocesan Coordinator of Movements.
6. Dialogue between the parish priest and the members of the Neo-Catechumenal Movement shall be fostered.
7. In liturgical matters, particularly the celebration of the Paschal Vigil, priority shall be given to the general membership of the parish community.

Please be guided accordingly.

Given at our Chancery, Naga City, Republic of the Philippines, this 26th day of December 1990, in the Year of our Lord.

+LEONARDO Z. LEGASPI, O.P., D.D.
Archbishop of Caceres

Cases and Inquiries

DIRECT CONFESSION TO GOD

I am a young priest, a parochial vicar in a large parish of this city. In the practice of my priestly ministry and in my conversations with some parishioners I have found myself puzzled at seeing how good people, who seem to fulfill their Christian duties faithfully, are convinced that they don't need to go to confession. They confess directly to God, they say. They have found out, so they say, that their relationship with God is now closer and more meaningful than when they used to confess to a priest, which, by the way, they did not find so easy to do sometimes.

If God is the one offended by our sins, they add, it should be God who forgives us, not a priest who is also a sinner and consequently needs to be forgiven by God, too. What do you have to say about this?

A Priest

I was about to pass this case to a theologian so that he could give the correct answer. On second thought, however, I believe that any priest should be able to see the different aspects of the problem and give the correct answer to the case. After all, should a theologian want to give his opinion on the matter, he may do so and his reply will always be most welcome.

By *direct confession of one's sins to God* we mean the act of acknowledging and recognizing with humility that by sinning the person concerned has offended God and, feeling truly sorry for it, he promises the Lord with sincerity to do his best in the future not to offend Him any more and to avoid all occasions that might induce him to relapse into sin again.

We cannot imagine or conceive any other kind of direct confession of our sins to God, that could be pleasing to Him. To tell Him the sins we have committed against Him is not necessary. He knows them all better than we do. He knows perfectly all our actions, words, thoughts, imaginations, desires and omissions by which in the past we have offended Him. What He really wants to find in us is true repentance, a sincere sorrow for our sins and a firm resolution on the part of our will not to commit those sins again. Expressions of true repentance or sincere sorrow for sins committed against God are numerous in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms. This repentance or sorrow is absolutely necessary to obtain God's forgiveness; however, *it alone is not enough.*

God, being infinitely omniscient and infinitely merciful, knowing all our weaknesses and wanting to forgive all our offenses against Him, could pardon and forgive sinners directly without any intermediary or minister, if He wanted to. He does not need any intermediary to grant us His gifts and blessings. Although He does not need anybody to do so, He wants, however, to impart His grace to us through His ministers. This is His divine will. He does not want to forgive our sins the way we might like. He wants us to follow the way He has decreed and established.

To say that direct confession to God, without any oral confession to God's minister is sufficient to obtain the Lord's pardon, is tantamount to saying that humility is not needed in the sinner's true repentance, which would be obviously wrong. A person who has seriously offended God has to realize that his grave transgression of divine laws has separated him from the Lord, and he has to accept the conditions God imposes on him in order to restore him to His friendship again. Realizing and acknowledging that with his sin he has gravely offended the Lord, how can a sinner still dare to impose conditions on God, so that He may be merciful to him? No sound mind can admit that the offender is the one to determine the manner of winning back the clemency and friendship of an offended God. Reason tells us that God should be the one to establish and fix the terms how the broken relationship between the sinner and Him can and should be restored. Nowhere in the Scripture it is said that direct confession to God is enough to obtain the Lord's forgiveness and pardon, although it is a necessary prerequisite.

The contrary is clear. Although direct confession of one's serious offenses to God is always necessary to obtain His forgiveness, as explained above, it is, however, not sufficient in order to restore the sinner's broken relationship with God. The Lord has established a certain procedure to receive sinners back to His friendship. Thus, we read in the Gospel of St. John, 20:23 that He said to the Apostles: "If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them; if you hold them bound, they are held bound." And in the Gospel of St. Matthew we read: "Whatever you declared bound on earth shall be held bound in heaven, and whatever you declare loosed on earth shall be held loosed in heaven." The Council of Trent (Sess. XIV, can. 1 *de Poenit.*) defined that the power to forgive sins given to the Apostles is the same power exercised in the Sacrament of Penance.

Hence, the Lord clearly gave His Apostles the authority to forgive sins. Moreover, He told them that those sins forgiven by them here on earth will be forgiven in heaven; those sins, however, not forgiven by them here on earth will not be forgiven in heaven. Blessed Isaac, Abbot of Stella, expressed this beautifully by saying: "Nothing can the Church forgive without Christ, and Christ does not want to forgive anything without the Church" (Cf. *Liturgy of the Hours*, week 23rd of the Ordinary Time). If God's forgiveness is conditioned by God Himself to the forgiveness granted by the Apostles here on earth, how can sinners obtain pardon through direct confession of their sins to God without being forgiven before by those who enjoy the power granted to the Apostles?

At the end our consultant says: "the priest (who absolves sinners) needs to be forgiven by God, too." Of course, the confessor needs to be forgiven by God from his personal sins too. All priests, i.e. the Pope, Bishops and simple priests need to confess their serious sins, not only to God, but to another priest too. The principle stated above applies to all without exception. We are all sinners.

We Christians have to accept Christ's words at face value as reflecting and conveying the will of God concerning the way or manner decreed by God Himself by which sinners can obtain pardon from the Lord and be reconciled with Him. Nowhere in the Gospel is mention made of any way for a sinner to go back to the Lord offended by him than through submitting himself to the Church empowered with the very authority given by Christ to the Apostles.

As a final remark, we would like to pinpoint some weak points in the attitude of those who seem to be satisfied with confessing their serious offenses to God directly only. Our consultant says: "They find out that their relationship with God is now closer and more meaningful than when they used to confess to a priest." This is really surprising. This relationship is meant to imply a real friendship or communication between God and themselves. If such is the case, how can they be sure that God is pleased with this kind of confession (i.e. direct confession), when the Lord Himself has told us all clearly that our sins will be forgiven in heaven *IF* they are first forgiven on earth by the Church? In God there is no inconsistency whatsoever. The contradiction and inconsistency exist only in us sinners, who prefer to do things in the easier way and refuse to follow God's will. The real basis for a lasting, close and true relationship between man and God is human submission to the divine will. Then and only then our relationship with God will be really meaningful.

Likewise, the "good people" who confess directly to God reason out and defend their attitude by saying that God, being offended by our sins should be the one to forgive us, not a priest who is a sinner, too. This kind of reasoning is obviously fallacious. They ought to know that the priest who absolves sinners in the confessional does not act on his own, as a man. He is God's minister in Christ, the intermediary between God and the penitent. Christ is the one who really forgives sinners through His minister, the priest. The confessor is empowered by God to remit or forgive human offenses against Him. The Lord said to the Apostles: "If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them." Obviously a priest, as a man, has no power to forgive sins. He enjoys this power as a minister of God, even if he himself is a sinner.

Finally, there is an insinuation in the case which, if true, might serve as an excuse to the "good people" to confess directly to God. It is said in the case that for those who confess directly to God, it is not so easy to do otherwise, as implying that to confess to a priest is sometimes difficult for them. Why? Is there no priest available to hear their confession? It would be deplorable to say that these "good people" have been forced to confess directly to God because they could not find a priest in the confessional, to whom they could confess. This is something for us priests worth meditating on.

Other times the faithful are disappointed with the way in which some priests hear confessions. The penitent always expects some kind of advice or some words of encouragement from the confessor. The latter acts at times so hurriedly that the penitent receives no spiritual guidance at all. In view of this, some penitents do not go back to confess. We confessors should realize that penitents seek and need some enlightenment and guidance to solve their spiritual difficulties. The confessor represents the Lord, who came to call sinners to repentance.

INVITATORY OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

In our regular diocesan meetings various matters are always discussed. There are matters in which a consensus or a general agreement is seldom reached; sometimes not even a majority prevails. One of the matters we have recently discussed was: when are the initial antiphon and the invitatory (psalm 95) to be said in the Divine Office? Some held the opinion that they always precede the Office of Readings; others believed that they are to be said before the Morning Prayer; still others made some distinction. Could you elaborate on this matter so that uniformity will guide our clergy in reciting the Liturgy of the Hours, which is rightly considered the official prayer of the whole Church?

A Priest

It is not surprising that there exist a variety of opinions on the matter. One has to read carefully the various texts dealing with the subject in order to dissipate any confusion.

Number 34 of the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* reads as follows: "The whole Office regularly begins with an invitatory. This consists in the verse *Lord, open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim Your praise*, and Psalm 95." Number 35 explains: "The invitatory is placed at the beginning of the whole sequence of the days prayer, that is, it precedes either *Morning Prayer* or the *Office of Readings*, whichever of these liturgical actions begins the day. The psalm with its antiphon may, however, be omitted when it should precede *Morning Prayer*."

However, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in the document on the *Roman Calendar* issued on March 21, 1969, says:

"The liturgical day is to be understood from midnight to midnight. However the Sunday and Solemnities' celebration begins in the afternoon of the preceding day" (n.3). Moreover, number 59 of the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, states: "Without prejudice to the regulations given above, the *Office of Readings* may be recited at any hour of the day, even during the night of the previous day, after *Evening Prayer* has been said."

Number 60 of the same *General Instruction* reads: "If the *Office of Readings* is said before *Morning Prayer*, the Invitatory precedes it, as noted above (no. 34-36). Otherwise, it begins with the verse *God, come to my assistance with the Glory to the Father. As it was in the beginning* and (outside Lent) the *Alleluia*."

The whole difficulty arises from the fact that, according to number 59 of the *General Instruction*, the *Office of Readings* may be anticipated "to the night of the previous day." It may be asked: Can the anticipated *Office of Readings* be considered in that case as the beginning of the *whole sequence* of the Office recited the next day?

Considering carefully the transcribed texts, the undersigned believes that the following solution is the most proper. Whenever the day begins with the *Morning Prayer*, the Invitatory precedes said *Morning Prayer*, not the *Office of Readings* recited the previous day. The reason on which our solution is based is the affirmation stated in number 34: "The whole office regularly begins with an invitatory," and the statement of number 35: "The *Invitatory* is placed at the beginning of the whole sequence of the day's prayer, that is, it precedes either *Morning Prayer* or the *Office of Readings*, whichever of these liturgical functions begins the day."

The meaning of the verse: "*Lord, open my lips . . .*" as an integral part of the Invitatory, seems to confirm this solution. It is an invocation to the Lord, that He may open our lips at the beginning of the day to praise Him throughout the *whole sequence* of the Liturgical Prayer. This meaning of the verse "*Lord, open my lips . . .*" can hardly be sustained if it could be said at the beginning of the *Office of Readings* when this part of the Liturgy of the Hours is not recited at the beginning of the *whole sequence* of the Divine Office on the same day.

FR. EXCELSO GARCIA, O.P.

Meditations for Holy Days

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 7, 1991

Readings: Ez 2:2-5
2 Co 12:7-10
Mk 6:1-6

"A prophet is respected everywhere except in his own country."

There are many prophets in the world today, both within and without the Church. Like Ezekiel and Paul they bring to men God's word of salvation. And, in general, their acceptance by modern man has not been very different from the acceptance of Ezekiel and other prophets by their contemporaries.

In the Church today we have in John Paul II a powerful and fearless prophet. And like the Old Testament prophet, he faces a stubborn people. Although widely accepted by the simple faithful, he is often criticized by his "own people."

We need and seek leaders (prophets) for inspiration and guidance, but it is not necessarily true that we would accept their word should they demand from us conversion and change of our lifestyle. Man has a rare capacity to accept or deny something because he likes or dislikes it, regardless of the evidence. And in particular in reference to God's word, man prefers a watered-down religion than a genuine, demanding faith.

* * *

The readings of the Mass have a common message: the failure, incomprehension and isolation of the prophet. This fact has been expressed very well with the classic: *"Nemo propheta in patria sua."*

The Lord sends Ezekiel to a rebellious nation. Although he is a prophet of the exilic period, some exegetes affirm that the message of this reading was preached in Israel before the exile. The attitude of the Israelites in pre-exilic times was really rebellious.

Ezekiel is called "son of man," that is, a simple, ordinary man. He has no special qualifications to be a prophet; it is the Spirit who speaks through him.

"... whether they hear or refuse to hear." The mission of the prophet is to bring God's word to men; his duty is to preach even if his message might not be accepted by many.

Paul teaches us here the most basic principle of spiritual life: *whatever my achievements are, I owe them to God. God's strength is in proportion to my weakness. The weaker I am, the more God's power works in me. There is no reason therefore to be proud of my achievements nor be afraid of my weaknesses or the task that lies ahead of me: Christ's power is in me.*

The message of the Gospel is: a prophet is not accepted in his own country and among his people. This time, it is Jesus himself who experiences, like Ezekiel, incomprehension and isolation among his people.

At first, Jesus' listeners are amazed and surprised at the way he speaks, his wisdom and the miracles he performs; but, in the end, they refuse to see in him anything but the carpenter, the son of Mary.

"He made the round of the neighboring villages instead and spent his time teaching." That is, we can expect opposition, but this should not be a reason to abandon our mission. Instead we should continue to preach to those who are willing to listen to us.

* * *

There is a strong awareness in the Church that she has a prophetic mission to fulfill in the world today. This mission has been entrusted to her by the Lord: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19-20). With St. Paul, the Church feels that there is an urgency to preach God's word with greater enthusiasm. Today more than ever before, it is urgent to carry out this mission.

A prophet must be capable to see the religious and human situation of the people to whom he has been sent and he must be sensitive to that situation.

An analysis of the Philippine situation shows that our country stands today in need of a strong prophetic mission. Besides the need of a reevangelization of the masses, we need prophets to denounce corruption, violence, poverty, abuse of power, etc.

Not a few voices from bishops, priests and lay people, both within and without the Catholic Church, have been raised to denounce and condemn this situation, as once Jeremiah, Amos and others did. We feel that there is a growing awareness of a need for a moral transformation in our country.

Perhaps the most important prophetic voice that has been heard lately is that of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines. It has closely examined the Philippine situation and has come up with the motto that will guide the Church in the future in her task to help bring about a moral renewal in the country: "The Church of the Poor."

In this prophetic mission of the Church in the modern world, the laity have their own irreplaceable participation. By virtue of his baptism, every Christian is a member of the Church and is bound to participate in her apostolic activity. It is a vocation.

The specific vocation of the laity is "to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs. The layman is closely involved in temporal affairs of every sort. It is his special task to illumine and organized these affairs" (*Dogm. Const. on the Church*, 31; cfr. also: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, chs. 3 & 4).

There are certain areas specific to the prophetic mission of the laity; especially those areas that are autonomous or of difficult access to the ordained minister: the family, politics, business, international relations, etc. It has been noted in some countries that, in general, Catholics have a passive attitude; perhaps this could explain why we find ourselves in the present situation. However, if we read well the signs of the times, the hour has come for the layman to take an active part in this awesome task of the Church to illumine and transform the world with the word of God.

FR. JAVIER ARRAZOLA, O.P.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 14, 1991

Readings: Am 7:12-15

Ep 1:3-14

Mk 6:7-13

Prophets of Our Times

The Philippine press is reputed to be the freest in Southeast Asia and ranks high in the world for the same reason. An explicit albeit sometimes tragic expression of this fact is the almost uncontrollable proliferation of opinion writers and columnists who compete daily not so much for their in-depth or scientific analysis of current events but for informations that titillate the curious among its many readers and for most opinions which are based not so much on facts but on unconfirmed gossip.

These opinions and views can swing the minds and beliefs of not a few of the citizenry and it is not rare that not a few reputations have been tarnished as a consequence of their shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later technique.

Prophets have a place in society. In the Old Testament they were viewed as oracles of God whose pronouncements spelled either salvation or doom. But no one questioned or recoiled from their presence or warnings . . . They were men of God and their admonitions proved their point all the time.

Prophets, however, in contemporary society most notably in the press are sadly only of the doom type. Since they often consider it unproductive to bring out the positive, most of the time they proclaim pessimism and gloom. Their influence is such that government, institutions and even private persons often hire PR agents to counteract and counterbalance negative or false informations dished out by the press, TV, radio and other agents of media. What is unfortunate about all these is the fact that many opinion writers are often experts only in dissecting and criticizing without being able to offer any positive solution to the problems they expose. They, therefore, do not really help to build up society but rather take advantage of what the former has guaranteed them without offering back anything to encourage and strengthen the same society which has helped them so much.

* * *

In today's first reading, Amos is presented as a prophet who is being eased out because of his uncomfortable message. The chief priest ordered Amos home, but he replied that his prophesying was God's bidding. He confessed to being just an ordinary shepherd but following God's call, he prophesied for the people of Israel.

St. Paul through his Ephesian epistle presents Christ to us as the ultimate prophet. It is through Christ that every spiritual blessings in the heavens have been bestowed on us. God chose us in Christ "before the world began to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love . . ." He predestined us "through Christ Jesus to be his adopted son." And all these that we may be able to praise God.

In Christ and through his blood, we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven.

Our Christian life is a mystery. Of ourselves we cannot fathom the reason why God the Creator has bestowed all these favors to us mere creatures. But through his Son Jesus Christ, this mystery has been unravelled to us because through him "wisdom has been given to us to understand fully this mystery."

But if the mystery of our life is for all times decreed and revealed by Christ to us, why is it that we cannot seem to understand and bring to completion all things that are in heaven and on earth under Christ's headship?

St. Mark in today's gospel gives us the answer. When the twelve were sent by Christ to preach, he gave them important travelling instructions. He told them to forget themselves, their families, their persons – in short, to be detached from the world and all its allurements. When Christ told them to go two by two taking nothing for the journey but a walking stick, he wanted to transmit to us the message that the conversion of the world can be achieved only by being detached from it and all its wiles. So, no food, no travelling bag, not a coin in the purse nor a second tunic. These are useless baggages and serve only to hamper the preacher and distract him from bringing God's message effectively and authentically.

Prophets need to preach repentance, to expel demons, to anoint the sick, to work cures, etc. These cannot be attained without self sacrifice, penance and denials in addition to prayers. Prophets should

e objective and should be motivated only by the truth and by the task of authentically bringing about the building up of Christ's body. Self-aggrandizement is out of the question since it tends to destroy the mind and heart of the prophet. He should be frank but truthful like Amos. A prophet should not be discouraged by criticisms and the absence of recognition. His only concern should be to bring God's message of salvation to all. Truth should guide a prophet's pronouncements – the truth that everything in heaven and on earth should be subordinated under Christ the Son of God and the Head of the Church.

* * *

As faithful we are obliged to be prophets according to our state of life. Like the twelve summoned by Jesus and sent "to have authority over unclean spirits," we have to be equipped according to the instructions of our Lord "taking nothing on the journey . . . no food, no travelling bag, not a coin in the purse . . ." We have to preach "the need of repentance," to expell "many demons, annoint the sick with oil, and work many cures."

What is expected of us as soldiers and followers of Christ are enormous. Therefore, we need not only prepare ourselves for them aptly but also to be equipped with the words of the Lord which are spirit and life.

Our life and words should reflect kindness and truth, justice and peace if it is only through these that the Lord will give us his benefits and enable our yield to be generous.

We therefore pray to our Father for his light of truth to guide us that following him we may reject what is contrary to the Gospel.

FR. JOSE MA. B. TINOKO, O.P.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
July 21, 1991

Readings: Jr 23:1-6
Ep 2:13-18
Mk 6:30-34

Jesus' Shepherd in the Mass

Sheep without a shepherd, whom Christ wishes to teach is the theme of this Sunday's readings. The theme of the shepherd appears frequently in the Bible. This is understandable, for the kind of life led by many of the writers and readers was that of a shepherd. The text from the first reading (*Jr* 23:1-6) was written against the Kings who misgoverned the people of God. The last Kings of Judah were not good leaders. They were weaklings who played politics in order to save the Kingdom rather than shepherds who served the people and remained faithful to Yahweh. In this reading God calls them false shepherds. For they neglect his people and are not really concerned about them. For they allow them to be scattered in exile.

But through the prophet Jeremiah, God holds out a vision of salvation of the scattered people. He promises that he will gather them by a return from exile and promises a future messianic shepherd. In the meantime, God himself will act as their shepherd whose work consists firstly in gathering the scattered sheep and bringing them to pastures. In order to bring about this gathering, he will provide them with shepherds. They will be good shepherds for they are shepherds after his own heart; they are shepherds who will feed the sheep with knowledge and understanding (*Jr* 3:15).

The model shepherd, so well described in the Old Testament, reappears in the New and is incarnated in Jesus. The Gospel reading (*Mk* 6:30-34) tells us of the anxious concern Jesus feels for the crowd. When the disciples reported to him all that they had done, he invited them to a lonely place to rest. But as they stepped out of the boat, the very crowd from whom they had sought rest was there waiting for them. Upon seeing them, Jesus is filled with pity for them for they are like sheep without a shepherd.

A sheep without a shepherd can get lost for it cannot find the way. A sheep without a shepherd can go hungry for it cannot find its pasture. A sheep without a shepherd is defenseless for it does not have defense against the dangers which threaten it. Thus, when Jesus is moved at the sight of a crowd who resembles a sheep without a shepherd, his first reaction is to be a shepherd for them. And in his eyes, teaching, that is, feeding them with his word, is the first and foremost task of a shepherd. Thus Mark referring to Jesus immediately adds "and he began to teach them at great length" after saying "He pitied them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd" (6:34).

It is by teaching that Jesus gathers the sheep together. The evangelists point out that the crowd follows Jesus (*Mt* 4:25; *Mk* 1:33; *Lk* 7:11); that the crowd has a great desire to hear his teaching (*Mk* 11:18; *Lk* 5:1). This desire for teaching is what draws the crowd after Jesus. Thus everytime an occasion arises, he always teaches them.

Jesus' teaching is filled with power, for he teaches with authority and confirms it by miracles. His teaching creates a new people, for his words are spirit and life; for people gather around him and share his teaching with one another. Slowly but surely they form a united flock on whom Jesus bestows his love, to whom Jesus communicates the Father's teachings.

* * *

That Jesus, the good shepherd, has gathered into one those "who were far off" and "those who were near" is also clear from the second reading (*Ep* 2:13-18). Christ, as Paul says, is our peace and reconciliation. In Christ's own flesh he tore down the walls that separated the Jews and the Gentiles; through his cross he reconciled them to God. Thus, in Jesus God fulfills his promise of a future messianic shepherd. In and through Jesus God fulfills his promise to gather into one all mankind, who "were once far off." For Jesus is the Good Shepherd described in the responsorial psalm (*Ps* 23:1-6). While the psalmist speaks of the shepherd leading us to verdant pastures, Jesus leads us to the Eucharist in order to feed us and to form us into a single people.

If, as Paul proclaims, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, then he is still a shepherd today. Christ performs this function of shepherding in the Mass itself. In the first part of the Mass, he teaches his flock through his word; in the second part he prepares a banquet for them. In other words, he provides nourishment for his flock "from the table of both the word of God and the body of Christ." Thus, not only the flock are "brought near" and are made eager to serve him "in faith, hope and love," but also they become the one Body of Christ. As Christ's Body, they, in union with Christ their head, continually proclaim to the glory of the Father "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose . . . He refreshes my soul."

FR. RUBEN CORPUZ, O.P.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 28, 1991

Readings: 2 K 4:42-44

Ep 4:1-6

Jn 6:1-15

Give It to the People to Eat

"What took you so long?" These were the words of a soldier who was forced to join the Iraqi army. Pictures of those days of war showed how the soldiers were hungry, thirsty and ill-clothed. They were waiting for the allied forces in order to be fed.

Last year we saw pictures of malnourished children in Negros. In our streets we see children suffering from hunger or adults who do not have anything to eat.

In the streets, in the rural areas, in palaces, in mansions, we see people who hunger for God, people who search for Christ. The world is suffering from hunger for bread and, more so, hunger for the Word of God.

* * *

In the first reading from the *Book of Kings* and in the Gospel from St. Mark parallel situations are described. People who hungered for God went to Elisha and to Jesus Christ. People forgot their physical needs in pursuit of satisfying their spiritual need. They came to the prophet as they came to Jesus Christ to satisfy their spiritual hunger for God.

In both cases, the prophet and Jesus Christ felt pity for the crowd. Elisha distributed the offering to God to those people who had come to him confident that God will provide for their needs: "Thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and there shall be some left-overs.'" In the Gospel, Jesus challenged his disciples in the person of Philip: "Where shall we buy bread for this people to eat?" The disciples became aware of the situation and concluded that from the human point of view there was no solution. But Jesus knew what to do. He commanded his disciples: "Let the people recline."

In both readings the disciples had the same attitudes. First, they felt frustration and helplessness. "How can I set this – twenty barley

loaves – before a hundred men?” asked the servant of Elisha. “What good is this five barley loaves and a couple of dried fish for so many?” asked Andrew the disciple of Jesus. Second, the disciples showed confidence in their masters. The disciples knew that their masters were men of God. Elisha was a prophet of the Most High; Jesus was the Prophet who is to come into this world. Because they believed and trusted their masters, the miracle happened. This kind of faith is the same faith and trust in Jesus that St. Paul proposes in the second reading. “There is one Lord Jesus Christ . . . one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, works through all and is in all.”

* * *

Hunger for God. People went out to listen to Jesus because they hungered for God. The preaching of Jesus Christ was different from that of the scribes and pharisees. The preaching of Jesus Christ was a proclamation of the Word of the living God. Jesus revealed God in a way no other preacher, prophet or teacher had revealed him or will reveal him. Jesus Christ is the eternal Word of the Father, who became man and revealed to us the mystery of God. He lived what he preached and he preached what he lived. Thus the people who were hungry and thirsty for the Word of God went to Jesus to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

Today like in the time of Jesus people hunger for God. They come to the ministers of Christ: deacons, priests, bishops . . . to listen to the Word of God. But sometimes we priests give the people the Word of God as an object of speculation, a doctrine to be understood, a truth to be known and mastered. Thus, it does not reach man's innermost self, his whole being. Yes, as truth it commands acceptance but not commitment and response because it does not satisfy the spiritual hunger of man.

Give it to the people to eat. Inspired by Christ's teaching the people followed him even to the point of forgetting everything else. They did not pay anymore attention to other things and just listened to Jesus Christ. But human endurance has its limitations; physical needs must be satisfied. Thus Jesus fed them spiritually with his words and fed them in the physical sense by performing a miracle.

Jesus took pity on the people and helped them. The apostles offered what they had and it became an instrument of the miracle.

Andrew had said, "What is this for so many?" He wondered but he gave generously what he had. He did not keep it for himself thinking it could not solve the problem.

In our country there are thousands of people who hunger. What do we do? Most of the time we do not offer our help to alleviate this hunger. It is not the alms we give, they are good but not enough. Are we truly concerned for others, putting our wealth at the service of the community (like creating jobs, social agencies to care for community needs)? Or, are we becoming greedy, keeping our wealth to ourselves hoping it would protect us, enjoying it and even spending it in lavish parties?

Christ is telling you and me, "Give it to them to eat." Feed those who hunger; help those who are in need. We see people starving but we have become too insensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters. At times we excuse ourselves: let the Church take care of the poor and needy. But *we* are the Church. The Christian community has only one source of income: the people's generosity. Sad to say, the generosity of many Christians does not exceed the few coins they drop in the collection box if they give any.

You may say like Andrew, "What is this for so many people?" But Andrew, although he knew that what he had was not enough to satisfy the hunger of so many people, gave it and offered it generously. What he had he was willing to share with others. The generosity of the apostles and the hunger of the people moved Jesus Christ to perform a miracle. The bread shared in brotherly love lasted and was sufficient to satisfy the hunger of the people because of Jesus' miracle. In the same way, when the community has done everything it could, when it has shared however little it has in the spirit of the Lord, the miracle will happen.

FR. MAXIMILIANO REBOLLO, O.P.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
August 4, 1991

Readings: Ex 16:2-4, 12-15
Eph 4:17, 20-24
Jn 6:24-35

Story of the Food-God

A study of the local cultures tells us of the richness of the religious rites of the early Filipinos. Early ethnographers recorded the god-directed practices of the tribes almost all over our islands. Museums keep ethnographical artifacts used by ritual leaders. We find headdresses of tribal priests or priestesses, earthen and porcelain bowls used to contain the food offered to a god, figures of idols, and many others pieces associated with the primitive religion prior to the coming of the missionaries.

In the practice of primitive religion, it was common to find food prepared for a tribal god; but we find no account of a food-god. The idea of a food-god seems to be unique in the religion founded by Jesus Christ.

* * *

The Gospel text is straight in referring to Jesus as food, i.e., bread of life. This phrase is part of the Eucharistic discourse of the Master. The discourse brings to memory another reference to meal in the Old Testament, namely, *manna*, "the bread from heaven" in the time of Moses.

The bread that God gives is one that brings life: "I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven, the true bread of God, is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." Whereas the manna could only nourish mortal men, the bread of life, to wit, Christ, gives true life.

While *manna* served as a sign of Yahweh's providence for the Jews in the desert, the new bread is more than a sign. The new bread is identifiable with a personal reality of the Son: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst."

* * *

Bread as food is consumable. Its nutrients are absorbed by every healthy member of the body. The members of the body are made strong and they continue to grow because of the elements consumed.

The Eucharist as food of the body and the spirit is a metaphorical image; but it is also more than a metaphorical image. Our Catholic

faith tells us that the reality symbolized by this image is ontologically present.

When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the offered gifts of bread and wine are to become the person of the one who once in history said over bread and wine: "This is my body, this is my blood." This indeed is a great mystery of our faith.

The bread and wine offered during the Eucharist are unlike the food prepared during the religious rituals of the early dwellers of our Islands. The readied gifts in rituals then were never destined to be transformed into another reality. They were to remain as food for a god or gods but never taken as Food-God.

The mystery of the Eucharist is best remembered in this story:

*God decided to visit the earth
so he sent an angel to survey
the place before his visit.*

*The angel brought back this report:
"Most of them are starving and
most of them are unemployed."*

*God said, "Then I shall become
incarnate in the form of food for the hungry
and work for the unemployed."*

FR. VICENTE G. CAJILIG, O.P.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
August 11, 1991

Readings: 1 K 19:4-8
Ep 4:30-5:2
Jn 6:41-52

A Gift of Pleasing Fragrance

To judge all things by human values and external standards is always a step farther away from the truth. It is like refusing a cheque

of one million pesos because it happened to be enclosed in an envelope which does not conform to the standards of the one being given.

The Jews refused the Bread of Life because they refused to believe a carpenter's son talking to them: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? How can a carpenter son claim to have come down from heaven?" (Jn 6:42). If he cannot even afford to give ordinary bread to all who hunger, how much more the Bread "for the life of the world?"

* * *

Jesus denies that the Jews know his origin, since he is the Son of God the Father born of the Virgin Mary. But there is no point arguing with the people. They have no faith and faith is a gift from God.

To have faith is to be drawn by the Father if man would understand that Christ is the Bread of Life. To be drawn means to be taught by God (Is 54:13) and thus to be led to faith. Lack of faith comes only from one's own resistance to be taught by God.

Faith leads us to the truth that no one can go to the Father except through Christ and one can see the Father only in Jesus. Faith is to say "I believe in God because I believe in Christ."

It is through faith that we see that which cannot be perceived by our senses. The Jews were so proud of their ancestors and of the *manna* which God has provided the Jews on their journey to the Promise Land. Yet, the *manna* did not stop them from dying. In their unbelief, they failed to recognize that Christ, not the *manna* is the true bread that gives life.

Faith tells us that the bread Christ is going to give is his flesh for the life of the world. Christ through his death becomes the life-giving bread. His life-giving is continued in the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist, therefore, is an invitation to Life, because, Jesus is the bread of life. To refuse the invitation and command of Jesus is to miss life and die. To accept his offer is to find real life in this world and in the glory to come.

It is the same Life that strengthens our commitment as heirs to the Kingdom of God. Just as Elijah who was fearful, discouraged, and

weary fleeing from the wicked Jezebel was strengthened by God by giving Elijah a special food on his journey to Horeb, so too, the Eucharist enkindles our hearts grown cold by the burdens of earthly life.

* * *

Just as the disciples at Emmaus recognized Christ through the breaking of the bread, so too, we recognize a God who constantly loves us; a God who continues to give hope; a God who brings Life through the Eucharist.

The Eucharist reminds us that as Christ offered himself up for us on the cross as a sacrifice to the Father for our forgiveness, we too, must be willing to forgive one another. St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (4:30-5:2) reminds us to "get rid of all bitterness, all passion and anger, harsh words, slander and malice of every kind..." and instead be kind to one another, compassionate, mutually forgiving just as God has forgiven you in Christ."

Just as Christ, in every Mass celebrated gives himself for us as an offering to God, "a gift of pleasing fragrance" in the Eucharist, we are all asked to be "imitators of God as his dear children" in the giving of Life to our families, our communities and the life of the Church as a whole.

FR. RODEL E. ALIGAN, O.P.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

August 18, 1991

Readings: Pr 9:1-6
Ep 5:15-20
Jn 6:51-58

"I am the Bread of Life"

It is a fact that many men and women today remain bound only to earthly horizon. The supreme values that guide their daily behavior are health, biological life, sex, pleasures and wealth. A powerful

attraction of material goods made available by present materialistic society has created in them deep anxiety and a sense of frustration. No wonder then that these people suffer terribly from spiritual anemia and hunger.

* * *

The Mother Church is constantly reminding the world of the need and importance of spiritual values in man's life. Today's Gospel is an example of this. We are told that aside from material concerns that man should have, there are also other aspirations and ideals worthy to strive at and which, in the final analysis, will quiet down his quest for happiness and peace.

When modern exegetes explain the meaning of today's Gospel, they all agree that the evangelist John has put together in the discourse of the Synagogue of Capernaum different materials preached by Jesus on various occasions of his apostolic ministry. Perfect unity is achieved by the one and important message contained therein: *Jesus is the poor and humble Messiah who comes into the world to save man and is the one given to us as spiritual nourishment in holy Communion.*

Before Jesus' death, he promised to give to his apostles his flesh to eat and his blood to drink. The miraculous multiplication of the loaves gave him the opportunity. The crowd that followed him were expecting more extraordinary signs. They hoped that he would give them bread from heaven as Moses did in the days of the desert. Jesus surprised them when he affirmed that he would give them a more excellent bread still, a living bread, a Bread of Life that comes down from heaven.

In surprise, the people begged Jesus to give them that bread always. And he answered: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never thirst" (Jn 6:35).

At this point Jesus was even more explicit. He told them in the most unmistakable terms that he would give himself as the food of men. "The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51). The reaction of the people was strong and repulsive. They

said: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (*Jn* 6:52). Jesus then became more emphatic: "I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day" (*Jn* 6:53-54).

Upon hearing this doctrine some of the people at Capernaum commented angrily: "This is an intolerable language." And so they left. Then, Jesus addressing his apostles asked "Will you also go away?"

That Jesus wanted his words to be taken literally is clearly shown by the fact that the people and the apostles understood them literally and not metaphorically. When some of the audience left impressed by such an unheard statement Jesus became more and more emphatic on what he was saying: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (*Jn* 6:53).

* * *

The promise of Jesus at the Synagogue of Capernaum was fully accomplished when he celebrated the Last Supper with his apostles before his death. In the blessed Eucharist, Jesus comes to us in person, in a sacramental manner, under the sign of bread and wine, the symbol of food and nourishment.

In choosing this way to come to us, Christ reveals the object of his coming - to be *the spiritual food of our souls*. The Eucharist is the sustenance of the divine life which we received in baptism. Therefore, just as we eat to live and work, we must partake of the Body and Blood of Christ in order to preserve the divine life and to acquire strength to bear our crosses and overcome our spiritual enemies. Furthermore, the *Eucharistic food is not only nourishment but a cure* to "free us from our daily faults and preserve us from mortal sin." This twofold effect culminates in the union with Christ and his transformation. To abide in Christ is to be one with him in mind and heart.

Finally, to receive the Bread of Life in holy Communion means *a pledge of future glory*: "Anyone who eats this bread will live forever" (*Jn* 6:58).

FR. PEDRO G. TEJERO, O.P.

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